CULTURAL SOCIOLOGY

Seeking Authenticity in Place, Culture, and the Self

The Great Urban Escape

Nicholas Osbaldiston

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Cultural Sociology

Series Editors: Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, David Inglis, and Philip Smith

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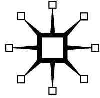

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Series Editors' Foreword

Human life is conducted and organized in both space and place. The former is a Cartesian environment of abstracted dimensions, vectors, and speeds. The latter is a world of meaningful locales. An innovative push in the 1980s saw new theoretical attention given to their relationship. Driven largely by critical thinking on postmodernity, this literature asserted that space and place were tied together by the forces of capital. Economic globalization, post-Fordism, and consumerism were the proximate factors that shaped place-meanings. These could be written off as shallow, malleable, and ideological. The lessons of an older cultural anthropology and humanist geography were mistakenly forgotten. These had long insisted on the power of story and symbol in shaping human encounters with landscape and cityscape alike.

Nicholas Osbaldiston systematically and decisively revives this forgotten tradition. Drawing upon structuralist theories of narrative and on Durkheimian thinking about the role of sacred and profane places, he reverses the causal arrows of critical theory. In his analysis, money follows myth. Through theoretical reconstruction and case study analyses he shows how mass amenity migration to the coast, mountains, and countryside is propelled by a search for authenticity. It responds to culturally embedded needs to flee urban profanity and to find the sacred. Urban planning is equally beholden to myth as it shapes place identities. Paradoxes and ironies emerge as reality and expectations collide. Real estate bubbles, marginalized locals, civic identity crises, and environmental degradation arise out of the mass pursuit of mythic ideals of self and place.

Illustrating how a meaning-centered sociology can inform the study of place, space, and migration, this study brings a new set of resources to cultural geography and spatial theory.

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Chapter 1

The Great Urban Escape

Introduction

Throughout the West since the commencement of industrial modernity, the city has been a magnet for attracting population growth. Filled with promises of economic security, increased opportunities for intellectual and vocational development, and an abundant social and cultural life, the metropolis has grown immensely in the modern period. Left behind were the small villages and country towns that became, in some respects, symbols of a time forgotten when life was harsh and less comfortable. Those who still resided in villages and towns were considered "country folk," backward, and with a limited view of the world. The city, on the contrary, was seen as progressive, technologically advanced, and cosmopolitan. Widespread migration into the city has subsequently resulted for many years in a general decline in population numbers amid some of these smaller country communities. However, in recent years, this general trend is being reversed in areas of high environmental value. Places that have historically been left untouched except through tourism have recently become the center of a great urban phenomenon: escape.

Described as amenity migration by some (Moss 2006a; Glorioso and Moss 2007; Ullman 1954), lifestyle migration (Benson and O'Reilly 2009a; Benson 2011; Hoey 2006, 2010) by others, and, in various corners, as Seachange (Burnley and Murphy 2004; Dowling 2004; Osbaldiston 2010), this movement involves a growing group of disgruntled ex-city residents who are seeking meaning in their lifestyles. The focuses of their quest are those places with pristine environments and small country town "feels." Areas that have traditionally attracted the gaze of the passer-by in domestic and international tourism are now attracting these modern-day Thoreaus

who search for their own slices of "Walden." Locales, for instance, along the foothills of the Cascade Range and Rocky Mountains in Canada, along the coastlines of the Pacific Northwest and Florida in the United States, across the beaches of Australia, or in the quiet countryside of England and France and surrounding European neighbors are developing into hotspots for the influx of what could be described as the "great urban escape." What is the apparent "meaning" that these metropolitans seek for is the question that underpins this book. Geographer Moss (2006b, 8–9) suggests simply that the answer lies in two categories of amenity, "environmental," which includes the natural beauty of both landscape and animal life,and "cultural,"which includes community spirit, small-town values, and a region's history. Other variables here include those that also drive tourism, such as air quality, scenery, animal life, opportunities for lifestyle pursuits, and the spectacle of the "natural world." Yet, tourist amenity, although a possible contributor, is not a dominant motivator for amenity-led migration (see, for instance, Kuentzel and Ramaswamy 2005). As Moss (2006b, 9) makes clear, the social world, including community mindedness, culture, and the "tangible manifestations" of not only the present community, but also of past peoples, is another attribute that these urban escapees seek out when they migrate from the city.

Understandably, this dramatic shift in population migration has attracted the interest of authorities across the world. Research and policy are abundant. Significant amounts of funding have gone into exploring statistical future-projected growth rates of areas of high amenity with a view to prepare small towns for the hard realities of amenity-led urban escapism. The results of these studies and projects demonstrate the importance of the phenomenon in the current social fabric of Western societies. Places once ignored in previous amenity-led shifts such as retirement migration are now drawing people in high numbers to the detriment of other areas. Once-revered destinations are now being overlooked in a quest to find towns that have yet to be spoiled by high migration and development. For instance, Garber-Yonts (2004) reports that in California, the usual high numbers of domestic migrants who arrive seeking after its famed environmental amenity has dropped in recent years. This trend, he proposes, will continue over the next decade as other less-developed regions across the United States have become more attractive for amenity-led migrants.. For instance, within the greater western region, regions such as Oregon and Washington in the iconic Pacific Northwest, home to vast landscapes and the Cascade Range, are emerging as winners. These two areas in particular are set to expand considerably with a projected population increase from 1995 to 2025 of approximately 42 percent (Garber-Yonts 2004). Among current estimates, Oregon falls just behind Florida, the great retirement village of the United States, in net

interstate migration, with seven in every thousand residents emerging from elsewhere (Garber-Yonts 2004, 4).

Similar statistics are recorded in other nations across the West. In Canada, for instance, approximately 41 percent of small regional areas recorded growth, rather than loss, during the years of 1996 to 2001 (Mitchell 2005). Although some of this growth can be attributed to intrarural migration, or the movement of peoples from one country area to another, Mitchell (2008) concludes that one-third of this can be attributed to in-migration from metropolitan centers. Elsewhere in Australia, where the Bureau of Statistics has considered thoroughly the prominence of urban-rural migration, population growth has been recorded in dramatic numbers in regional areas. In 2004, for instance, and similar to the case of Canada, Australia's coastal regions grew in population size significantly within a five-year period. Of those migrating into these areas, one-third came from major capital cities such as Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane (ABS 2004). Of more interest is the suggestion that 42 percent of these new residents were families, with approximately 18 percent of couples having dependent children (ABS 2004). Furthermore, there is also strong evidence in this case study that many were not retirees, but younger than 55 years of age (see ABS 2004). Such counterurbanization trends have been occurring for sometime in Australia, as demonstrated in Hugo's (1996) studies in the late 1990s.

While these examples are small, they do beg the question of why people are seeking refuge from the city among less popular areas. It is apparent that these locales hold some extraordinary or even charismatic value that pulls people away from metropolitan centers. Yet, inherent in the revaluation of small regional places is the *devaluation* of similar attributes in the city. Important social issues such as pollution, overcrowding, materialism, distrust, and risk serve, I contend, to accentuate the mythical pull of small-town life. While we must admit there have been some structural changes, such as advances in telecommunications and Internet technologies and a widespread increase in personal wealth, that have increased the mobility of individuals (see Lash and Urry 1987; Beck 1992; Giddens 1990), it is the contention of this book that amenity-led migration is indeed a cultural phenomenon embedded in narratives that are constructed culturally and that impact greatly on the current and future dimensions of place-value. This book will examine in particular the binary coding of the city and the country that sits deep in the imagination of the amenity migrant. Life amid the natural beauty of the countryside, beaches, and mountains holds the key, for this group of escapees, to unlock the happiness and meaning that is imprisoned by the ingrained habits and stresses of the city. As noted earlier, it is not just retirees, as might traditionally be assumed, who seek after this escape. Professional journalist Dowling (2004, 8) illustrates this in her

discussion with some of Australia's "Seachangers," many of whom are middle-aged people who had "reached a point in their life . . . where they opted to put their own personal happiness ahead of more materialistic concerns such as salary, career advancement or the house in the prestigious suburb."

Indeed, there has been some suggestion through empirical work that income itself is sacrificed at the altar of self-fulfillment in not only this movement, but also in its cousin, voluntary simplicity or downshifting (Osbaldiston 2006a; Breakspear and Hamilton 2004; Schor 1998). However, amenity migrants are broadly speaking quite well resourced in comparison to those who live in small country towns and villages. To suggest otherwise underestimates the income and wealth disparity that exists between city and country populations. In fact, this unevenness (as this book will explore in detail later) is often evidence of the impact and proliferation of recent urban escapism across Western nations, especially as the movement has grown in popularity (Benson and O'Reilly 2009b). Indeed, the structural stresses that are brought to bear upon these small regional locales through population in-migration from the cities are quite apparent in statistical data matching population growth with local market housing costs. Some examples of this include iconic places such as Teton County in Wyoming, United States; the Town of Canmore in Canada's Rocky Mountains; Brighton on the United Kingdom's coastline; or the Byron Bay region in Northern New South Wales, Australia. In each instance, there has been significant growth in population, especially from urban centers. In time, these once-small economies that held relatively cheap housing markets have subsequently boomed. As an example, Teton County, which encompasses both the spectacular Rocky Mountains and the great plains of Wyoming, increased in population by 13 percent in the decade of 2000 to 2009 (Census Bureau 2010). The impact on Jackson Hole, a fairly isolated town located in the heart of Teton's national forest, is significant. For instance, overall real estate sales figures from 2006 through to 2007 jumped 20 percent to approximately $1.5 billion indicating a growth not only in new home sales but also in house prices. However, the recent downturn in the national economy has seen this restricted in recent years as a flow-on effect of broader troubles. Yet, such figures have inflated market prices to the extent that local authorities have been required to initiate policy that deals with equity issues. In particular, having to balance the influx of relatively wealthy individuals (and developer interests) from larger city centers with the needs of earlier amenity migrants and less wealthy local residents is an important issue for this small community.

A similar situation is occurring in the historically small village-like place of Canmore in Canada's Alberta province. Here, the township's population over the age of five in 2006 was 11,340. Of these, approximately 35 percent were outsiders who had immigrated either from other parts of Canada

or from overseas locations (Statistics Canada 2006). The resulting flow-on effects upon the housing market, alongside demand for second homes and residential tourism, have been dramatic, with the average single-family home selling for approximately $900,000 in the first quarter of 2011, well above national averages (Canmore Real Estate 2011). Such dramatic consequences for the locale have drawn a response from local authorities similar to the Town of Jackson. Here, a policy instrument has been designed to create low-cost housing for local municipal employees. In Australia, in the township of Byron Bay along the northern New South Wales coastline, a similar situation has emerged. At the last census intake, the percentage of immigrants from outside the region (or overseas) into the town was approximately 30 percent of the total Byron population (ABS 2006). Wealthy migrants and other developer interests have subsequently created a push factor, with local residents being forced out into surrounding suburbs and regions in recent years (Howden 2009). Indeed, the median house price within this iconic piece of Australiana in December 2010 was $664,000, over 50 percent higher than in surrounding regions (Domain 2011). In 2007, the annual median house price growth was 20 percent, which has since dipped. However, the effect of the "cashed-up" migrant is evident.

Research across the phenomenon is finding similar circumstances throughout other amenity-rich areas as well. This is especially evident in relation to rapid population growth, incoming wealth, and social sustainability issues related to housing and significant shifts within micro-economies (see Moss 2006b; Gurran, Squires, and Blakely 2006; Chipeniuk 2008; Gober, McHugh and LeClerc 1993; Hall and Muller 2004; Fuguitt 1985; Hall 2006). As Moss (2006b, 17) states, the injection of wealth can indeed be a source of social turbulence. Increasing rates of second-home buying and the empty houses syndrome can also exacerbate this turbulence within smaller communities (see McIntyre, Williams, and McHugh 2006; Gurran, Squires, and Blakely 2006). Incoming migrants, who are distinct from more established amenity migrants (who had arrived earlier), are inclined, according to Moss (2006b, 17), to engage quite clearly in "conspicuous consumption," not only in housing, but in daily practices. Thus, the escape from the city is less about lifestyle transformation and more about a new mode of status-related consumption.

As this book demonstrates later, the increase of permanent urban escapees and the fluctuation of temporary residents with second homes can create disharmony within these small and traditional communities. The reasons for this are multifarious. However, data such as those provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in a study conducted in 2004 provide some hints. The study finds that city escapees within regional locales were more likely than their neighbors to have a university education. In a strange

twist, urban escapees were conversely found to be less likely to find quality and ongoing work, with an unemployment rate of 18 percent opposed to the 8 percent rate found among the locals (ABS 2004). Reasons for this latter statistic are beyond the scope of this research. However, we can speculate that perhaps the strength of local social networks and trust plays a role here in the job market. Furthermore, the qualifications that new residents hold are less likely to be attractive to industries within regional locales. Often these places are based on blue-collar labor, a course new migrants may not have experienced. As a result, there is potential for value conflict through the disjuncture between urbanites and local communities. The former group, however, as Pahl (2005) has recently considered, has the power to alter the shape of a locale through its influence and, perhaps, cultural capital (see also Halbwachs 1991[1941]). Alongside these issues lie also the physical effects of population turnaround on landscapes, environmental conditions, biodiversity, and other sustainability concerns such as sewerage, waste water, and pollution (see Gurran, Squires, and Blakely 2006). The subsequent pressure on local municipalities to deal with these matters alongside other issues such as climate change has accelerated in recent times. Yet, despite this, authorities often act to promote their area rather than keep quiet, hoping to obtain a slice of the migration phenomenon for their own localities. As such, the very phenomenon of amenity-led migration also threatens its continued viability not only in relation to sustainability issues, but also culturally.

Exploring the Phenomenon

Throughout the chapters that follow, the unintended consequences of amenity-led migration are explored in some detail. Underpinning these issues, I contend throughout this project, is a cultural narrative that promotes amenity-led migration, but that also draws attention to the degradation in value of places that have become ruined through the movement. It is perhaps a cruel irony that those sleepy locales that serve as a place for the rejuvenation of the self are now challenged by the same profane attributes of the city that drive people to seek refuge.

The foundation of this book is based in Durkheimian logic, specifically that of contemporary figureheads such as Smith (1999) and Alexander (1998) and their "strong" approach to cultural sociology. Using this approach allows culture to take center stage in analysis. Yet, this methodological framework is not just designed to demonstrate collective values in the movement, as illustrated through qualitative comments or the "thick" data that emerge from participants themselves. It also allows us to see these cultural narratives embedded in institutional concerns that have a deeper relationship to the sacred and the profane than what is usually proposed in other theoretical

work (see Smith 2008). As I will show later in this book, the act of promoting places as authentic and the protective work that is initiated to maintain the distinction between city and country are inherently tied into those cultural binaries that provide the foundation for amenity-led migration.

From this perspective, the present work provides an analytical position that is often missed in studies of the phenomenon. As mentioned earlier, purveyors of research into amenity-led migration tend to focus on revealing those issues of sustainability, overpopulation, and environmental danger that emerge as the movement rolls on. Such debates are not only necessary, but can also provoke communities into civil and political action (Moss 2006a). However, policy discussion and examining political discourse ignore the power behind understanding the motivation to leave the city in the first instance. Perhaps this is not their cause for concern, but in many instances human behavior in amenity-led migration tends to be simplified. Not only here but also in analyses of voluntary simplicity and downshifting (see Hamilton 2004; Schor 1998), researchers often rely on well-founded principles found in social science/theory to answer the question of motivation. For instance, Moss (2006b) concludes that technological advance, mobility, and other structural transformations akin to the "new" age of *individualization* (Beck 1992; Giddens 1990; Bauman 2001a) are the bases for the inception of amenity-led migration. While such notions are important, such as the freeing up of social and economic capital to allow the phenomenon to flourish, they miss a broader fundamental feature of the movement that is intrinsically tied back to the self and importantly, the realization of the authentic self through the very act of migration. In other words, the motivation for escape is treated almost as a given through structural transformations, which denies the possibility of deeper symbolic trends among analyses. These are the issues that this book seeks to address.

Further displaced in these policy discussions are the collective imagination and valuation of places with high environmental and cultural amenity—in particular, the distinction between city and country/beach, which acts as the mediator for urban escapism. In this present work, the importance of place is a focal point. The narratives that construct the locales discussed below provide the symbolic value that either acts mundanely or degradingly on the self, or promotes a certain authenticity. Conceptually and methodologically, this project is aligned closely with Smith's (1999) Durkheimian-inspired "Elementary Forms of Place." I will elaborate on this further later. Importantly, this theoretical logic acts to provide that holistic approach to amenity-led migration missed in those policy discussions mentioned above, but also promotes an appropriate alternative to spatial theories such as the Urry (1992; 1995) "gaze" theorem, which proliferates in empirical and theoretical research.

In particular, Smith's (1999) logic allows room for the cultural imagination to impact upon the behavior of individuals in greater detail than what Urry's (1990) gaze theorem allows. It should be noted that within the discussions below, the notions of the latter are not entirely dismissed as irrelevant. Indeed, as will be shown, there is conceptual value in the way Macnaughten and Urry (1998) illustrate the significance of the authentic in place. However, Urry's (1992) persistence with the Foucaldian-inspired tourist gaze rhetoric denies access to broader cultural codes and narratives that are deeply embedded, as will be shown, in place value. The romantic "gaze," for instance, is founded upon the precepts and perceptions of the "upper middle classes" (Urry 1995, 44), producing a set of criteria that defines natural landscape and, importantly, how it is to be enjoyed. These theories inevitably tie nature-based activities to class boundaries where bourgeois tendencies have precedence. Yet those who negotiate with the natural world do so heterogeneously. Activities that perhaps could be considered historically as "unnatural" are enjoyed with the same underlying sentiment that guides more "natural" behaviors. For instance, consider the white-water rafter compared with the bird watcher or bush walker. In each instance, there is a connection between the individual and place that encourages different forms of "authentic" behavior according to subgroup norms, values, and themes. The subsequent cultural force of the place provokes changes in action; the difference between them is irrelevant. While Urry (1992) acknowledges that these supposed natural activities are constructed, he fails to note that there are different ways of enjoying nature that are not always met with complaint from more "dominant" discourses.

The main point of distinction between Smith's (1999) model and Urry's (1992) theorem is found in the focus of the latter upon the "eye" and visual consumption of landscape. For instance and in response to critics of the tourist gaze, Urry (1992, 185, italics added) argues the following:

> What is crucially important is that the systematicity of an "attraction" derives from different kinds of gazes, both upon various markers and upon the nucleus itself. *It is these different kinds of scopic regimes*, that incorporate different times and space, *that produce different tourist systems*. These can be organized around both built and supposedly "natural" environments. *The eye is central to such systems. The visual might be disparaged, but its systematic power cannot be doubted.*

Intrinsic to this mode of analyzing place/space, then, is the organization of landscape around sight. Gazing upon sites, whether they are natural, built, or historical, provides the individual with "something distinctive to be gazed upon... set off from everyday life and experience" (Urry 1992, 173).

Yet, these notions fail quite mundanely to explain the deeper motivations for traveling to places we might consider "sacred," such as war memorials, sites of religious and national significance, and other iconic locales (see West 2008; Osbaldiston and Petray 2011). Universal themes, such as self-authenticity, the sacred, and indeed even the profane, are lost in what is a superficial analysis of place value. Thus while Urry (1992) persists with categorizing activities in relation to how place is organized around specific "gazes"—such as solitary engagement, collective enjoyment, brief two-minute camera "moments"—he neglects the myths and narratives that attract people to the place in the first instance. As we will see in examples shown throughout this book, landscape has a much more powerful influence on the individual than simple visual consumption. Lifestyles are transformed through objective surrounds. West (2008) illustrates further that this is also evident in tourism, where experiences can leave indelible impressions on individual's memories and cultural practices (see also Smith 1999).

The core of the Smith (1999) project relates to appreciating place by providing culture with a certain autonomy, distinct from concrete spatial practices (Urry 1995) and critical theory, which concentrates specifically on the mundane, leaving little room for understanding of places of high collective value (see Soja 1996, 2000; Harvey 1996, 2001; Zukin 1995). At the other end of the theoretical spectrum are those who critically engage with tourist places as sites of contrived or staged authenticity (MacCannell 1973; Baudrillard 1994; Ritzer 2010). In the case of Ritzer (2010) and Baudrillard (1994) especially, individuals become little more than pawns to the spectacular, seduced by the enchantment of the fantasy world presented by places such as Las Vegas. Certainly as we shall see later in chapter 2, these mammoth objects of materialistic desire can at times be viewed with an air of cynicism and disgust by those with quasi-postmaterialist tendencies. Yet within these postmodernist theories and assumptions, the consumer of landscape is treated as a dependent rather than an independent variable (Alexander and Smith 2001). Lost are the collective values and cultural wrangling that can at times serve to provoke disdain for places that evoke disgust.

While place and its associated attributes hold an important position in the theoretical and empirical reasoning of this book, it is the relationship of the locale to the individual that is more prominent. From here, we can begin to reveal more emphatically the motivations of those who escape city environs for the natural wonders of the regional world. (As mentioned earlier, this failure to adequately study motivation is one of the fundamental flaws of studies into the migratory phenomenon in general.) This book also distinguishes itself from the well-established school of thought of lifestyle migrant theorists Benson and O'Reilly (2009a; Benson 2011), who propose that the movement is based on a "reflexive habitus" (Sweetman 2003),

suggesting that amenity-led migration is "inevitable" in a late modernity, where life projects are embedded in cultural tastes. This is demonstrated for them specifically in the behavior of people post migration, which reflects choices once exhibited in the city:

> Migration enables individuals to begin to establish a way of living that they feel is preferable to life before migration. In this respect, their actions demonstrate that they reflect on their particular circumstances, acting to improve their lot in life; that they make choices demonstrates that, to a degree, lifestyle migration is an individualized action. However, while they stress that they are in the process of realizing their dreams, it is evident *that these remain informed by their lives before migration*, and in this respect, are not the break from the pasts they had previously envisaged. *They bring with them skills, expectations, and aspirations from their lives before migration.* Their lifestyle choices thus remain *mediated by their habitus*, and framed by their levels of symbolic capital. In other words, their relative symbolic capital (incorporating educational, cultural and social capital) *impacts on the decision to migrate and the destinations chosen*, *but also the life then led in the destination* (Benson and O'Reilly 2009b, 618, *italics added*).

There is some analytical and empirical power behind these sentiments. The manner in which some "lifestyle migrants" perform their urban escape reflects previous experiences in metropolitan living. This causes some to conceive of newer participants in the phenomenon to be "fake" and detrimental to the authenticity of the locale. However, this is just one population within the entirety of the movement. Dominant features, as this project aims to reveal, include a significant break in lifestyles from those found in previous lives in the city. Attributing lifestyle migration simply to the tastes of previous lives underestimates the power of the relationship of place to the self, or rather, underestimates cultural autonomy and the power of cultural imagination to transform the self and its associated practices. Participants have been able to show in the past a transformation in attitude, values, and expectations in their new residencies, albeit through much upheaval of ideas and behaviors (see Dowling 2004; Ragusa 2010a; Osbaldiston 2006a). From this perspective, Benson and O'Reilly (2009b) fail, similar to Urry (1992), to envisage more universal themes such as the *quest for the authentic* within their analyses.

Such wider appreciation of cultural values within movements similar to amenity-led migration is certainly the focus of other works (see Lindholm and Zúquete 2010; Parkins and Craig 2006; Vannini and Williams 2009a). However, these are often broad and focus on collective ideas or the influence of global forces in producing cultural rebellion. Lindholm and Zúquete (2010), for instance, propose that new movements of contemporary

modernity respond to the homogenizing influence of globalized capitalism (see also Parkins and Craig 2006). They write,

> The struggle against the evil system, despite overwhelming odds, and at the risk of isolation, mockery, or punishment, is a value in itself…No compromise is possible because, for the aurora movements, American-style neoliberal-capitalist globalization represents a dark power of indignity, disenchantment, homogenization, and debasement. It is not just flawed or mistaken, it is evil (Lindholm and Zúquete 2010, 155).

The utopian dream of social movements based on such a philosophy, is as shown, a guiding principle only. Realistically, the rebellion against the hegemonic influences of global forces is unwinnable. Yet, for Lindholm and Zúquete (2010), it is the spirit of rebellion against a driving inauthentic force that is capitalism, which is highly prized. Thus, it is through collective action, or rather reaction, that members of these groups experience "authenticity, diversity, solidarity and humanity that they feel are denied to them in ordinary life," even if their goals are unrealistic and unattainable (Lindholm and Zúquete 2010, 161). Or in Durkheimian-type logic, ritualistic encounters enable the reenchantment of life through collective processes.

Similarly, Parkins and Craig (2006; see also Honoré 2004) contend that slow movements, such as slow food, emerge as global responses to pressures from elsewhere. These "glocal" responses form through the transformation of mundane practices. This everyday is renegotiated within paradigms of "care," "attention," and "mindfulness," where behaviors such as food consumption adopt more meaningful purposes (Parkins and Craig 2006, 4). Slow living has emerged through civil/political narratives that take into account complex global outlooks on issues of social, environmental, and political justice. Social action in the everyday can have "creative and ethical potential," which the slow movement embraces through transformation in action, consumption, and production (Parkins and Craig 2006, 7). These notions are reminiscent of calls from Soper, Ryle, and Thomas (2009) to consume differently, as a form of "alternative hedonism," in order not only to recapture activities that provide pleasure (such as cycling or walking), but also to provide an opportunity for a sustainable future.

These positions are helpful in understanding the inception of "slowness" into the vernacular of Western culture. Similar to the manner in which amenity-rich locales are protected from profane influences through policy instruments and planning controls, communities rebel against the "evil" forces of capitalism through social movements and changing mundane practices in order to recapture a sense of authenticity. However, what these culturally sensitive approaches lack is a discussion of the underlying narratives

and theoretical pathways that promote a collective valuation of authenticity and the sacred self in the first instance. In other words, what is it that people see as being "profaned" through these intrusive forces and how does that reflect in their behavior? Questions such as these are vital to any discussion of amenity-led migration. In particular, the city, like global capitalism for Lindholm and Zúquete (2010), is perceived to damage the sacred authentic self, causing the individual to seek out sacred places that provide an objective surround that promotes self-actualizing behavior. In this book, I seek to reveal the meaningful cultural codes that do not just underpin amenity-led migration, but also traverse the spectrum of authenticity-seeking behavior in late-/postmodern societies.

A Question of Labels

Before laying down the theoretical foundation from which this analysis will be built, I wish first to clarify a rather mundane issue but one that has conceptual importance for this book, this being the name of the phenomenon in question. . What Lindholm and Zúquete (2010) make clear is that throughout contemporary Western culture, there is a continued attempt to remove what is considered profane from those attributes of high value. Freedom, authenticity, community, and collective autonomy are all objects threatened by global and other detrimental forces that plague everyday life. In slow food for instance, the reaction against the fast-food giants is intended to protect and enhance local food cultures and the authentic ethnic identities they represent. Unquestionably, a binary is at play here. Good versus evil, sacred versus profane, or authentic versus inauthentic—these distinctions are missed somewhat by other researchers. My contention is that in amenity-led migration, this binary is also clearly evident in practice. In particular, the city is becoming increasingly profane, in the Durkheimian sense of the word. It threatens the moral fabric of individual well-being to the point that a type of secular ritualistic avoidance strategy is employed to escape it. Of course, hinged on this is the sacralization of places in the country, which become an antidote to the evils of the metropolitan lifestyle.

The play between the city and country is therefore based on hot or affective symbolic communication and negotiation. In some cases, participants in the movement are inclined to discuss their migration in quasi-transcendental manners (see Locke 2006; Dowling 2004). The soul is at stake, or something like it. Yet, most are less inclined to such dramatic language. However, it is clear that the decision to migrate is often connected to deeper emotional thoughts rather than being viewed simply as a lifestyle project found in late modernity (Benson and O'Reilly 2009b). Recognizing this, Australian demographers Burnley and Murphy (2004) have labeled

amenity-led migration as *Seachange*. Derived from a successful television drama of the same name, which embraced the term from Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, Seachange denotes not simply a migration to locations outside the city, but also a deeper transformative process within the individual. The metaphorical term suggests a "fundamental change" of experience, lifestyle, and cultural/vocational pursuits that is achieved through a transition in scenery (Burnley and Murphy 2004, 3).

Within international and Australian academic and public debates, the term is misrepresented often as simply meaning a shift toward coastlines. For this reason, there has been a growth in alternative terms, specifically within Australia, that signify a push toward specific parts of the country, such as Greenchange (movement into the lush countryside), Treechange (movement into the rural/regional country areas), Hillchange (movement into the hills), and T-Change (movement into the small island state of Tasmania). However, the term "Seachange" is derived not from locations of interest, but from Shakespearean language in *The Tempest*:

> Full fathom five thy father lies. Of his bones are coral made; Those are pearly that were in his eyes; Nothing of him doth fade, But doth suffer a Sea-Change, Into something rich and strange (cited in Dowling 2004, 15).

The theme here reflects a deeper and "rich" transformation that delivers the subject into something new, something "strange." As will be shown in the later empirical chapters, the places sought after in this phenomenon are those distinct from or "unfamiliar" to the city. Although there are certainly traces of a reflexive spirit in the decision making of individuals within the movement, which at times serves to divert disaster (see Moss 2006a; Ragusa 2010a, 2010b; Osbaldiston 2006a), it is the adventurous and subjective transformative power held within Seachange that provokes participation. These notions as Burnley and Murphy (2004, 3) suggest are not coast specific, but spread across the most of the movement's population. For these reasons, I contend, the label "Seachange," not simply amenity migration with its utilitarian notions or lifestyle migration, which reflects a more general movement specifically of middle-class peoples, is entirely useful both in its functional and its aesthetic capabilities for discussion here.

A Strong Cultural Sociological Approach to Seachange: Place and the Self

The relatively recent return of the Durkheimian school back to the agenda of sociology has sparked significant debate. In particular, the new American-led strong program of cultural sociology from Yale's Alexander and Smith

(2001) has created a steady flow of discussion and criticism (Alexander and Smith 2001, 2010; Alexander 2005a; Alexander and Reed 2009; Emirbayer 2004; McLennan 2004, 2005) alongside a more general focus on not just the French master but also on his students (see Riley, Daynes, and Isnart 2009; Riley 2010). In particular, Alexander and Smith's (2001) somewhat pointed discussion of other contributions to the sociology of culture as "weak" has sparked some response from progenitors of certain strands of the discipline (see for instance Gartman (2007) as an example in relation to Bourdieu). Furthermore, the direction and use of Durkheim's own work within the broader cultural sociological field of Alexander himself has arguably resulted in alternative explorations of the French scholar by authors such as Lemert (2006), who seems to wish to reclaim the "ghost" of Durkheim, lost to the world of cultural studies.

Such debates are important to have. Here, however, there is not nearly enough space to discuss them all. Rather, in this book I espouse an application of the strong program, in which culture is illustrated as an autonomous driving force that creates lifestyle pursuits such as Seachange through an ongoing negotiation and contestation of codes and binaries. Specifically, the cultural field here can be examined through narrative theory. Places of high amenity and the processes that inject them with high collective value are explored in this book as underpinned by texts or narratives. Such a methodological approach (namely narrative or genre theory) is for Alexander and Smith (2001) a potential step forward to distinguish Cultural Sociology from other "weaker" programs. It is worth citing them at length here:

> The appeal of this theory lies partially in its affinity for a *textual understanding of social life*. The emphasis on teleology carries with it some of the interpretive power of the classical hermeneutic model. This impulse towards reading culture as a text is complemented, in such narrative work, by an interest in *developing formal models that can be applied across different comparative and historical cases*. In other words, narrative forms such as the morality play or melodrama, tragedy and comedy can be understood as "types" that carry with them particular implications for social life. The morality play, for example, does not seem to be conducive to compromise (Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 1994). Tragedy can give rise to fatalism (Jacobs 1996) and withdrawal from civic engagement, but it can also promote moral responsibility (Alexander forthcoming, Eyerman forthcoming). Comedy and romance, by contrast, generate optimism and social inclusion (Jacobs and Smith 1997, Smith 1994). Irony provides a potent tool for the critique of authority and reflexivity about dominant cultural codes, opening space for difference and cultural innovation (Jacobs and Smith 1997, Smith 1996) (Alexander and Smith 2001, 146, *italics added*).

One of the more significant applications of such a reading of culture is delivered in Smith's (2008) *Punishment and Culture*. Here, reanalysis of collective punishment, where the dominant perspective of the Foucaldian tradition has prevailed (mainly the *Discipline and Punish*–inspired tradition in criminology and the sociology of deviance) for many years, is challenged through a perspective that promotes the cultural terrain as a powerbroker in transforming ideas on retribution, justice, and crime. Not only does Smith (2008) achieve this, but he also in turn displays some of the follies that are present in "weak" appraisals of institutional punishment.

In this book, however, and as indicated earlier, the emphasis on place as a fundamental concept for investigation in Seachange calls for one of Smith's (1999) lesser-known works, which combines the work of literary critic Northrop Frye (1957, 1976) with the Durkheimian tradition to produce "The Elementary Forms of Place" model. As suggested in the above quote from Alexander and Smith (2001), this typology is based on reading culture as a text that can in turn be used for application across historical or comparative cases. We can see an illustration of this in Smith's (1999) own exploration of *Place de la Bastille*, which he argues has developed historically through a number of cultural paradigms, each distinct from the other. Specifically, the locale has been seen to traverse from sacred value to the profane and then to two other categories that Smith (1999) invents for his four-pronged model, the liminal and the mundane.

Despite its distinctiveness from competing paradigms (see earlier discussions in this chapter), this model has some similarities with existing place theories. In particular, the now much-maligned humanist geographies of Relph (1976), Buttimer (1993) and Tuan (1976) are comparatively similar in purpose to Smith's (1999) piece. These once-popular contributions to human geography attempt to ground cultural perceptions of place with terms such as "place-attachment," "place-rootedness," and effective "placelessness." The essential argument that binds them together is the notion that values within places can bind themselves to individuals, creating strong ties. Place can define identity, promote authenticity, and allow for strong communities. Modernity, however, creates the potential for these ties to be severed as increased mobility uproots and continual commericialization of locales rips them from the individual's sense of place. This process does much then to remove a collective feeling of community, instead leaving us to live individualized lives. To a certain extent, these ideas are well illustrated in the motivations for Seachangers (see Ragusa 2010a; Dowling 2004; Osbaldiston 2006b). Relph's (1976) assessment of authentic places versus placelessness is significant in light of the degrading influence the metropolis has on individuals seeking to *seachange*. However, the flaw in the logic of the humanist geographers lay within their ethically and morally charged arguments.

Unlike Smith (1999), they viewed culture homogeneously, despite their acknowledgement of subgroup deviation. In particular, their views on the destructive influence of commercialization reflect a biased value perception of what is authentic to society, rather than acknowledging that authenticity is culturally constructed. These normative assumptions and articulations are essential to those who dismiss humanist geographers in contemporary work (McIntyre, Williams, and McHugh 2006).

With this in mind though, the humanist tradition does attempt to connect culture with a deeper symbolism that is embedded in the individual psyche. Smith's (1999) "Forms of Place" model follows this notion in a value-neutral manner, unlike the humanist geographers. Using the "spirit of Goffman and Giddens" in conjunction with the Durkheimian view, Smith argues that places are "settings for interaction which are, in turn, reproduced by action itself" (1999, 14). In other words, the cultural texts or themes that surround a locale also mitigate the action or behavior of social actors. Like the myths that underpin religious ritual for Durkheim, the narratives that sustain an area are replenished or sustained through this activity:

> The action/setting dialectic can be understood as mediated by overarching, place identifying cultural structures—treated in this paper as quasi-religious myths and narratives—which inform the actions of ego in contexts of both single and double contingency. That is to say interpersonal actions are attuned by the symbolic meanings attached to a locale, and, indeed that ego's actions within a place will be influenced by myths and narratives of the locale even in the absence of alter (Smith 1999, 15).

While agency is vital in the analysis of place behavior, it is crucial also to recall the cultural codes/narratives that determine the characteristics of certain spaces. However, these sustaining codes are not homogeneous across collective society nor are they fixed (Smith 1999, 16). As Smith (1999) demonstrates in his historical discussion of *Place de la Bastille*, meaning and its subsequent social action are transformed according to different paradigm shifts. At one moment in time, a place may project a sacred aura invoking pilgrimage and ritual encounter while at another it may signify disgust or absurdity. The shores of Gallipoli, for instance, were transformed from a rather mundane or even unknown setting through the horrors and subsequent stories of World War I in the mind-set of the Australian. Now, ritual pilgrimage to the site where Australian identity was concretized (see Scates, 2006) is common practice (West 2008). Similar thoughts can be applied to the site of the Flight 93 memorial in Pennsylvania (Riley 2008). Both these examples illustrate the power of myth in promoting a place in value or

contempt but also demonstrate how a concentration on the "gaze" of tourists fails to identify deeper motivations.

As mentioned earlier, Smith (1999) proposes in his typology that there are four "forms of place" that can be used as a model to interrogate place both historically and in contemporary case-study examination. Two of these follow after Durkheim's (1995[1912]) treatment of religion, the sacred and the profane, which when used in conjunction with Frye's (1976) "themes of ascent" and "themes of descent" presents a conceptual framework for understanding the deep division between places of high value and those of moral disdain. In particular, and of conceptual importance for the Seachange debate, is the manner in which one promotes social solidarity, relationships, and meaning whereas the other provokes individualized experiences that disconnect the individual from true identities. To thicken the typology however, Smith (1999) further adds the liminal, which is inspired by Shields's (1992) investigation into marginal spaces. Here, places on the boundaries are represented that are neither sacred nor profane, but still appear outside the ordinary. Lastly, Smith (1999) answers criticism of Durkheim's (1995[1912]) conceptualization[1] of the profane by introducing the concept of the mundane place. Here, sites of no significance that are the "everyday" are disentangled from the profane category, allowing the latter to be fully developed. Each of these forms has distinct properties that differ from the other and that I will introduce briefly now.

The Sacred Place

In the flows of everyday places, there are some locales that provide alternative experiences from the ordinary. They inspire and provoke behavioral change, not because of some dominant power watching their movements through the aid of a CCTV, provoking panoptic-type responses, but rather through a culturally derived paradigm that causes one to alter micro bodily (our walking, gestures, speech, and breathing patterns, for instance) behavior. The themes surrounding these sacred places are for Smith (1999) likened to Frye's (1976) conception of the "theme of ascent" located often in romances such as Christian dogma, Greek mythology, or Latin texts. Important here is the distinction between "themes of ascent" and "themes of descent" discussed by Frye when he reflects upon literature throughout history as follows:

> The general theme of descent...was that of *growing confusion of identity and of restrictions on action*. There is a break in consciousness at the beginning, with analogies to falling asleep, followed by a descent to a lower world which is sometimes a world of cruelty and imprisonment...In the descent there is

> a *growing isolation and immobility*: charms and spells hold one motionless; human beings are turned into subhuman creatures, and *made more mechanical in behavior*; hero or heroine are trapped in labyrinths or prisons. The narrative themes and images of ascent are much the same in reverse, and the chief conceptions are those of *escape, remembrance, or discovery of one's real identity, growing freedom, and the breaking of enchantment*. Again there are two major narrative divisions: the ascent from a lower world and the ascent to a higher world. (1976, 129, *italics added*).

The central character of such stories, as Frye (1976, 129–130) explains, is placed under so much strain in the descended world that there emerges a "revolt of the mind, a recovered detachment," which sparks an ascendency into a higher world. Within this transition, themes such as escape, identity, collective festivals, and mercy are all key outcomes of a "theme of ascent." It is perhaps fitting that the play from which the term "Seachange" is derived, *The Tempest*, follows suit. The story follows the life of magician Prospero, rightful Duke of Milan, who is usurped by his brother, Antonio, and sent out to sea with his daughter, Miranda. The two land on an isolated island and learn how to survive through the assistance of Caliban, a half-human monster. Eventually, through his dark magic, Prospero raises a mighty tempest that forces a passing ship carrying Antonio ashore with King Alonso of Naples, the co-conspirator. What follows is a "theme of ascent" from the isolated and subhuman island to Propero's rightful place in Naples—or in other words, to his true identity. The crescendo of the play is Prospero's eventual release from imprisonment, encapsulated when he turns to the audience and cries, "But release me from my bands, with the help of your good hands" and finally, "Let your indulgence set me free." In other words, only through the applause of the crowd is the victim released from his bonds.

It is quite remarkable how entwined Frye's (1976) reading of romantic literature and Durkheim's (1995[1912]) own reading of sacred objects, places, and persons are. For Durkheim, sacred things promote not just respect and admiration, but encourage a "collective effervescence" or collective identity set aside from the profane world of individualized experience. Thus, as Hubert (1999[1905]) records, religious festivals are often opportunities for people to come together in collective reverie from the profane world. Yet the distinction between the profane and the mundane is never quite clear in the Durkheimian work, which we will explore briefly later. Despite this, the split between sacrality and profanity is evident in our social imaginations, as Smith (2008, 20–21) comments here:

> These imaginative templates enable societies to make sense of the world by organizing their environments and experiences using broader, extra-contextual symbolic patterns. Such cultural systems live symbiotically with

> the collective rituals that reproduce them, these being oriented around that deep gulf separating the sacred from the profane, the pure from the impure.

The duty of the cultural sociologist then is to uncover the semiotic codes that illustrate this split. Understanding how the sacred and profane operate within the concept of place is the proposed direction this book takes.

The position of Smith (1999) with regard to these theoretical paradigms is that both religious and secular narratives can establish a sacred site. Themes of patriotism, nationalism, romance, and identity underpin a variety of locales that are considered sacred across certain subgroups. Relph (1976) and others would be quick to remind us that small families may well have sacred sites that relate to their own past experiences and evoke nostalgia. However, at the larger collective level, locales of political struggle, collective upheaval, sacrifice, and at times death often attract the solemn assembling of people. Underpinning many of these is the notion of heroes who become immortalized through totem-like structures, such as Abraham Lincolm or Karl Marx (see Hubert 2009[1919]). Their stories, at times romanticized, serve to provide a place with a special aura provoking special behavior:

> Nearing the sacred place a penumbra of solemnity imposes itself of human behavior, inviting, for example, the hushed tones, the straightened back, silent footsteps, slow breathing which in turn invoke physiological changes and direct memory towards the sacred and away from the mundane, liminal and profane (Smith 1999, 19).

Riley's (2008) recent discussion of the Flight 93 crash site exemplifies this further. Not only do pilgrims to this important spot in contemporary American history transform behavior in accordance to the force of the narrative of sacrifice, they also engage in a ritual "gift giving" exercise where "religious medals and icons, firefighters" and emergency workers' uniforms, other items of clothing bearing messages of sympathy and identity with the passengers and crew, and many, many American flags are pinned to a memorial fence, erected in honor of the sacrifice of those who perished (Riley 2008, 11). Here, the symbolism of such exercises reflects a deeper cultural coding that distinguishes the Flight 93 memorial as sacred.

Places such as Gallipoli, the World Trade Center memorial, Golgotha, or graveyards are perhaps obvious examples of sacred sites. Their association with or similarity to Seachange places is not so clear. However, when utilizing Frye's (1976) theoretical contribution, the sacrality of country townships is exposed. In particular, the notions of isolation, loneliness, and subhuman/mechanical worlds that the hero or heroine breaks out of through a moment where a "revolt of the mind" takes place are indicative of the romantic

journey that the Seachanger endures. This will be evident throughout the discussion chapters. Through further use of Smith's (1999) typology, we can also see how narratives that promote a place in value also cause a transformation in macro behavior. The cultural force of sacred places is essential to understanding why certain locales are chosen in Seachange in particular narratives of natural beauty alongside communal and cultural heritage (Moss 2006b). While secular worship is perhaps a strong word to be using within this phenomenon, I contend here that the force of the "themes of ascent" embedded in natural form, cultural heritage, and communities produces a transformation in the consciousness and the lifestyles of individuals. For instance, as Dowling (2004) shows (see also Osbaldiston 2006a), participants in the movement often find themselves living more slowly or more meaningfully and more purposefully, and participate in activities that they would otherwise not participate in. Migrants into regional areas often end up in community groups, participating in informal social networks or even involving themselves with activist organizations at a local level. This transformative power is precisely what Seachangers seek out. The setting here produces an action, but is, as Smith (1999) contends, strengthened by the activities of those within the sacred sites. Within the Seachange phenomenon, we can, as will be shown later, see evidence of a highly secularized sacred place sustained through quasi-religious myths and narratives.

The Profane Place

Understanding the sacred place is complemented by the profane. Certainly in Seachange, the division between the city and country is well conceptualized in the sacred/profane dichotomy. While the threat of the liminal or mundane is also very real, it is the impact of the "profane" metropolis that causes the Seachanger to seek refuge or escape in the countryside. Once more employing Frye's (1976) theory of "descent" from romantic literature helps us to read the text of Seachange places as well as the phenomenon in general. He writes, for instance,

> At the beginning of a romance there is often a sharp descent in social status, from riches to poverty, from privilege to a struggle to survive, or even slavery... the structural core is the individual loss or confusion or break in the continuity of identity, and this has analogies to falling asleep and entering a dream world (Frye 1976, 104).

The descent here is not to be taken as literal in the Seachange drama. Rather, the Seachange drama shares the attributes of identity loss, strain on personal happiness, or as Frye (1976) reminds us later, the entering of a world that

is mechanical and isolated. When using this notion to describe the profane place, Smith (1999, 19) conceptualizes it thus:

> These narratives see human actions as polluting to the moral fabric of society and degrading to human spiritual values. Like sacred places, those which are profane are often founded upon narratives of violence... Profane places are more often—but not always—the locus of subsequent, equally ritualistic (to the sacred) attempts at destruction and obliteration... marked out by taboos and what Durkheim called "rituals of avoidance."

It is the latter "rituals of avoidance" or escape that we concentrate on here in this book. However, as Smith (1999) cites, there are numerous examples of profane places that have inspired intense hatred and moral outrage, which in turn cause spontaneous moments of ritual destruction. The Berlin Wall is perhaps a telling demonstration of this.

From Smith's (1999) perspective, we can begin to connect the impact of the profane place within the city/country dialectic in Seachange. However, as a note of theoretical interest, it is my contention that we must also deal with how the profane place appears to inspire ritual engagement, rather than avoidance. Here, we can begin to identify another pole of the sacred, the impure or "left" sacred identified by Durkheiman Hertz (1960[1909]), working within places. The sacred is divided here between two poles. One induces feelings of awe, inspiration, and collective effervescence. The alternative, the impure, produces responses of horror and dread. Both, however, are revered. The relationship of the two poles of sacrality is intimately connected in place and needs to be distinguished from the profane detailed by Smith (1999) here. In many settings, the two are present. For instance, the Flight 93 memorial presents a pure sacred aura through hero worship and patriotism as described above. However, beneath the layers of collective admiration for those who died is the deeply disturbing and somewhat horrific narrative of how they met their fate. It would be difficult to walk through the fields of that significant site without also conjuring images of how the plane crashed, slamming 40 innocent lives into the ground. Such visions no doubt invoke dread. This is also evident in Gallipoli where at times, symbolic landscapes provoke a feeling of exposure, horror, and depression (see Scates 2006; Osbaldiston and Petray 2011). However, like the impure left hand and pure right hand of primitive cultural form (Hertz 2009[1909]), the two serve to provoke a holistic sacral experience. The horrific manner in which the crew and passengers of Flight 93 died serves to strengthen their heroic status through narratives of courage.

In contrast, the profane serves only to degrade human values and produces feelings of disgust that are detrimental to the human condition. Often,

profane locales are symbols of a wider destruction. Throughout history, examples of profane places that have been laid to waste through ritualistic attempts to remove them from society include Pol Pot's home, murderers' houses, places of moral transgression such as brothels in conservative societies, and many of the Nazi death camps. In each of these areas, the symbolism reflects a wider "theme of descent" (Frye 1976). However, profane places can be less toxic that those listed, but still provoke avoidance or fleeing. If we view Seachange as a secular ritual in the worship of the individual, the city represents a profane place. It is essentially seen as detrimental to individual well-being and at times, social worth. While the metropolis is stark in contrast to those profane places listed above, the underlying coding through "themes of descent" (Frye 1976) is similar. Locating the city as the profane further enables a sacralization of the country. Or as Durkheim (1995[1912]) suggests, the profane drives the sacred and vice versa.

The Liminal Place

The distinction between the sacred and the profane has had a pronounced influence on important cultural theorists such as Levi-Strauss and Douglas, who have in turn inspired others. Within the subject of place, however, Smith (1999) is adamant that leaving the theoretical model within this binary fails to incorporate all conditions that a place can pass through culturally. Those spaces that sit on the margins of place and that are narrated by "themes of absurdity" are an example of this. Using theoretical logic from Shields's (1992) assessment of areas such as Niagara Falls, where "deviant behavior and sexuality" are well-established themes of the area, Smith (1999, 20) contends that within the cultural treatment of place, there lies another type outside of the categories of sacred and profane. This he terms the "liminal." Such areas sustain "quasi-carnivalesque, playful or grotesque forms of behavior" that cannot be located in the previous two categories. They stand above the everyday through themes of excessive consumption and taboo breaking through festival-type atmospheres. Such events are at times historically noted as sacred, but now represent something less enchanting. Important here are the thoughts of second-generation Durkheimian Bataille (1991[1949]), who posits that within modern culture, excess energy is spent through the temporal crossing of taboos, in particular the transgression of sexual norms. In the case of the liminal place, narratives that surround the space allow for the temporary removal of everyday morals and collective norms. As one enters the place, morality, it seems, is checked in at the door, only to be regained once the person reemerges into the everyday flows of life. It is true, however, that for some groups, particularly conservative groups, liminal places espoused by this typology could well be conceived of as profane. Indeed, if

we consider examples of the liminal to be sites for cultural practices such as horse-racing tracks, casinos, brothels, or strip clubs, we can see how the place itself encourages deviant behavior outside of everyday morality attracting the protesting eye of the conservative person/group.

This is an illustration of how the reading of the sacred, profane, liminal, and mundane types are fractured across different social groups. However, it is clear that dominant perspective of areas such as Las Vegas revolve around themes of excessive expenditure of not just money, but also time. Furthermore, added pop cultural lines such as "What goes on in Vegas, stays in Vegas" suggest that behavior within the confines of the city are essentially morally unacceptable in an everyday setting. Time itself, as Hubert (1999[1905]) discusses in his exploration of sacred time, is cut out of normality by themes of entry and exit. In a similar fashion, one could argue that Saint Patrick's Day, once considered sacred, has now become a festival of the ludic where excessive behavior is normalized, suggesting that there are indeed liminal times.

Within Seachange, the threat of the liminalization of place is great enough to warrant concern from policymakers and advisers (Gurren, Squires, and Blakely 2006). In the Queensland coastal city of the Gold Coast, for instance, the annual event known as "schoolies week" (where graduating students from high schools across Australia congregate for fun and frivolity) transforms the location into one giant party. Media presence is strong, presenting images and stories of drunken teenagers, underaged sex, and drug consumption to the general public, who every year debate the future of the event. Police have a part to play in this via a risk/danger amplification that exacerbates the ludic atmosphere. Similar incidents occur during national holidays such as Australia Day, where the sacral aura of nationalism/patriotism is shadowed by the ever-present absurdity of crude drunken behavior. Across the Spanish coastline, similar notions plague other, once quite tranquil locales such as Costa Del Sol, where migration has transformed towns and villages into a chaotic urbanity that encourages carnivalesque type attitudes and behaviors (Diaz-Orueta 2004). Once these areas sink into the liminal, even if temporarily, those "themes of ascent" (Frye 1976) that promote unity, identity, and meaning (or authenticities even) are lost to themes of absurdity and transgression. The diminishing of value in these areas, even if temporary, illustrates to us how the identity and cultural perception of place are not fixed but can shift according to different narratives. As mentioned earlier, at one moment the place may hold sacred value, yet as events occur and narratives interact with place, it transforms into a liminal setting. In the phenomenon of Seachange, the avoidance of this is crucial to its future success not only as a collective movement but also for the individuals within it.

The Mundane Place

The sacred, the profane, and the liminal all share a common element: they are extraordinary. Like Simmel's (1997[1910]) notion of the adventure, these places appear as islands amid the oceans of the everyday. Those who step into the sacred, for instance, are confronted with those symbols that have a power to transform their own bodily and mental behavior. Similarly, the profane induces fleeing, escapism, and, at times, destruction. Yet, outside these extraordinary areas lie the constant and ordinary. For Smith (1999), these represent what he terms the "mundane," or the normal day-to-day spaces that are viewed with little collective thought or valuation. Unlike Durkheim (1995[1912]), these spaces are conceived of as separate or distinct from the profane, which actively degrades human values. The mundane represents those spaces that require "little conscious reflexivity on the part of the individual as to symbolically appropriate forms of action" (Smith 1999, 21). For this reason, the mundane par excellence for Smith (1999) is the city, where infrastructure, symbols, and signs induce an everyday procession of social activities. Zukin (2010) and others are integral here to understanding how the design of cities encourages normality through a symbolic force that disables deviance.

However, it should be noted that describing mundane places in this manner does not mean that they have little or no cultural significance. Indeed this is not Smith's (1999) argument at all. Mundane spaces may well require conscious effort to navigate through, alter behavior, and negotiate the mazes of infrastructures and diverse material cultures. This is clearly the case in shopping malls, where food courts, entertainment, shop windows, and other visual/audio consumption encourage certain types of activity. However, despite the cultural significance of these places and their influence in everyday social action, they require "less human investment than the extraordinary" (Smith 1999, 22). The distinctiveness between the war memorial and the shopping center is obvious. The former promotes a collectively established, ritualized-type behavior, whereas the latter can conceivably be seen as an everyday space, promoting little more than consumption and sociality. In the Seachange discourse analyzed in this chapter, the tension between the mundane and the sacred is also very evident. The constant nourishment of narratives that serve to sacralize Seachange locations prevents them from descending into the everyday. Without such narratives, the black hole that is the mundane drags them into nothingness, or perhaps as Relph (1976) contends, placelessness. Areas in Seachange in particular lose their distinctiveness from their metropolitan counterparts and take a step toward "themes of descent" (Frye 1976) and the eventual profane attributes that cause disturbance among Seachangers. Thus the mundane is technically defined as the default (see figure 1.1).

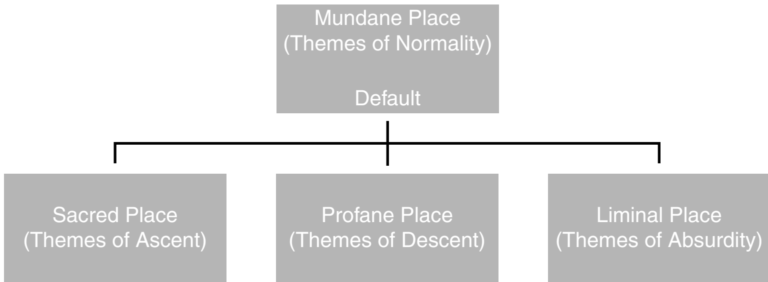

Figure 1.1 The Elementary Forms of Place (adapted from Smith 1999)

Some Notes on Method and the Book

The contention of this book is that through the *Forms of Place* model proposed by Smith (1999) we can conceptualize the Seachange movement through a lens that promotes rather than denies cultural autonomy. The four types of place are evident throughout the experience and negotiation of place across the phenomenon, as will be illustrated later. The two most significant forms are the sacred and the profane. Throughout the book, it will become apparent that through the city/country narrative, a well-established and reinforced binary between the two resembles Smith's (1999) distinction between the sacred and the profane. The maintenance of this opposition is increasingly important for the future of Seachange. Once symbolic lines are crossed, or in other words, once the city enters the country sphere, these lines of separation are lost and the binary breaks down. From here, the once-lauded regional place descends into paths of alternative values. In some cases this includes the liminal, or in others, a removal of value completely, with areas becoming sites of the ordinary or mundane place.

Such a conceptual pathway allows, I argue, for an understanding of how places in general descend or ascend in value. In particular, as Smith (1999) makes apparent in his empirical analysis of *Place de la Bastille*, narratives that surround the place itself impact upon the place's value. Furthermore, it is apparent that a simple test of the power of a place, importantly the sacred, is illustrated when individuals choose to transgress boundaries of behavior. Responses from the general community as well as from the institutions that enable legal responses from them toward those who desecrate sacred places are often highly emotive and generally harsh. Within the Seachange drama, we could argue that a similar response is evident in community outrage over "property" graffiti that disturbs the aesthetic peace found in spectacular landscape and a township's authenticity. The sacred binary begins to loosen, and towns fall in value for those seekers of serenity.

With the theoretical model discussed, we can now move on to the heart of the book, the empirical investigation. But before doing so, it is important to make a few comments on methods. As is the case in cultural sociology, the important work is the understanding of semiotic codes and discourses that feed phenomena such as Seachange. However, as Alexander (1998, 31) contends,

> [S]emiotics can never be enough. By definition it abstracts from the social world, taking organized symbolic sets as psychologically unmotivated and as socially uncaused. By contrast, for the purposes of cultural sociology, semiotic codes must be tied into both social and psychological environments and into action itself.

Thus, unlike the Goffman-inspired projects (1971) where meaning is discovered through the interaction, the themes revealed through an analysis of culture must be connected to a wider or broader social setting. Such is the gap between microsociological analysis and the direction of a strong cultural sociology (Alexander and Smith 2005, 8).

In the pages that follow, the semiotic codes of Seachange are revealed through discourses that surround selected Seachange areas such as the Town of Canmore and the Town of Golden in Canada, the Town of Jackson in Wyoming, Noosa in Queensland and Clarence Valley in New South Wales in Australia, and various coastal towns in the United Kingdom. Some of the areas used as examples are large, now-vibrant commercial centers, others still small village-type towns where population growth has caused concern for locals and Seachangers themselves. For each town mentioned, there is also an entry in the appendix that will help orient the reader to the landscape and histories of the places. Within the chapters, however, these places tell a story that adds to the Seachange drama. Whether it is action enacted through policy, marketing of Seachange through local councils, advisory columns and opinions pieces in local and statewide news sources, or narratives from the actual participants themselves, each piece of information allows us to peek in and capture the spirit of the phenomenon.

Thus, the data brought to the fore will allow for the "thick description" of the social setting called for by Geertz (1973), which is of importance to the cultural sociology paradigm. Themes that emerge are not dissimilar to those explored by other researchers such as Moss (2006b), Benson and O'Reilly (2009b), and Ragusa (2010a). These include the pull of sacred nature and landscape, community values, and cultural heritage. Yet, the book will also explore those narratives that suggest that these things are threatened by increasing numbers of urban escapees, environmental changes, and other social issues akin to the city. Explaining or exposing this is important to

understand the cultural complexity of Seachange. However, as Alexander (1998) notes above, we need to move beyond simple explanations that render data meaningless. Throughout the book then, I provide sprinklings of theoretical insight from not only Smith (1999) above, but also other key theorists such as Urry, Simmel, Pahl, Ingold, and the "other" Durkheimians. At the conclusion of the work, I explore the entire phenomenon in relation to the concept of self-authenticity, which, as explained earlier, is a wider principle founded in our contemporary culture that drives movements such as slow food and, in this case, amenity-led migration. Like Smith's (2008) argument on the Foucaldian take on the self, my argument will propose an alternative perspective to self-authenticity embedded in Simmelian notions of self-actualization or cultivation and Durkheim's and Mauss's conceptualization of the soul. Most important here is the distinction in this work from that of Foucaldian-inspired Nikolas Rose (1996), where the contemporary obsession with self-help is established through years of psychological theory and advancement within institutional settings. The basic premise here is, as Simmel (1997[1912]) acknowledges in his essays on modern culture, that Seachange is hinged on a practice of engaging with the objective world for the cultivation of the subjective. What is authentic in the former significantly impacts on the authenticity of the latter. The sacred place then becomes an important player in the promotion of the self in late-/postmodern culture.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROMISES OF THE NATURAL WORLD: ESCAPING THE CITY FOR PRISTINE LANDSCAPES

To begin this exploration of Seachange, we examine the impact of the natural world on amenity-rich places. Considered the backbone of the decision to escape the city (Moss 2006b; Benson and O'Reilly 2009; McIntyre, Williams, and McHugh 2006), nature, landscape and scenery promote a certain aesthetic that sets a place apart from the metropolis. They are essential features that attract those tired of the everyday and even deleterious. The ability to embrace the visually stunning landscape provokes a *seachange* in thoughts, action, and subjective well-being. Yet nature provides more than "eye candy." The sounds of an environment free of the everyday bustle of the city are equally important. Furthermore, the perceived cleanliness of an untouched environment where the human hand has had little influence lies juxtaposed symbolically against a metropolis that is dirty and polluted and whose environs signify the detrimental role of technological progress. Of course, this dichotomy is not new, as Williams (1973) and MacNaughten and Urry (1998) both show. In the past, life in industrialized cities produced a deep affection for the country and its simplicity, charm, and, most importantly, cleanliness. Subsequent bourgeois status seeking resulted in escapism from the dirty, disease-riddled, and at times immoral city. Entire regions such as the Lake District in the United Kingdom are historically embedded with such class rituals. Yet while Seachange could be conceived of as a sign of good taste, it cannot be merely reduced to a status-seeking exercise. In the quest for self-authenticity, the natural world plays a more important role than simply a reflection of class-based habitus

(see Benson and O'Reilly 2009b). Though it is clear that in the promotion of areas, certain types of people actually can lessen a place's value.

Within the Seachange discourse, nature is narrated through a wide variety of "themes of ascent" (Frye 1976). At times, the wider sociocultural constructions of landscape play a role. Alongside collectively disseminated views of scientific concern for environmental degradation (see Szerszynski 2005) that sacralizes nonhuman life, specific narratives that reflect national or mutual identity promote certain landscapes in value. These landscapes include the golden beaches of Australia, the snow-capped mountains of Canada, and the vast plains of the United States. While it could be argued that these broad cultural narratives serve to pull the natural world into an aura of sacrality, it is within Seachanger discourse that we can see environmental amenity accentuated through a cultural patterning that distinguishes it as untouched, pristine, and spectacular. Most importantly, it is the manner in which the natural world encourages a transformation of subjective life that enables us to see how it adds to the aura of a sacred place. However, this notion is based heavily on the notion of the profanation of the city. The binary codes that are at play in Seachange between the city and the natural world are clear in what follows below.

The Problem with the City: A Growing Disdain for a Profane Metropolis

What is it about the city that drives people away? What are the "themes of descent" (Frye 1976) that stigmatize the metropolis to the point that causes ritualistic-type attempts to avoid it? The answer to this question is the crux of what follows in this section. Essentially, the city is usually viewed as a mundane feature of everyday life as evident in Smith's (1999) own development of his typology. Durkheim's (1995[1912]) suggestion that the outside and ordinary world (the profane world) pushes individuals toward the sacred reflects this further. Tourism to exotic places, where one experiences distinct emotions from the everyday, suggests that Smith (1999) is right to conceptualize the city in this manner. Yet, within Seachange, the decision to engage with the sacred place is neither temporary nor merely an "adventure" (Simmel 1997[1910]) but a permanent escape. From that perspective and using Smith's (1999) *Forms of Place* model, Seachanging is not simply an example of being pulled out of the mundane, but that of a city descended in value to a level that promotes a ritual of avoidance.

Of course, the degradation of the city is enacted through the collective impressions of country landscape. The natural world, in its purity, serves as the backdrop for the city's decline. Kate Soper (2007) in her work on alternative hedonism, the pursuit of individualistic behavioral change embedded

in ecological concerns, provides us with some insight into how this dichotomy is further established in Seachange. She writes,

> People who live in the cities and suburbs, for example, *are largely denied the experience of total salience*; they are never enveloped in full darkness, nor offered a clear vision of the night sky. As pedestrians, they are constantly interrupted and halted by traffic lights and other obstacles, and assaulted by the noise and dust and stench of motorized vehicles... *there is little provision for shelter or rest* (Soper 2007, 221, *italics added*).

Soper's thoughts here are perhaps foreshadowed by Simmel's (1997[1903]) thesis about metropolitan life some one hundred years earlier. For the German, the city had become overobjectified with rushing manmade symbolism, rapid transition, and the exposure of the individual to unprecedented numbers of strangers. Simmel's last point appears frequently in Seachanger discourse, with many lamenting about the lack of community feeling in the city.

The belief that the city denies the experience of "pure" aestheticism is located deep in the narratives within Seachange. In a document from the Australian group *Live the Dream,* which advocates for urban escapism, the metropolis is juxtaposed against the country in colorfully contrasting language. In one example, authors seek to call their readers' attention to the degrading influences of the city. They propose that "city vistas" that are composed of "concrete, traffic and pollution" can be replaced by natural scenery within the country that is "isolated," "pure," and full of "grandeur" (East Gippsland 2009, par. 2). The concerns of the city, in particular overpopulation and congestion of humans and nonhumans alike, are what these types of statements are premised on. Creative adjectives such as "pure" and "isolated" used to describe the landscape of the countryside serves to promote an imagery that is not just distinct from the "concrete jungle" of the city, but also full of the spectacular and invigorating. The city, reflective of Frye's (1976) analysis of the subhuman world of descent in romance, is mechanical, bland, and lackluster. Within Seachange discourse, such colorful language is common.

The dichotomy between the two places is of most interest here. The city is described as not just bland (concrete) but also stressful (traffic) and dirty/unclean (pollution), which presupposes that the reader can easily draw upon past experiences to identify with their degrading influence. The notion that the countryside stands opposed to these is a long-standing cultural tradition (Williams 1973). Macnaughten and Urry (1998, 175) illustrate this by demonstrating how industrial towns within early modernity were "seen as thoroughly polluted, as unnaturally invading all the human offices." Within

Seachange this binary is further concretized through themes of profanity. This is exemplified in a statement made by a participant from Australia:

> But, I think for me I was *sick of the city*, and that it was *dirty and people are sort of always angry* and stuff like that you know. Yeah, and it was *a stressful place* and I wanted somewhere more *peaceful* (Osbaldiston 2006a, 49–50, *italics added*).

Like the *Live the Dream* article, this Seachanger utilizes a highly binarized schema to contrast the city to what they perceived in their new country locale. The pronouncement that the city is dirty is coupled with the contention that it also makes people angry and stressed. For this participant, the result is a strong need to escape to an area that does not have these environmental and social disadvantages.

However, the city is more than just uncolored scenery and polluted atmospheres. For many within the Seachange phenomenon, the metropolis impacts upon their values and psyches, forcing them into lifestyle choices they later consider inauthentic or profane. Often, city life is linked with materialism, individualism, and selfishness rather than compassion, community, and collegiality. Consider the following example from a Seachanger in Australia:

> I think I just got sick of the crowdedness of Sydney. I got sick of the traffic. I got sick of the fake lifestyle really, you know no community mindedness everybody is so, so solitary so, you know encapsulated in their own sort of space and just seem to be about just achieving money and not caring about the planet and stuff like that (Osbaldiston 2006a, 50).

In another similar story, a newspaper article exploring the foundations for Seachange cites one participant as becoming disgruntled with the "affluenza" virus that has infested city culture. Not only did these ex-city residents seek a more "relaxed lifestyle" and "meaningful life," they also found the city to be far too materialistic and focused on "making money" (Weekes 2010, par. 32). Such notions are not far from the mind-sets of those who propose that a focus on economic and material growth is more damaging than good (Schor 1998; Hamilton 2004).

However, in these two examples, the descent of the city is founded not just on its physical attributes but also on a broader metropolitan psyche. In the first instance, issues such as traffic and community mindedness reflect the paradigm discussed above. However, the lack of authentic sociability or community is believed to foster an individualism that encourages selfishness through consumerism and personal financial growth. This is then juxtaposed against a more caring attitude that takes into consideration the

sustainability question. In the second instance, similar notions are considered. The focus of the city for these participants is geared toward materialism. Simmel (1997[1903], 176) perhaps agrees with these sentiments when he describes the metropolis as the "seat of the money economy." The consequent social behavior of those within its boundaries is objective, rational, calculating, punctual, and flat. Simmel further suggests that one of the resulting traits is a blasé attitude combined with a social reserve or distrust for others.

An entire later chapter will be devoted to the problem of community mindedness. Here, I simply wish to expose the fundamental flaw of the city that pervades the Seachanger's thoughts promoting escape. If we look closely at what is discussed above, we can begin to see that urban/city life is viewed as inauthentic and opposed to some sense of self-authenticity that is not defined, but implicitly sought after in Seachange. The coding of the metropolitan culture as "fake" and of less "meaning," which is opposed to what is to be found in the regional locales, indicates that the participants conceptualize their migration with their subjective well-being in mind. To be more specific, it is the lack of authenticity within the city either environmentally, socially, or culturally that drives individuals to search for authentic locations. The profane pushes people toward the sacred, as Durkheim (1995[1912]) proposed. A further illustrative quotation exemplifies this further:

> [U]p here you can grow your own food, and you know the food you do purchase you know where it's coming from, you know where it's grown . . . *just for peace of mind, and just finding some peace and stillness in your life it has to be long term, it has to be a good thing I think* (Osbaldiston 2006c, *italics added*).

Tapping into the slow food culture, this participant seeks a subjective peace of mind that comes from being able to identify where her food comes from. However, it is more than just food here that drives the ambition to Seachange. It is the finding of something different, something unique, and most importantly, something unknown to city residents. Implicit in this quote is the idea that peace and stillness, keys to securing the well-being of the subjective self, can only be obtained through (for this person) a country lifestyle, which is slow, meaningful, and authentic. The magazine *Readers Digest* (2004) lends some empirical weight to this argument by suggesting, after interviewing over a thousand participants, that most Seachangers were indeed seeking after "radical change" motivated almost entirely by "an insatiable hunger for self-fulfillment" (*Readers Digest* 2004, par. 3). Interestingly, the report also indicates that in their preparations for making a seachange, many are willing to endure significant "sacrifices" for their journey. Research from this author in 2006 (Osbaldiston 2006a) also indicates that Seachangers take significant risks in their decision to leave the city.

However, the point of these illustrations is to demonstrate, as evident in Durkheimian thought, that the push of the profane city is equally and importantly matched by the pull of sacred nature and the promises of country life. Narratives that underpin the city are strengthened through the "themes of ascent" (Frye 1976) that serve to sacralize regional places. Duanne Elgin, charismatic American author of the book and subsequent phenomenon *Voluntary Simplicity* (1981), proposes that this push/pull binary is considered to be the foundation for not just Seachange but also for a range of simple/slow social movements. While the "pushes," such as pollution, materialism, blandness, and other degrading city aesthetics are strong, the "pulls toward this way of life" are for Elgin (2003, par. 5) "equally compelling." In the example discussed above, it is those narratives of stillness, peace, and tranquility promised in a country life that serve to act with the pushes of the city in motivating people to Seachange. The profane does not exist without the sacred, and vice versa.

Of course, it is not merely place value that motivates Seachange, though it is the predominant factor. The other issue contributing to the degradation of the metropolis is time: more specifically, clock time and the Taylorization of contemporary social lives. As lifestyles and the demands of labor begin to coalesce into one ongoing procession of day-to-day experience, time begins to be carved out in slots in a highly routinized and rationalized manner. In particular, time spent with children, families, friends, and/or partners becomes increasingly threatened by flexibility enhanced perhaps by the mobility of technology and persons (Hochschild 1997; Schor 1998; Hamilton 2004). Seachangers and those from the "lesser" movements such as Downshifting often discuss issues of a "time bind" in their experiences of the cities. For instance, a participant in a study conducted by Breakspear and Hamilton (2004, 10) discusses his former lifestyle as dominated by work with little time for "doing things that I wanted to do." In particular, this once career-minded person recounted that although he tried to avoid weekend work, he ended up spending at least "three out of four" weekends in a month at the office. As others like Schor (1998) have highlighted, that without these increased work hours, the ability to climb the corporate ladder is limited. The conundrum for city dwellers, proposed by the individual in Breakspear and Hamilton's (2004) study, is that as social life becomes increasingly colonized by what we could deem "profane" or "mundane" times, those moments that are of high value are squeezed and themselves calculated, rationalized.

Prolific time theorist Barbara Adam (1990, 113) comments on this situation in the following statement:

> In society where time is exchanged as a commodity, not merely time but life and work become divisible into a multiplicity of units. Working time becomes separated from break time and leisure time, sleeping time from

> waking, eating or working time, production time from that of the market, the patient's time from that of their doctors.

If we take but one instance, child rearing, we can see how the invention of terms such as "quality time" reflects this rationalized practice of time in everyday lifestyles (Hochschild 1997). In her significant empirical work into this "time," Hochschild exposes how quality moments with children are carved out of a day filled with work and other nonpaid labor. For example:

> Gwen and John Bell responded to their time bind at home by trying to value and protect "quality time." A *concept unknown to Gwen's ancestors, quality time has become a powerful symbol of the struggle against the growing pressures on time at home*. It reflects the extent to which modern parents feel the *flow of time running against them*. Many Americo families were fighting *hard to preserve outposts of quality time*, lest their relationships be stripped of meaningful time together. The premise behind quality time is that the *time we devote to relationships can somehow be separated from ordinary time*...Quality time holds out the hope that *scheduling intense periods of togetherness can compensate for an overall loss of time in such a way that a relationship will suffer no loss of quality* (Hochschild 1997, 50, *italics added*).

In order to compensate for the loss of normal time spent with loved ones, in this case children, individuals treat quality time as if it were a commodity, precious, cherished, and, most importantly, requiring protection. It becomes perhaps a contemporary secular version of a sacred time (Hubert 1999[1905]), carved out of normality or profanity, and treated with high value. Like the sacred festivals and ceremonies that adorn them imbue remembrance of heroes or cultural icons of the past (Hubert 2009[1919]), quality time enables the parent to ascend to his or her sacred identity of father or mother outside the mundane or profane workplace. Increasingly however, profane/mundane times influence the ability to be part of children's lives and control how often a parent engages with these special temporalities.

Of course, not all Seachangers (or Downshifters) feel the urge to migrate or simplify their lives based on a desire to spend more time with family. However, the escape clause that participants sign up for is partly to remove themselves from the stresses of this rationalized and pressured social life. Alongside the environmental conditions of the late-/postmodern metropolis therefore is a growing "time bind" that stresses and degrades the self both physically and emotionally. One Seachanger comments on the predicament of others in the corporate world (where she emerged from) thus:

> Just as workplaces start to retrench people and not replace them, people are being asked to do more and more and more in their work in their jobs. And

> often are asked to pick up the role of the person that has been retrenched but hasn't been replaced, so the work still needs to be done so it's spread around...I think that there is a lot of pressure for people to work long hours now. One of my friends works in a law firm and they were looking at putting beds in the office so they can sleep there, well that's not very healthy, finish work at 11 o'clock at night sleep for six hours and be back on deck the next morning (Osbaldiston 2006c).

The problem of overwork in the city is one that has been heavily researched by critics such as Schor (1993, 1998) and Hamilton (2004). Among the works that champion the simplification of life through Seachange or Downshifting, there is often pointed discussion of the social consequences of a culture obsessed with work (and consumption). It would appear that participants in these phenomena agree. In the case of Seachange, escaping to the countryside or coastline is fraught with danger and risk economically (Osbaldiston 2006b), but creates an opportunity to wind down the iron cage of rationalized time. Although "slow" in this book refers mainly to contemplation, meaningfulness, and authenticity (Parkins and Craig 2006), here I mean exclusively to escape clock time pressure. In some respects, this helps us to understand why the natural world is provided with such value. It operates on a different timescape, not answering to the demands of contemporary capitalism. Being immersed in such an environment, this book argues, allows one to feel at peace. Seachange places are slower and simpler and, most importantly, less cluttered. There are fewer traffic jams, less distance between destinations, fewer stressed-out individuals clambering for crowded trains and buses to get home, and, most importantly, less time spent at the office. Freeing oneself from these metropolitan problems allows one to engage with more meaningful activities, such as the "quality time" identified by Hochschild (1997). We could argue however, that as time becomes less routinized and Taylorized, carved-out moments like "quality time" become less needed as individuals find more free time to spend. Of course, I speak of these things in the value-neutral sense.

The Natural Sacred Forms: Identities in Untouched Paradises

While time is an important issue in the quest for more meaningful lives, the natural world imposes itself as perhaps the predominant value in Seachange. The narratives that promote the value of Seachange places often accentuate the pristine conditions that flora, fauna, and landscape are presently in. While the city languishes as a place of dirtiness and moral and aesthetic pollution, the natural world is clean and pure. It is seen as providing the

antidote for the ills of metropolitan life. However, environmental amenity is not merely about romantic scenery and long strolls on the beach. It is underpinned by cultural codes of collective and personal identity, adventure, time transformations, and nostalgia. Nature also provokes social action of differing sorts. From adrenaline-enhancing sports to meditative moments, those who enter these landscapes conduct themselves in ways that bring them in touch with self-fulfillment and authenticity. This latter point will be the subject of the next section. Here, however, I wish to expose the cultural construction of nature itself within the Seachange discourse. Often, the themes discussed in this section will be found readily in tourist brochures and marketing campaigns. However, the fundamental difference between tourism and Seachange lies in latter's permanency and its relatively profane outlook on the city. Tourists return; Seachangers try not to.

To illustrate the cultural codes characteristic of Seachange, I turn to three separate but similar areas: The Town of Golden (Canada), the Town of Jackson Hole (United States), and the Clarence Valley (Australia).[1] Each has been the target of urban escape both in tourism and Seachange. As a result, many once-quiet villages have begun marketing themselves to potential candidates for residential migration and not simply tourism. Relocation pamphlets coupled with illustrative examples of business success stories, community activities, and natural wonders are published in the ambitious hope that city dwellers will identify with them. Whether or not they are successful is not a concern for us here. Rather, if we examine them carefully, the cultural coding of places set up implicitly as opposed to a dull, staid, and dangerous metropolis provides us with an interesting insight into amenity-led migration.

One of the qualities attached to the natural world that drives this symbolic separation from the city is the tempo of landscape. The antithesis of a fast-paced instantaneously (Macnaughten and Urry 1998) driven culture, the countryside is slow, steady, and works according to natural rhythms. The following example from a Clarence Valley Council document demonstrates this further:

> The topography varies from *fertile river plains* and *gentle rolling hills* right through to rugged mountain ranges and almost *impenetrable rainforest*. It is traversed by whitewater rapids that carve through mountain gorges and vast, *lazy rivers that meander* through the plains (Clarence Valley Council 2006a, 2, *italics added*).

The visual imagery in this quotation exemplifies the distinction between country and city. Nature takes no thought for consumer capitalism's thirst for instant outcomes and speed (Macnaughten and Urry 1998; Virilio 1986).

Rather, the unrefined course of action that the country landscape takes is best described as "glacial," as Macnaughten and Urry (1998, 147) propose. It remains as if "left behind" in the wake of technological and economic advancement (see Virilio 1986). Clearly, a collective nostalgia, even if it is imagined nostalgia rather than from personal history (Davis 1979), is at play here. This is increasingly evident in other documents, which I will turn to later. In this small quote, however, nature is portrayed as not just slow, but mild on the senses. The usage of terms such "lazy," "meander," and "gentle" sit implicitly against the impact of the metropolis on the self. Scenery of this type promotes an aesthetic of peace and calmness well distinguished from the degrading influences of a time-stressed economy. Living amid it alters one's reflexive behavior and further, one's conscious thoughts on time. One Seachanger within Australia explains this in stark detail:

> [W]hen I lived in the city, *time was more linear in the city far more structured*...because of what the environment is...Here it...*it's almost like cosmos time* rather than linear time you can blend the two together. It's a lot freer cause the people have sort of wound down and it's not the same tempo as what it is in the city, *everyone's maniac in the cities compared to the tempo out here* (Osbaldiston 2006c, *italics added*).

Again, a binary coding of time emerges explicitly here. While the city is structured but at times chaotic, the country is even paced, glacial, and "cosmic." The role of the landscape is evident. Places that have little urban infrastructure, or at least the ambiance of a metropolitan/urban environment, instill a feeling of stillness or peace among their residents.

Collectively within Western culture, an untouched natural world is highly valued, but rarely found. The imagination of the Seachangers, however, for places where the human hand has had little influence feeds the ascension of landscape in value. This is illustrated in the below excerpt:

> Rarely will you find a place *where the land remains as wide open and untouched as it was when America's settlers first came* through. Where honest to goodness cowboys still rope cattle and ride the land as a way of life. Where *wildlife like moose and bison still roam freely*, and a tip of the hat and friendly hello hasn't been lost to fast-paced city living...Rarely will you find a place like Jackson Hole (Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce in Wyoming 2008, 1, *italics added*).

Implicit in this colorful quotation is a "collective nostalgia" (Davis 1979) that defines what American landscape used to be prior to colonization. In his theoretical outlook on the country, Baudrillard (1988, 6) considers the desert and the plains to be embedded in a national identity. Certainly in the

above quotation, this idea has some merit. The American identity is captured through the imagery of the landscape. Through this historical/nostalgic reference, the language again distinguishes the town from contemporary cities. Wide open plains untouched by the developers and planners who have transformed America's landscape promote an aura of authenticity. Nature here is genuine and left in its original state prior to the advancement of infrastructure and technology. This is evident in the comment that "moose and bison" roam around the plains "freely," suggesting that human intervention is minimal on their "natural" wanderings. The fauna of the area then is as much a part of the authentic America as are the plains, mountains, and canyons that serve as its backdrop.

The notion of an "authentic" collective identity that is embedded in place is further illustrated in work done by Robinson and Stark (2006, 120) on Canada. Natural environments and panoramas are important cultural symbols of collective identities and shape subsequent individual place attachment. In their discussion of Alberta's residents, they conclude,

> Ask Albertans to describe their province and the chances are they will conjure up images of immense blue skies, small prairie towns, fields of wind rippled grain, rolling foothills, forests without end and glacier capped mountain playgrounds... It does not matter that over 60% of Albertans now reside in metropolitan areas... they still consider themselves rooted in the country. All those distant vistas and all that open space helped to shape their character and values... (Robinson and Stark 2006, 120).

Identification with the landscape in such a manner imbues the places that exist within them with sacral-like value. As in the Jackson Hole example, however, animal life also has a role to play alongside natural form. Located in the state of British Columbia, neighbor to Alberta, the Town of Golden (within Kicking Horse County) actively promotes not only its spectacular scenery, but also human-animal relationships. The following excerpt from a community member within a publication discussing the area demonstrates this further:

> We are hunkered down in a safe spot. A black bear is foraging with her three cubs. One of them is acting like a naughty child, running off and making Mom fetch him back. A Pika, also called a Rock Rabbit, Coney, or Whistling Hare, calmly licks my pack. *I feel privileged to be here in Kicking Horse County*. We walk through a meadow of Alpine flowers, and stumble on Grizzly bear skidmarks in a small patch of spring snow. *I imagine the great beast having the time* of his life sledding down the slope on his huge paws. In August, *I share my taste for fresh huckleberries with the bears*. I camp overlooking alpine lakes and I watch shy mountain goats amble along the high mountain ledges (Town of Golden n.d., 9, *italics added*).

In this lengthy and descriptive example, the participant is seen to have an intimate relationship with the landscape and also animal life without the impeding influence of humans. Her subjective identity is connected to both facets of the place. The high esteem she subsequently has for the location is exemplified when she confesses to feeling "privileged to be here." Like Jackson, behind the front stage of this narrative is a Canadian identity that embraces certain topographies and animal life. Though metropolises do sit within impressive landscapes compared to other cities in the Western world (for instance Vancouver, which is situated on the shores of the Strait of Georgia and beneath the towering Mount Seymour and Pinecone national parks), places like Golden provide an opportunity to share the landscape with nonhumans who behave in a normal, authentic manner.

The narratives of wide-open spaces, untouched and pristine vistas, and protected or uninhabited countryside are evident in both examples above. The authentic Canada or America is identifiable through a lack of *contemporary* human development. This point is significant, because no matter how open a field may be, eventually, evidence of human activity will be found. However, old infrastructure and material cultures of yesteryear can actually enhance the aura of authenticity in an area (the subject of the next chapter). Despite this, the above illustrations of natural landscapes indicate that in their genuine state, they are uncorrupted. Within Australia's Clarence Valley, similar notions are coded into the manner in which scenery is presented to potential Seachangers. Three excerpts from publications discussing relocation to the area highlight this further:

> The countryside is breathtakingly beautiful. Whether you're exploring the *rugged peaks and gentle valleys* of the high country or cruising the wide open river plains, every turn in the road reveals something *new and spectacular* (Clarence Valley Council 2006b, 1, *italics added*).
>
> The beaches are punctuated with pristine rivers and streams, rugged headlands, shimmering lakes, some of the world's finest surf breaks—and many are protected by national parks and reserves. In fact, the Clarence Coast has the longed stretch of *uninhabited coastline* in New South Wales (Clarence Valley Coast, 2006a, 1, *italics added*).
>
> The Clarence Valley is blessed with vast areas of protected bushland and *untouched* wilderness of breathtaking beauty that promise *endless opportunities for relaxation, meditation and nature based pursuits* (Clarence Valley Council 2006c, 3, *italics added*).

The vivid imagery presented here once again taps into the unspoken but yet accepted belief that such aesthetics are missing in city life. Furthermore, the local landscape here is portrayed as "new" and "spectacular," indicating

that living amid the natural surrounds is adventurous. This is evident in the proclamation that the environment supplies "endless opportunities for relaxation, meditation and nature based pursuits." The sacred quality of these areas is exemplified in these comments. Individuals reflexively perform social actions that are in keeping with what is considered to be normal behavior in pristine environments. One of these is that of consuming the landscape with a quiet, meditative, and thoughtful demeanor.[2] Another is the narratives that surround beach culture. Both themes touch upon wider collective sentiments on Australia's landscapes.

The beach, for instance, according to Booth (2001, 3), is a highly valued commodity in Australian culture. Domestic tourism and adventure pursuits often engage closely with the coastline. Like war memorials or religious temples, the beach provokes direct transformation in the individual's psyche and subsequent behavior. Booth (2001, 3) lists these as feelings of casualness, informality, and content. But the beach also opens up the individual to the vast view of the ocean and the ability to laze away under the sun. It represents an aesthetic break away from the everyday world, or in the case of Seachange, from the profane city. In a similar fashion, the bush or countryside of Australia invokes feelings or visions in contrast to the major metropolitan centers. Not only can one find "endless opportunities for relaxation," but one can also find solitude, peace, and quiet. Such attributes were an attraction for many of the country's early colonial authors and artists (Dixon 1995). Subsequently, narratives like these are developed perhaps through generations of stories such as Lawson's "The Drover's Wife" or Patterson's "The Man from Snowy River," which imbue Australia's bush with a sacral-like value. Untamed, open, and mostly secluded, the countryside proves attractive for the potential escapee from urbanity. Contemporary storyteller Tim Winton, alongside colleague Woldendorp (1999, 17), demonstrates this in a recollection of landscapes:

> In landscape the world seemed properly open…Somehow I needed the openendedness of natural form in order to cultivate privacy. Part of this, of course, was the simple ability to get away from people, to get peace and quiet, to escape other people's requirements and demands and rules.

Often, seclusion amid significant natural beauty is portrayed as enhancing creativity and the cultivation of the soul. Winton's (1999) remarks, however, cut to the heart of Seachange motivation within the bush setting: the ability to escape the social and environmental demands of the metropolis and to embrace different forms of living amidst inspirational scenery. Seachangers are like contemporary Thoreaus seeking after their own slice of seclusion in Walden Ponds.

Spatial Pursuits amid Sacred Nature

While the natural world is presented as authentic, pristine, untouched, and gentle (which perhaps ignores also the powerful manner in which nature can destroy), the activities encouraged and promoted in the Seachange places follow a more ambiguous pathway. The recurring theme above that situates enjoyment of landscape in relatively quiet and meditative ways suggests there are collective narratives about the "proper" way of consuming natural forms (see Macnaughten and Urry 1998, 199). We could propose that walking, hiking, bird watching, and other styles of engaging with nonhumans (such as the hiker from Golden) are perceived to be authentic activities. Certainly, when reviewing the Transcendentalists such as Thoreau or Emerson, the wilderness is home to deity and it is through solitary romantic contemplation that one experiences a unity unfound elsewhere. In a more secular example, Simmel (1997[1895]) in his essay on alpine leisure severely criticizes the egoistic activities of alpine skiing for feeding the poverty of capitalist desire for entertainment and excitement. In his own private life, he sought for the "solitude of the Swiss mountains with his family so that he could devote himself to writing in peace" (Jazbinsek 2003, 112). That peace was destroyed however, when the city he fled pursued him.

These remonstrations on the proper or authentic negotiation of natural form reflect only specific subgroups (see the discussion in the previous chapter on Urry's [1995] romantic gaze theory for instance). The major dilemma of humanist geographers such as Relph (1976) is their inability to break free from these moralistic ways of condemning what they deem to be inappropriate action resulting in a loss of place. In this cultural sociological account, we must acknowledge the cultural construction within the discourse of authentic behavior, especially when different social groups negotiate authenticity through their own norms, narratives, and codes (Smith 1999). Macnaughten and Urry (1998, 199) for instance provide an interesting summation of those activities that are fought for vehemently in the public eye as "proper":

> Such spatial practices are not "natural" to the countryside. It is no more natural to go walking up a hillside just for the sake of it than it is to drive a speedboat along Lake Windermere or to go skiing in the Alps, even if such practices have hugely divergent physical effects. These are all distinct practices and entail specific spatialisation.

We cannot escape in our analysis that such notions are indeed true. However, as Durkheim (1995[1912]) proposed with religion, we must also accept that authentic constructions across subgroups are meaningful. My contention above has been that natural form constructs an emotional, reflexive response among those interacting with it. Those responses, however, are "fractured"

across divergent social characteristics, as Smith (1999) makes clear in his *Forms of Place* model. In other words, the impact or symbolic force of a sacred, profane, or liminal place on human behavior is defined by group membership, subgroup cultural norms, and in some cases socioeconomic status.[3]

Conceptually and theoretically, this is where the "new" Durkheimians break the mold of a singular collective consciousness, arguing instead that among our culture, specific codes such as sacred and profane are shared, but lived experience of them is not. As Smith (2005) has shown in another work, when groups with differing perspectives on what "sacrality" is emerge in the public sphere, a struggle for dominance and legitimacy occurs (see also Alexander 2006a). To a certain extent, similar conflicts occur within Seachange locales where concern for the ecological sustainability of an area causes some to condemn adventure-based pursuits that involve vehicles (such as four-wheeled drives or snowmobiles). However, in the promotion of areas, local towns appear to discuss nature in a Janus-faced manner.

In one clear example, the Clarence Valley is described as a place for two distinct forms of activity. On one side, the surrounds enable the subjective and quiet pursuits described earlier. On the other, the openness of the landscape and the spectacular surrounds allow subjects to pursue exciting and high-adrenaline activities. The following excerpts illustrate this further:

> Also hidden away in the Yuragir National Park is the village of Brooms Head...There's a Lake complete with jabirus, swans and scrumptious mud crabs; great fishing spots and a lookout where you can *"zen out" and watch the whales and dolphins go by* (Clarence Valley Council 2006d, 2, *italics added*).
>
> Throughout the area, enthusiastic locals take to the water to swim, ski, surf, sail or scuba dive. They buzz about on everything from jet skis and ski boats to luxury cruisers, yachts and houseboats...The broad calm waters of the Clarence River are naturally a focal point for the region's boaties...a *venue for high adrenaline aquatic competition* (Clarence Valley Council, 2006c, 1, *italics added*).

Two distinct styles of activity can be embraced in the Clarence region. The ability to "zen out" in meditative enjoyment as animal life frolics nearby seems at odds with the "high adrenaline aquatic" sports one can also engage with. However, using Smith's (1999) caveat of social group norms and narrative based perception, it would appear that the locale accommodates different styles of engagement. Reviewing documentation from the Town of Golden (2008) provides us with further insight into this diversification. For instance,

> For those with a taste for more *adventurous sports*, hang gliding, paragliding, and extreme mountain biking are very popular. There are several white water

> rafting companies that offer packages for rafting on the Kicking Horse River. Kayakers also enjoy the Kicking Horse River and *those looking for a slower pace* can float the Columbia River and view the fabulous Columbia River Wetlands. Numerous small lakes surround Golden providing boating and fishing opportunities (Town of Golden 2008, par. 3, *italics added*).

In other documents already cited above, the location is portrayed as a place that has "something for everybody" (Town of Golden n.d., 11). This includes whitewater rafting, golf, skiing, riding on snowmobiles, fishing, horse riding, sky diving, mountain biking, hiking, and animal tracking. While each activity is diverse from the other, my contention is that they are all underpinned by the common denominator of authenticity. Furthermore, they are all practices that are distinct from the lifestyles associated with the city.

Yet, these moments are not simply embedded in this separation. They connect to the individual's subjectivity in a unique and meaningful way. In the case of adventure sports, the adrenaline rush provides an experience that liberates the individual from the contours of normality. A local resident and tour guide in the Town of Golden (n.d., 7) illustrates this notion further here:

> The raft bucks and rears like a wild stallion. We're paddling as if our lives depend on it. I glance up at a small piece of blue sky above me; it seems to be holding the two rock faces of the canyon apart. A blast of icy water hits my face and brings my attention back to the Kicking Horse River—to the rapids and the rocks . . . We're in the lower canyon, the biggest section of the day, and the meek have risen to the challenge and moved to the lead paddlers' positions. They'll be back, they're hooked. I can see it in their eyes—the excitement, the adrenalin—there's nothing like it.

The "challenge" according to Simmel (1997[1910]) is exactly that which stands opposed to mainstream life. Risk-taking, as opposed to the dominant thoughts on "risk aversion" (see Beck 1992), is promoted here as attractive. Social psychologist Lyng (1990, 27) further suggests through his own empirical work with skydivers that adrenaline-based sports provide the individual with a chance to feel "a sense of oneness." He comments that "playing with boundaries in acts of transgression and transcendence" allows for a delving into subjective experience missing from ordinary life.[4] While those "slower" forms of thoughtful interaction with nature are considered by some to be the truly authentic way of behaving, risk-taking activities provide alternative experiences even if they are egoistic and individualistic (Simmel 1997[1895]). As Lindholm (2008) argues, adventure sports provide an opportunity to feel genuine emotions, otherwise blunted by the everyday. However, it is also clear from the above quotation that this individual,

despite being in the throes of high-adrenaline adventure, can still connect with natural form in thoughtful ways. In another example, a local base jumper shares that while aloft, he encountered an eagle that floated next to him and caused reflection on what the animal thinks of "me sharing his space" (Town of Golden n.d., 9). The individual here becomes at one with the natural landscape, while at the same time experiencing the excitement of this adventure sport. Thus, while we might consider hiking and bird watching as distinct in ambition from cliff jumping or white-water rafting, the underlying narrative of finding authenticity through engaging with nature is a cultural code that unites them.

Creative Pursuits amid Sacred Nature

The physical activities discussed above are not the only methods of engaging with natural surrounds in sacred landscapes. Within the Seachange phenomenon, and across narratives of country/coastal towns in general, the creativity is unshackled in the pursuit of slower and more meaningful forms of living.The natural world is central to the realization of this. Slower lifestyles, coupled with an atmosphere of cleanliness and seclusion, allow for the creative "fruits" of an individual to flourish. This romantic inclination served as the motivation for colonial artists in Australia to seek refuge among the bush (see Dixon 1995). Contemporary examples (see Tim Winton's above as well), including the following one from the Clarence Valley Council, suggest that this link between an individual's creativity and landscape is still present in modern Australia:

> The *landscape, climate and lifestyle of the Clarence also nurtures, nourishes and inspires a thriving creative community*. Through the Valley, from sleepy hinterland villages to colourful coastal meccas, the *visual and performing arts are celebrated* in galleries, cafes, exhibitions, festivals and shows right throughout the year (Clarence Valley Council 2009, 2, *italics added*).

Yet, the creative potential of the individual, once immersed in nature, is also evident in other places, as shown in this documentation from the Town of Jackson:

> The art community in Jackson Hole probably *spawned out of the sheer beauty surrounding the area. With the Teton's as a backdrop, the area attracts artists in every category* [*sic*] *of artistic work*. A number of art associations and a growing community of independent artists, Jackson Hole offers fine art and crafts for every taste (Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce n.d., par. 1, *italics added*).

Like the examples discussed in the previous two sections, there is an implicit understanding here that situates the metropolis as a site whose infrastructures and bland environments stifle creativity. In contrast, the vibrancy of life, human and nonhuman, in the countryside "nurtures, nourishes and inspires," creating an atmosphere of inventiveness. This leads, as the Jackson quotation suggests, to the formation of social networks and associations as well as creative communities that contribute to the sense of place. In the town of Devon in the United Kingdom's southwest, similar narratives are presented that connect the individual to other famous creative celebrities. The Devon County Council, for instance, calls for readers to "discover" their creative side in Devon by following in the footsteps of international artists such as "Agatha Christie or Arthur Conan Doyle," who have been influenced by "our inspirational landscapes" (Devon County Council, n.d., par. 3).

Participants within Seachange appear to further demonstrate the capacity of locales to provide the peace and calmness needed to become creative. For instance, one urban migrant who moved to Northern Queensland in Australia suggests that within her new surrounds the "relative relaxation" is "good for my creativity" (MacDonald 2008, par. 5), which is in turn good for her business. In another non-Seachange example, a professional artist whose family owns a second home outside the city encourages those seeking to enhance self-creativity to find peace and quiet similar to what he finds in his coastal retreat. Here, he proposes, is where he can "make room for creativity" by being among spectacular nature, which provides him landscapes for "walks, hikes, naps" (Baubata n.d., par. 10). By removing himself from the busy atmosphere of the city, he allows creativity to flourish.

Despite not being a Seachanger in the sense we are discussing in this book, this example illustrates again the power of being immersed in natural surrounds. Like the example of Tim Winton's above, the relative solitude of the country/beach motivates this individual to remove himself from the city. Yet, professionals are not the only ones inspired by natural beauty and its ability to reinvigorate creative identities. In a recent newspaper article on the town of Stanley in Tasmania's Northwest, one Seachanger recalls that her journey allowed her to take up creative pursuits. In addition to opening up a bed and breakfast (an often-trod path for the Seachanger—see Dowling 2004) and a newsagency, the participant "rediscovered a love of photography," which is attributed directly to the "stunning vistas" surrounding Stanley (Vowles 2010, 15). The participant in particular makes reference to the "breathtaking" views that she is immersed in, which contribute to a desire to recapture her artistic hobbies (Vowles 2010, 15). Like the discussion above where natural form is presented as "stunning" and "spectacular," this Seachanger finds something enticing and fresh in her experiences. The force of these vistas reinvigorates once-dormant creativity.

However, not all Seachangers are content with the ability of their new surrounds to satisfy their need for the creative arts, as illustrated here:

> Yes the arts (I miss), mainly the arts, shopping doesn't bother me because they're turning that into a completely standardized experience wherever you go in Australia...but I think really the Arts to be able to get to the theatre and the museum and things...that you don't have so well out here (Osbaldiston 2006c).

These latter thoughts suggest that within small locales, creativity may well flourish, but the infrastructures and services that the city holds are lacking.

The relative importance of this facet of Seachange life is evident in local government support for the arts. This becomes a priority for community planners who seek to sustain the authentic aura of the locale. Like Clarence Valley and Jackson Hole, the Town of Golden also promotes its artistic qualities with fervor. However, as the quotation below suggests, the municipality has undertaken the responsibility to sustain and promote the creative arts:

> Golden also has a thriving arts and culture community. We have a wide range of local artists and musicians that have proven to be very talented. There are special events throughout the year that showcase our local talent. Kicking Horse Culture is a multi-faceted developing organization that sponsors some local events and celebrations and brings in talent from other areas (Town of Golden 2008, par. 7).

Across Seachange locals, organizations such as "Kicking Horse Culture" have been developed in the bid to ensure that the artistic flavor of places is maintained. In the Sunshine Coast mecca of Noosa (located north of Brisbane, Australia), a Sunshine Coast Creative Alliance [5] has been created with the purpose to encourage specifically the "Noosa community" in order to "promote the creative class," which is described as a major contributor to the future of economic development in the region (The Sunshine Coast Creative Alliance n.d., par. 4). In another Seachange locale, the Town of Canmore (located west of Calgary, Canada), the future of the community is discussed as lying in the "intellectual and creative wealth" that has emerged within the region through local initiative and Seachange influence (Town of Canmore 2008a, par. 6). Subsequently, groups such as the "Community Public Art Committee" have been set up in the ambition of promoting creativity.

Of course, occurrences of governments taking steps to attract creative capital for the purposes of economic development are not unheard of. Metropolitan councils and states all appear to place high value ina shifting paradigm within the market from production of goods to creativity. For

the individual living in Western culture, the "aspiration to be creative" is fast becoming a highly valued attribute not just within personal lifestyles, but also within occupations (Osbourne 2003). Vocations of all sorts, including mundane ones, are now subject to narratives of creativity (Miller 2009). For critics such as Miller (2009) and Osbourne (2003), this contemporary obsession with creativity within the workplace is part of a wider political economy where individuals are now "obliged to be creative" (see also Miller and Rose, 2008) and creativity is commodified by giant corporate interests (such as Youtube, Facebook, Google). Miller (2009) and Osbourne (2003) further contend that the construction of the so-called creative class is a fallacy serving perhaps to gloss over other economically based class issues.[6]

However, while there is some merit to such criticisms, Seachange locales demonstrate a different appreciation for creativity. Creativity remains buried at a deeper subjective level where landscape encourages creative pursuits. Again, these are distinct from metropolitan experiences. As exemplified in the above quotations, the narratives of creativity serve as further "themes of ascent" (Frye 1976) in which nature connects the individual to something meaningful even transcendental. My contention here is that creativeness is considered authentic. Culturally, the ability to entertain through creative projects and to be engaged with artifacts of genuine art has been a highly valued attribute throughout Western modernity (and premodernity). Contemporary writings discussing the notion of self-authenticity among the general public justify this claim. For instance in a forum entry by self-help entrepreneur Good (1999, par. 3), creativity is key to enabling one to "stay in touch" with one's authenticity. In pursuing one's "authentic" self, an individual can reconnect to lifestyles that are more genuine, which provides "new depths to our creativity" (Good 1999, par. 3). Thus, while creativity is not the only attribute that contributes to an authentic self, the message here is that through a more authentic life, we can discover a creative side that enhances a genuine self.

The literature from self-help expertise connecting creative pursuits with self-authenticity is legion. It emerges however from a well-developed cultural paradigm that deeply values the creative arts, hobbies, and other similar pursuits. Debates may rage about the contemporary urge to have a creative psyche (see Osbourne 2003), but as the Seachange phenomenon suggests, being creative is one avenue to reconnect with a perceived authentic self. Natural landscape provides the setting for entertaining this, as the above discussion suggests. However, the previous two sections demonstrate that creative pursuits are merely one road to take in the journey toward self-authenticity. What I have attempted to show in this chapter is that pristine environment, magnificent natural form, and untouched wilderness, like the

sacred place for Smith (1999), alters not just the behavior of the individual but also his or her emotions, moods, and feelings.

REFLECTIONS AND DEPARTURES

This chapter discusses a wide range of culturally located narratives or "themes of ascent" (Frye 1976) that provide an aura of authenticity within Seachange places. Through Smith's (1999) typology, we can distinctly see the separation of natural wonders from the profane settings of the city and the lifestyles it invokes. Speed, pollution, stress, and anger are some of the traits of the metropolis that are left behind in the search for meaning. In addition to this is the desire to escape from the "time bind" (Hochschild 1997) that urban environments invoke. This binary coding between city and country is enabled through the cultural narratives that underpin places in regional areas. Table 2.1 illustrates this coding in more detail, showing the distinction between city and country that is present in the discussion above. As shown, the natural world plays a unique role in creating this opposition. It is seen as untouched, pristine, and spectacular. But most importantly, it is seen as slow and unaffected by the demands of the capitalist- and consumer-based values of cities. Furthermore, it promotes behavior that enables the self to feel authentic. Whether this be through high-adrenaline sports that transgress normal boundaries and put individuals in touch with the unknown (Lyng 1990), meditative activities such as hiking where nonhumans and humans interact in shared spaces, or the creative pastimes or hobbies that landscape inspires, these social actions can be seen as a transformation in lifestyles from those pursued in the city. They are as Smith (1999) proposes responses to the sacred force of the symbolism present in the locales.

Table 2.1 The Binary Coding of the City/Country Environment

City Environment (Profane)	**Country Environment (Sacred)**
Instantaneous	Glacial
Rapid	Gentle
Fast	Slow
Stressful	Peaceful
Bland	Colorful
Overdeveloped	Untouched/Pristine
Unnatural	Natural/Authentic
Stifling	Full of Life
Materialistic	Meaningful
Time Poor or Time Bound	Time Rich or Freedom
Uninspiring	Inspiring/Creative

The distinction between these "codes" establishes a strong desire to be part of the right hand column and to escape the left. However, as we will see later on in this book, the blurring of these distinctions means a breakdown of the sacred/profane distinction, potentially leading toward confused narratives where value breaks down into nothingness or the mundane. In particular, the vision of the landscape here as untouched and in pristine condition is one that is challenged through Seachange itself, ironically. The desire for some local authorities to support the urban escapism of late-/postmodernity has constructed counternarratives that threaten the sacral/authentic values of landscape within locales (Gurran, Squires, and Blakely 2006). In particular, the need for housing, services, telecommunications, roads, andthe provision of tourist needs that often economically support new migrants (and traditional residents) allow those infrastructures akin to the city to intrude into sacred spaces. In chapter 4, we will see how planning cultures across municipalities attempts to protect these spots.

However, with the attractiveness of the movement growing, can we see the death of Seachange within its very foundations? Furthermore, will the inception of more nonhuman technologies into an area undermine the ability for some (especially hikers looking for solitude and quiet reverie) to interact well with their authentic spaces? And even if planning controls are tighter, allowing minimal development, will this drive costs associated with housing high enough to limit who can afford to Seachange? Finally, as the narrative of climate change and its associated impacts such as sea-level rise within broader social and political spheres grows in importance and stature, how will this impact on the future of the phenomenon? These questions will form the basis for future thoughts in this book. They are also, as mentioned in chapter 1, the focus of several geographers, demographers, and policy analysts.

CHAPTER 3

A Sense of Community: Cultural Heritage, Nostalgia, and Sociability

In the escape from the city, natural form is perhaps an obvious motivation in Seachange. At some point, most of those living in Western urbanity have had an opportunity to visit the grandeur of mountain landscapes, the golden sands of uninterrupted beaches, or the emptiness of wide open plains. Tourism, both international and domestic, confirms the value of these to our modern culture. Embedded in the decision to Seachange is of course a sense of romanticism that arrives through the narratives discussed earlier. However as Moss (2006b), Gurran, Squires, and Blakely (2006), Benson and O'Reilly (2009a) and Burnley and Murphy (2004) have all found, it is not merely natural form that inspires movement away from the city. Alongside environmental amenity lies the important realm of cultural heritage. This includes not just the current community feeling, which as we saw previously is a motivating influence in "discovering" country townships. It also involves the aura of authenticity that is conveyed through symbols of the past. As this chapter will illustrate, old infrastructure, material cultures, and other instruments of yesteryear evoke a powerful symbolism of a place steeped in history. Cultural artifacts connect the individual back to national and locale-specific identities, which in turn impacts upon the development of the self.

Like the sacralization or authentication of nature, these cultural values are partnered in a binary relationship with those "themes of descent" (Frye 1976) that degrade city lifestyles. Already I have employed the helpful cultural theory of Georg Simmel previously to provide us with a guide to the

metropolis. Again, his work on sociality and the impact of metropolitan objective culture allows us insight into those narratives at play here. In particular, his belief in the triumph of objective culture over subjective life is something to consider not just as a broad theoretical construct, but as a significant perception that is shared by Seachangers. For it is in their discourses and those of other publications that we can see those issues Simmel (1997[1903]) finds so prominent in the city come to life. Of course, Simmel (1997[1903]) is not entirely pessimistic about the dominance of the objective over the subjective. There are benefits including the ability to be hidden amid the masses. On this point, Seachangers perhaps disagree with the German. As will be shown below, they do not desire to remain strangers to their fellowmen, but to establish concrete social networks in strong vibrant communities. Through themes that frame the country community as sociable, friendly, old, and traditional (Williams 1973), Seachangers arrive at their destinations with the expectation that they will be involved in their new local society with welcoming neighbors, unlike their metropolitan counterparts.

This chapter seeks to interrogate this further. Similar to the discussions carried out earlier, I will explore the discourses and cultural narratives that serve to promote an area in value. Built upon them however, as mentioned previously, are the profane attributes of the city. Similar to Relph (1976), the metropolis appears as "placeless." However, throughout this chapter, I will show that it is more than just a lack of identity and subjective connectivity that instills a desire to move. Significant issues regarding trust, risk negotiation (a là Beck 1992) and consumerism stigmatize the city in Seachange. Metropolitan people are held against country people in a long-standing opposition that spans modernity. The latter provide, it is believed, an authentic community experience. The Town of Golden for instance, uses the wording of "authentic, community" as their catch phrase to inspire people to visit, either as tourists or as permanent residents. However, like the natural world, there are important questions to be asked regarding the sustainability of these "themes of ascent" (Frye 1976) as Seachange continues to gather momentum. These I will discuss toward the end of the chapter.

"There is No Community Mindedness": The City Social Landscape

The role of the social in the Seachange story has been hinted at already in the previous chapter. As one of the participants suggested, a major problem that creates desires for ritualistic escape is that of "community mindedness" (Osbaldiston 2006a, 50). In that same quotation, the Seachanger further laments that lifestyles in the metropolis are "fake," with everyone appearing

to be "encapsulated in their own sort of space" (Osbaldiston 2006a, 50). Tacked onto this perception is also a belief that metropolitan lifestyles construct desires to be consumer driven. In a forum devoted to debating the Seachange dream, a participant reflects that in their new lifestyle, they work far less, which means "I manage on far less . . . as a result I find the "consumer culture" meaningless from its destruction of resources to its neglect of our planet" (Severin 2010, par. 2). However, not all Seachangers condemn the materialistic culture of the city through environmental or societal concern. The American model of "keeping up with the Joneses for instance, which results in significant stresses in "upscaling" (see Schor 1998), is strangely persistent in contemporary metropolitan and urban areas:

> I think too that we're just, like us personally, the risk of living so close to a lot of other people is *comparing yourself with other people* and you know that whole need to get ahead and be doing what you're meant to be doing and to get the car and tv . . . and to be like people down the street from you and your friends that live around and get into debt, and like [*sic*] *killing yourself to be financially well off and look really good* . . . I think that probably because . . . we live around so many other people, I think that's bad (Osbaldiston 2006a, 49, *italics added*).
>
> I mean, you tried not to [imitate others], *but when you are surrounded by people*, especially where we were . . . people's houses are getting bigger and you know, more and more things, and you almost *found yourself wanting*. I would like a house and I would like that, but it's going to cost us quite a bit to do it, how are we going to do it? And *you could find yourself easily trying to want it, and trying to find ways how your could* (Osbaldiston 2006a, 49, *italics added*).

Similar to the previous Seachanger (see chapter 2) who describes the mentality of the metropolitan in more condemning language, these two participants consider the issue of materialism and imitation as a significant social issue for city lifestyles. Through a domination of objective cultural surrounds (the neighbors, consumer culture, etc.), people are led, according to these comments, into a path of debt, stress and consumer anxiety. The ability to step outside these materialistic cultures through a Seachange produces an alternative perspective: a lifestyle where simplicity flourishes and consumer demands wither.

Upon returning back to the city, another Seachanger discusses the impact of the consumer-driven society in a critical manner:

> I think that there is a huge risk in our current city culture of people becoming clones. I was sitting in one of the big, the big posh areas of Melbourne just having a coffee, and I was watching these people go by and I realized they all look the same, but I thought it was the same lady going up and down the

> street and I thought that's odd why does she keep walking past, they were different, she wasn't the same... they had the same hair, the same clothes, the same baby stroller, the same kid in the same designer clothes, the same shopping bags you know, it was scary (Osbaldiston 2006c).

Reflecting on the condition of imitation in the city, the coercion of individuals to become like others constructs a paradigm of danger here. Though physical risks are an issue, there are subtle impurities to metropolitan lifestyles that infringe on the freedom to be individual. In later comments, this Seachanger proclaims that in her escape into the country, she has far less material possessions but is now also "more happy" (Osbaldiston 2006c).

Simmel (1997[1905]) in his essay on *Fashion* reveals that the need to imitate others through dress, and perhaps also through material possessions in general, has been a by-product of metropolitan life since early modernity. For him, the individual in the city is torn between two poles of pursuit (Nedelmann 1991), generality and individualism. At one end of the spectrum, the metropolitan seeks to conform to others through dress. However, the monstrous ability for signs and symbols to dominate social life and discolor lifestyle creates a need to "exaggerate" the "personal element" in order to satisfy a "personal core" (Simmel 1997[1903], 184). However, the dominant choice for the individual is to remain "hidden" from the gaze of the stranger in the city. He writes:

> Imitation gives the individual the assurance of not standing alone in his or her actions. Instead, it elevates itself over the previous practice of it from the difficulty of maintaining itself. Whenever we imitate, we transfer not only the demand for creative activity, but also the responsibility for the action from ourselves to another. Thus the individual is freed from choosing and appears simply as a creature of the group, as a vessel of social contents (Simmel 1997[1905], 188).

This may appear as a problem, but for Simmel, the ability to blend allows a certain freedom from the "demand for creative activity." However, Seachangers perceive this differently. As demonstrated in the above three quotations, the blending of human to human in appearance *and* possessions is dangerous. It detracts from more meaningful lifestyle choices and relationships. A common complaint from participants in the Seachange phenomenon is that the desire to ensure that you are "keeping up" causes an excessive egoism in the city. People are seen to "not care." One Seachanger suggests that it is possibly the case that in the metropolis, you could "die in your flat and no-one find you" (Osbaldiston 2006c), suggesting a lack of strong social networks. Life in the country, on the other hand, is perceived to be full of trustworthy communal bonds.

Simmel (1997[1903]) expresses a similar logic when he considers the "neurasthenic personality" (Frisby 1987, 73) of the metropolitan. On the one hand, the city itself, with its multiple signs and symbols and engrossing money economy, facilitates a "blasé attitude" that reduces aesthetic perception into "evenly flat and gray tone[s]" (Simmel 1997[1903], 178). On the other hand, the mass entry of strangers into the everyday life of the metropolitan encourages social reserve and distrust as a form of self-defense. This for Simmel is a contrast to rural life:

> Whereas the subject of this form of existence has to come to terms with it entirely for himself, his self-preservation in the face of the large city demands from him a no less negative behavior of a social nature. This mental attitude of metropolitans toward one another we may designate, from a formal point of view, as reserve. If so many inner reactions were responses to the continuous external contacts with innumerable people as are those in the small town, where one knows almost everybody one meets and where one has a positive relation to almost everyone, one would be completely atomized internally and come to an unimaginable psychic state. Partly this psychological fact, partly the right to distrust which men [*sic*] has in the face of the touch-and-go elements of metropolitan life, necessitates this reserve. As a result of this reserve, we frequently do not even know by sight those who have been our neighbors for years (Simmel 1997[1903], 179).

Essentially then, Simmel's (1997[1903]) argument hinges heavily on the psychic and social experiences of those who live in small towns. It is perhaps significant to note that there is little evidence to suggest that the German ever ventured outside Berlin to gather support for this reasoning (Brody 1982). Rather, it appears that Simmel believed in a wider paradigm of city versus country life. Later, he perhaps illustrates this in his comment that "small town people" label or stigmatize urbanites as "cold and heartless."

However, my purpose in injecting Simmel's thoughts into the Seachange story is not to denigrate or challenge Simmel, but rather to demonstrate how this wider collective paradigm that he himself perhaps partook of continues to work within the Seachange story. The distrust of strangers and the risks associated with the unknown serve as a motivation, in some cases, for a move to the country. The following citation from a Seachanger in Tasmania illustrates the power of this narrative further:

> We moved down here [Tasmania] because we felt in, in Sydney...every day you listen to the news, somebody bashed or somebody murdered or stabbing or something so we've decreased the risk by moving down here...afterward all of our family wanted to come in the view that it was safer to get away *from the risk of living in that environment* in Sydney (Osbaldiston 2006a, 47, *italics added*).

Similar comments are consistently made in blogs and forums that discuss the movement. For instance, in one response to a post written by a Seachanger, a respondent argues that metropolitans live in fear of crime and strangers. They suggest that if you "fall over" in the city, no-one will come to your aid (Yabby 2010a, par. 4). In direct contrast to this, those in the country do not hesitate to rush in and help (Yabby 2010a, par. 4).

Such thoughts are potentially exaggerated but in both instances, the essence of the discussion is similar to Simmel's (1997[1903]) theoretical logic. The dualistic view that pits the city against the country considers the former as risk-entrenched and dangerous, whereas the latter is conceived of as safe and populated by socially responsible individuals. Rural communities are the antidote to a life lived amid people who fail to care for one another.

From here, we could pursue a case that escaping the metropolis is part of a larger risk-avoidance strategy. Beck's (1992) risk society destroys the foundations of sociality that Seachangers seek to recover through their migration into the country. "Social bads" such as pollution, crime, conformity, and materialism are attributes that one cannot avoid in the city. The above quotation from the Seachanger in Tasmania exemplifies a condition where we in the metropolis are afraid, seeking to reduce our own risk and danger through actions that limit our exposure (Douglas 1992; Beck 1992). Yet, Seachangers are not risk averse. As previous research shows, those involved in the phenomenon *take* risks and in some cases embrace the unknown (see Osbaldiston 2006b; Dowling 2004). Leaving the city means dropping out of social networks, facing uncertain economic futures, and often, being amid environments that can be dangerous themselves. For instance, many Seachange locales in Australia are prone to flooding, fire, and drought. Furthermore, the increasing scientific evidence and modeling of climate change impacts such as sea-level rise means that property itself falls into risks of financial devaluation. Yet, wealth and the risking of all that one has to find the peace and authenticity of country life is perhaps the largest issue facing Seachangers. The television reality show *The Real Seachange*, which follows the lives of those taking the plunge into rural and regional life, illustrates this further in their promotional material located on their website. For instance, they suggest that the "fantasy" of Seachange or rather for our purposes here, the romanticism of the movement, is inevitably coupled with a "gamble" that is "enormous" (XYZ Networks n.d., par. 1). Like studies conducted previously (see Osbaldiston 2006b; Dowling 2004) into the social movement, it is clear that these gambles, as this television program also reveals, include financial, social, and even familial risks. Inevitably, some people who leave the city find these risks overwhelming and fail in their quest for a new life. But as *The Real Seachange* also demonstrates, many also survive and "find new love and prosperity" (XYZ Networks n.d., par. 1).

Subsequently, we can argue that there is a dualistic nature to Seachange and its relationship to risk. On one hand, the profane nature of the city produces a desire to seek shelter from the perceived dangers that lurk, specifically in regard to other people or strangers. On the other hand, Seachange is also clearly a process of risk-taking. The trade-off is that of security in an economic sense for authenticity in lifestyle and sociality. Underpinning Seachange is then a binary that distinguishes between city and country. The "themes of descent" (Frye 1976) that label the metropolitan as blasé, materialistic, and reserved are counterposed by narratives of warmth, history, community, and, finally, authenticity. In order to reduce risk, one must also embrace it to find a richer and more rewarding lifestyle in the country.

Warm, Friendly, and Authentic Communities: Narratives of the Country Society

Built into the assumptions made by Seachangers is the perception that the country is replete with genuine and real communities and people. Such cultural narratives have been built over generations. While the natural world is situated as left behind in the wake of modernity's progression, the villages and townships within them reflect similar perceptions. Country people are considered as behind the times but also live in far simpler ways to their city counterparts. This simplicity is not rejected but sought after in Seachange. It allows the individual to flourish subjectively. In terms of sociality, Raymond Williams (1973) in his *The City and the Country* shows to us how the paradigm operates here. Through fiction and within a Marxist tradition, he is able to demonstrate how the romanticism of the country is produced through social relations and bourgeois culture. In his departing and critical remarks, Williams (1973, 297) proposes themes that relate to the country that remain heavily embedded in present-day culture:

> It is significant for example that the common image of the country is now an image of the past, and the common image of the city an image of the future…The pull of the idea of the country is towards old ways, human ways, natural ways. The pull of the idea of the city is towards progress, modernization, development (Williams 1973, 297).

Despite the overly critical nature of his work, which ties these paradigms to class and status (similar to Urry (1990, 1995), discussed in chapter 1), the dichotomy at play here is highly important for us to envisage in Seachange towns. The ability of a place to remain distinguished from the city and thus retain its high value and authenticity is contested, ironically, by Seachange itself. Development, progress, and modernization, which Williams (1973)

identifies as metropolitan attributes, threaten the very country aura that is held in such high esteem by Seachangers. The profane is creeping into the sacred, blurring lines of distinction.

Intrinsic in the notion that regional place is "an image of the past" is the communities that occupy them. Within the Seachange phenomenon, narratives that underpin rural culture identify values akin to the golden days of yesteryear. Through a collective nostalgia for a time period that perhaps no participant actually experienced, country communities are deemed as genuine through their traditional approach to lifestyle. "Times forgotten" (Macnaughten & Urry 1998, 161) when neighbors talked, communities were strongly knit, and consumer culture was limited to upper classes are to be found still thriving outside the city. For instance, one Seachanger in a newspaper article comments that her new town is like stepping "back in time," where everything is clean and life is lived how it "used to be and still should be" (Vowles 2010, 15). Nostalgia for a time "forgotten," however, need not relate to actual personal memories, but rather to collective values and memories.

At times, country communities appear quirky to the outsider; however, this is a charm that is not degrading but endearing. It provides the community with its distinctive charisma. One participant in a Seachange forum writes about her childhood experience of moving to the country as a fascinating experience that was enchanting. She writes that within the town there were odd and the "most eccentric people" but who also had a real camaraderie (Pelican 2010, par. 4). Events like Christmas were times for the whole community to come together to enjoy good food and good company. The underlying impression of this particular discussion by Pelican (2010, par. 4) is that while country people can at times be quirky and "eccentric," they are also warm, loving, communal, and genuine.

That these communities remain in a cultural world that stands far apart from human progression is the reason they are perceived in this manner. However, like landscape, this quirkiness and traditionalism can be threatened by population turnaround and the homogenizing influence of consumer capitalism. Rapid growth and the influx of strangers into the relatively stable setting of country locales threaten to destabilize cohesion and bonds and constructs counternarratives of distrust, as I will discuss in more detail later.

Within Seachanger discourses, the themes of tradition and warmth are synonymous. Communities are described in a colorful language that proclaims their uniqueness through a nostalgic lens. The following two excerpts from Clarence Valley Council documents serve as excellent starting points here:

> Then there are the communities. Each town in the Valley, from the tiniest rural hamlet to the vibrant commercial and cultural hub of Grafton, has

> it's [*sic*] own distinctive character and strong sense of "place" and community. The people of the Valley take pride in who they are and where they are (Clarence Valley Council 2006b, 1).
>
> This geographically and culturally diverse region really does have something for everyone—from innovative alternative lifestyles to old fashioned family values; warm friendly villages to secluded mountain retreats (Clarence Valley Council 2006b, 2).

Amid comments like these is an implicit contestation of life in the metropolis as somewhat opposed to these particular ideals. In the second quotation, the authors portray the "diversity" of the area in a manner pleasing for various subgroups. Alternative types are accommodated as are those seeking purely for the "old fashioned" values of yesteryear. The latter is an important narrative for Seachange. However the first quotation reveals something deeper. It indicates that the search for a rural refuge involves finding a "sense of place." This is an attribute that is intrinsically connected to a collective identity that locals can "take pride in." Indicative of these comments is the unspoken perception that city culture has little communal belonging or collective identification as these Seachange places do. Furthermore, adjectives such as "warm," "friendly," "distinctive," and "old" portray a community that is opposed to the reserved, blasé, and consumption-focused metropolitan culture.

It would appear that these characteristics are not uncommon in Seachange towns. Themes of similar intent are evident in literature from the Town of Golden. As mentioned earlier, this place proudly waves the flag of authenticity over their region. This encompasses not only natural habitats, landscapes, and heritage, but also communities, as these excerpts illustrate:

> Two of the things that attract people to Golden are the small town atmosphere and friendly people. Many of the residents have lived in Golden their entire lives while others were drawn here by the quality of life (Town of Golden 2008, par. 8).
>
> Golden is a vibrant, rapidly diversifying town with a *profound sense of community spirit*. With tourism playing an increased role in its personality, Golden is attracting people who want to experience a *real, authentic B.C. community* in a natural, unspoiled mountain setting. It's a lot to be proud of, we know. It would be easy to swagger around like we owned the place. Yet, this *down to earth town is a community in the truest sense of the word*. The people here are warm and friendly and those who have chosen Golden as their home speak humbly about how much this special place means to them (Golden Tourism 2008, par. 5–6, *italics added*).

These quotes, the latter admittedly from tourist literature, echo the themes found in the Clarence Valley documents. Descriptions of the town as "down

to earth" convey a message of purity in social relations. In other words, the residents of this place are not concerned with objective needs such as competitiveness and/or comparativeness, which are encouraged in the city. Rather, the township is "friendly," "warm," and "true." Phrases such as "community in the truest sense of the word" imply that this small Canadian village is genuine, authentic. Furthermore, pride is stripped bare and residents are humbled to be part of the experience. It would perhaps be easy to consider this as contrived and "staged" as MacCannell (1973) might argue. Suspicion is a trademark of sociological accounts of place. However, one resident within a publication from the Town of Golden contends against this notion:

> I arrived in Golden a few years ago to discover an oasis of culture—small town culture—the special kind that isn't created just for tourists: authentic, genuine and welcoming. That's the way we live here—visitors join in. They come into our hometown and experience old fashioned hospitality. Our covered pedestrian bridge and Rotary trails epitomize this sense of community, of people coming together to celebrate their roots and history (Town of Golden n.d., 4).

While we cannot simply deny the power of "staging" in this specific comment, we are unable to deny the affective communication at play here. The community's roots, its history, and authenticity are for this participant a special attribute. Interestingly for them, it is through man-made structures and pathways that this genuine community is externalized or symbolized. This is indicative of the role of the nonhuman outside nature in the construction of the authentic. Appearance that tantalizes the senses through nostalgia for the "golden years" is important enough for local authorities to develop stringent planning controls and overlays that deny "out of character" infrastructure. Furthermore, the promotion of heritage and the "authentic" townscape encompasses other cultural artifacts that were once perhaps mundane or even profane.

Themes that narrate communities as warm, back in time, genuine, and friendly are ubiquitous within Seachange texts. Other attributes, however, are also apparent. One in particular relates to the issue of trust in the metropolis. Emerging from the aura of a community's past, country locales are considered to be more trustworthy and less dangerous than urban environments. Crime is as minimal and the social milieu is as pure as the clear crystal water and fresh air. In some cases, such as for the couple who moved from Sydney mentioned in the previous section, moving to the country is an opportunity to immerse oneself in a risk-free environment. Of course,

the removal these risks, namely from dangerous persons and unintended consequences, can and is replaced by other risky situations, including fire and flood. However, despite this, the sociality of the regional location is such that it enables a high quality of life in a nonthreatening manner. In another forum comment from the user Yabby (2010b, par. 5), the country is described as bright and full of life but also safe. The author remarks that there is never a need to "lock up" their home, whereas in the city, people are "terrified of each other" because of the threat of harm or assault that might come their way (Yabby 2010b, par. 5).

The binary coding of the city versus the country is stark here. The serenity of the country landscape is matched by the free attitude toward security of oneself and property. While in the city, danger lurks on every corner, the regional location is safe. Such narratives encourage in some cases families to migrate for their children. For instance, in moving their family to Dorset in the United Kingdom, one urban migrant commented that within their new community "trust" has been "afforded" to them, suggesting that perhaps it was missing in their city lifestyles (BBC 2006a, para. 6). Another participant describes the peace of mind their new locale provides as such:

> One of the big things I've noticed is the pace down here it's (Tasmania) a smaller place…but it's nice or it reminds me a bit of growing up in New Zealand, still progressing like the rest of the country I guess, but *you are still confident to let your kids walk*…there are just still those things *around that are reminiscent of our childhood and you have a slice of that for your kids* (Osbaldiston 2006c, *italics added*).

In this instance, life the way it used to be and should be (part of the current catch phrase of Tasmania's capital city, Hobart, where this participant now resides) is connected back to the Seachanger's past subjective experiences. Memories of childhood experiences here are shown as powerful emotions that impact on later lifestyle choices and values (cf. Bachelard 1994[1964]). This is particularly true for those who come to the city from rural backgrounds. Soon enough, as Dowling (2004) shows, some feel the pang to return to the country. However, as shown earlier, the nostalgic connection with place is often based on culturally perceived "themes of ascent" (Frye 1976).

Though the narratives that surround the Seachange place frequently sacralize the past and encourage collective reflection, it is evident that this does not indicate a quest to go backward in time. Progress in telecommunications, mobility, and other contemporary aids are important for the future attractiveness of towns in regional areas. Nostalgia here rather is expressive

of a concern for the lack of sociality that pervades current metropolitan culture. Kimberly Smith (2000, 523) provides further insight here:

> We should recognize that remembering positive aspects of the past does not necessarily indicate a desire to return there. Remembering the past should instead be seen in a way to express valid desires and concerns about the present—in particular, about its relationship (or lack of relationship) to the past.

In Seachange, the disjuncture between current and past conditions is spawned through the degrading influence of consumer capitalism. The bygone era is neighborly, friendly, warm, and mutual (Macnaughten and Urry 1998, 161). The present is harsh, dangerous, angry, cold, and individualistic. Searching through a nostalgic framework is therefore a quest to reconnect the present with past attributes. In her work, Wilson (2005, 86) agrees with this and comments that "the exercise of nostalgia may be a way of recreating a sense of community and constructing a sense of collective hope." Seachangers, therefore, seek to connect in a meaningful way to the collective identity of the group, thus acquiring a stronger sense of self. In other words, belonging is a pathway towards self-authenticity.

Cultural Artifacts: Symbols of Past Communities

In the discussion thus far, I have concentrated on human-to-human sociality. In what proceeds now, I turn my attention to those nonhuman elements of landscape that are symbolic of the generations that have passed on. The history of an area is important to the shaping of the collective identity and subsequently impacts upon the private self. For Seachangers, infrastructure that promotes the heritage of an area and its social history is vital to a sense of place. One participant from Stanley (Tasmania) suggests for instance that within her community, people are beginning to care more about "our history," which she believes is good for the township (Vowles 2010, 16). The importance of this is perhaps evident in the growth of policy innovation that seeks to enhance and protect heritage sites across Seachange locales. As I will explore later, this not only includes the protection of infrastructures and objects with symbolic value, but also the creation of rigorous planning guidelines and controls to ensure that an overall aura is maintained. Policy advisers Gurran, Squires, and Blakely (2006, 28) for instance suggest,

> A local heritage study is a key tool for evaluating the cultural heritage and character of towns and villages and surrounding landscapes, and identifying incentives and controls to protect and enhance this character.

These authors later continue by proposing that local authorities should engage their communities in the identification of "sacred spaces" to ensure that special sites of high value are not decimated through poor and inequitable planning procedure (Gurran, Squires, and Blakely 2006, 28). Human-made structures, including roads and pathways, are included in these designations. As illustrated earlier in the comment from the community member in the Town of Golden, these "material objects" epitomize a sense of community and place; they are authenticated/sacralized further through their histories by connecting the community symbolically to the roots of its collective identity.

Landscape, then, is not simply about maintaining an untouched or pristine condition. Rather, as Ingold (1993, 152) has argued, it is inevitably "pregnant with the past." When interrogating place, therefore, the observer must adopt a "dwelling perspective" whereby

> [t]he landscape is constituted as an enduring record of—and testimony to—the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves (Ingold 1993, 152).

Certain characteristics of a vista, for instance, will be the result of human intervention. Pathways, roads, cultivated land, fences, windmills, or old barns form part of the landscape. They add to the sense of place through their symbolic value, or detract from it by being "out of character." The narratives and myths that define a sacred place can be impeded by objects and structures that contest the distinction between city and country. The growth and domination of these material objects can result in the eventual cultural degradation of an area. Sustaining a sacred place requires significant effort on the part of planning and policy officials. However, as Ingold (1993, 162) argues, "landscape is never complete" but "perpetually under construction." Thus, the sacred can turn into the profane (or vice versa) merely through temporal transformation, which is often the result of ordinary human activity.

Objects of the past are therefore not condemned to being "out of character" as time progresses. For instance, in certain circumstances once mundane or perhaps even quite profane artifacts become sacralized through a "collective nostalgia" (Davis 1979) that colors them as authentic. Indigenous heritage is often highly prized in certain places (see Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2008). However, more often the authentication of historical objects tends toward the pioneering achievements of Anglo-Saxon people. Reflecting upon indigenous heritage perhaps creates a symbolic dissonance where themes of horror, cultural homogenization, and persecution evoke negative emotional responses. This may well be an example of sanitized cultural reflection. The

narratives surrounding Seachange for instance reflect a Western-centric bias that excludes other perceptions. In other words, what is authentic to the typical Seachanger is differentiated from what is authentic to the indigenous conscience and other minority groups. Further reflection upon this is beyond the purpose of this chapter, however.

What is evident is the manner in which past pioneering histories (and others) relate heavily to a nation's identity. These are of significant value in Seachange discourse. Objects that symbolize the genealogy of an area are subsequently authenticated and sacralized. In the Clarence Valley documents, this is illustrated beautifully in the following:

> Much of the Clarence hinterland *retains its rustic, early pioneering feel*. The graveyards and ruins of gold rush settlements lie crumbling in the grass and beyond the abandoned town of Dalmortan, *you can pass through a tunnel hewn from the solid rock by convict labour* (Clarence Valley Council 2006a, 2, *italics added*).
>
> Maclean is another of the Valley's *unique historic treasures*. Its rich *Scottish heritage is proudly displayed* in everything from decorated shopfronts to its tartan powerpoles and every Easter it celebrates all things Scots with a weekend of traditional highland gathering (Clarence Valley Council 2006d, 2, *italics added*).

In these quotations, the historic identities are brought to life. In the first instance, the landscape is "pregnant" with an aesthetic of a bygone era when the locale was shaped and contoured by European colonization. Reference to the "graveyards and ruins" that dot the hinterland portray the locale as relatively untouched and/or abandoned by the progress of humanity. The mysteriousness of such imagery invokes a sense of adventure, a stepping back in time. It provides the potential Seachanger with a binary opposition to the narratives that surround contemporary cities and their progressive and fast-paced advancement.

However, it also weaves into the Clarence Valley story narratives of Australian identity. For instance, the discussion of the Dalmortan convict tunnel[1] that is "hewn from the solid rock by convict labour" calls to attention a mythology that is deeply seeded in Australiana. It also represents the fluidity of cultural artifacts. While it most certainly would not have represented a sacred emblem for those unfortunate individuals who had to construct it, the tunnel is now presented as an object rich in cultural symbolism. It harks back to a time period when Australia's identity was shaped and constructed. In calling to attention the presence of the tunnel, the authors attempt to portray the aura of the place. Individuals are connected through mythology to an imagery of the authentic. Australia's

convict past, as its genuine beginnings, contribute to an overall genuine aesthetic.

The second piece relates a different theme but still illustrates how the "nexus" (Ingold 1993, 155) of a place is reflected in simple objects. The emphasis here, however, lies not on the convict labor that conceived Australian identity, but rather on other European settlers within the Clarence region. Scottish heritage in the township of Maclean is here externalized through shop windows and objects that adorn mundane structures like powerpoles. Cultural heritage in this instance denotes the multifarious nature of Australia's colonial past. The place itself is authenticated through its remembrance of the roots of its identity, even if this denies indigenous pasts. Embedded in this practice is a desire for a sense of place and community. Reconnecting through nostalgia for a colonial past is driven by motivations to recreate community spirit and hope (Wilson 2005, 85) from the emptiness of individualized late-/postmodern existence. In other documentation from the Clarence Valley Council, further emphasis is placed upon townscapes with nineteenth-century infrastructure that is now a major feature of towns and villages. These once-mundane objects now invoke an aura of sacrality through their symbolism of the past.

Similar notions are found across other Seachange locales discussed already, such as the Town of Golden, where historical treasures from its rich mining history contribute to the self-proclaimed authentic experience to be enjoyed there. In Teton county, where the Town of Jackson is located, several infrastructures that symbolize its rich colonial history remain and are highly valued. For instance, the famous "Moulton Barn" or "Mormon Row," which apparently is the most photographed barn in America because of its spectacular location, contributes greatly to the overall sense of authenticity of the place. In a discussion focusing on Moulton Barn in the blog *Tales from the Tetons* (2009, par. 3), one contributor writes that the infrastructure remains intact and calls to attention a "time" when "barn raising was a community event." The symbolism of the structure, according to this author, provides a "glimpse of early homesteading life" and contemplation of lifestyles far back in time. Important here are family values that were distinct from contemporary times but which flourished in communities such as those in Mormon Row (*Tales from the Tetons* 2009, par. 3).

Like Smith's (1999) discussion of the sacred place, Mormon Row or Moulton Barn now has a symbolic force that encourages a reflexive response from the individual. Through narratives and mythologies of religious pioneering life and the simplicity of a "barnyard" lifestyle, the onlooker contemplates past existences. In particular, the imagery is of a lifestyle that is uncomplicated, community oriented (or family oriented), and meaningful.

Not mentioned of course is the lack of sanitation, electricity, health care, and other modern comforts that are characteristic of colonial pasts. Of course, as Kimberley Smith (2000) mentions above, the desire here is not to return back to these primitive manners of living. Rather, they capture the essence or spirit of community and a life left untouched by the negative by-products of consumer capitalism and individualization. “Mormon Row” essentially symbolizes a world in binary opposition to the money economy and the city.

Hip/Chic Communities: Overcoming God’s Waiting Room

One of the issues facing Seachange places is that they attract the aged. In the Clarence Valley, for instance, the median age at the time of census 2006 was approximately 44 years whereas for Australia, it was 37 years. The major issue here is that 19 percent of the population of the Clarence Valley was at the time over the age of 65, indicating that there was a substantial aged community within the region. Age pyramids such as these largely impact on development and infrastructure. The symbolism of a bowls club, or other organizations frequented by the elderly, as the hub of a community is telling for potential in-migrants. Furthermore, the stresses that aged populations place upon local services, which policy makers have to deal with, are critical (Gurran, Squires, and Blakely 2006). However, a major problem in regard to the phenomenon of Seachange is that as locales further age, their value declines for younger populations. Activities and infrastructures that provide options for cultural engagement, entertainment, and sociality are important for maintaining the attractiveness of a town, not just for urban escapees but also for tourists. Seachangers comment on the unavailability of these options at times, as illustrated in the previous chapter with the lamentation of the lack of arts programs in one Seachange locale.

The problem of having aged communities and a stigma that is associated with rural life is that they are not seen as progressive. As illustrated earlier, in some instances the quirkiness of country people is endearing for some. However, the stigma of regional locales is often that they are backward, at times racist and strange. This quirkiness can then be translated as “themes of absurdity” (Smith 1999). The country person can become the ludic, sitting on the margins between acceptable and completely disgusting behavior through his or her idiosyncratic actions. Local authorities are not ignorant of this. Through innovative revitalization techniques and community development programs, they attempt to tackle this theme by redefining their townships. This should not be seen, however, as an attempt to rid the country “feel” of an area. Rather, the community adapts high culture

into its day-to-day living in order to accommodate the needs and varieties of new migrants. As we will later see, often the inception of commercial activity can lead toward a path of cultural destruction. This balancing act between tradition and cultural heritage and new development is important. Maintaining a distinct identity from the city and the traditional country town often results in stringent policy direction and controls. Embedding metropolitan lifestyle pursuits into classic rural townships requires deep consideration of aesthetics and community needs. Often, the two are meshed together. In publications, the potential Seachanger to the Clarence Valley is exposed to this:

> Grafton's retail precinct has everything the most ardent shopper could hope for . . . chic boutiques, bustling department stores and plenty of tempting coffee shops and al fresco eateries (Clarence Valley Council 2006a, 2).
>
> Today's Seachangers are joining *vibrant, culturally diverse societies with dynamic, progressive economies, strong community values, sophisticated cuisine and some of the world's finest coffee*! . . . Seachangers are *not just retiring baby boomers*—in fact, the vast majority *are of working age*. They come from all age groups and all walks of life and share a common desire for quality living (Clarence Valley 2006d, 1, *italics added*).

The latter quotation is telling here. No longer is the Clarence community aged, white, lower- to middle-class country types. Now with the inception of Seachange, the society has diversified, making it "vibrant" and alive with culture. Injected into the narrative of "community values" and "quality of life" is an image of a populace that is chic and progressive. The symbolism of the "boutiques" and "tempting coffee shops" is a testament to the potential migrant that a cultural diversification has occurred. While the explicit aim here is to convince the participant that these services are available, a deeper implicit reason is to suggest to the Seachanger what type of community it is now: a mixture of metropolitan culture with the authentic sociality of a traditional country town.

Across the Western world, regional locations are transformed from simple villages into classy Seachange communites. The town of Brighton in the United Kingdom for instance has a now well-embedded identity as a "bohemian city" through its youth culture, creative individuality, and, most important, thriving gay community. One advisory website suggests that Brighton and Hove is now one of the "most vibrant and diverse cities in the UK" through "world class arts and culture" and an infamous "nightlife" and local culture that embraces "alternative" people, specifically gay and lesbians (Columbus Travel Media 2010, par. 4). Here, the community is progressive and attractive for younger people. However, there is no denying

that the amenities and values spoken of sit at the other end of the spectrum from other country locations. It is possible that older Seachangers may well find Brighton and Hove as a culturally profane place, one to be avoided. It is perhaps the case that this seaside locale has become a Seachange possibility for the young.

In another UK lifestyle destination, Dorset, the community is described by participants in less alternative ways but with the right mix of metropolitan amenity and traditional values. This is illustrated in a local BBC (2006b, par. 14–17) website that illustrates a younger migrant's experiences moving to the area. He suggests in a way that might attract others his age that finding things to do is "no problem here" as there is a great "nightlife" coupled with a range of friendly and welcoming locals (BBC 2006b, par. 14–17). Interestingly, this particular Seachanger closes out his comments by suggesting that Dorset has an abundance of things to do and see even "for a city boy like me" (BBC 2006b, par. 17).

These closing sentiments reveal the ability of the area to provide a young metropolitan with excitement and interest despite the rural nature of the area. Nightlife akin to the city is coupled with a friendly community that taps into the regional narrative in general. Thus, for this participant, Dorset provides the right balance between hip and traditional.

This balance is evident in other areas too. Canadian towns such as the Town of Golden claim their communities to be diverse but relaxed and traditional. Another, the Town of Canmore, narrates their locals in similar ways:

> Canmore has a young, energetic, diverse and well-educated population that values a vigorous, outdoor adventure lifestyle that allows them to come home to comfort and amenities usually reserved for city life (Town of Canmore 2008a, par. 6).

Here, the outdoors, which, as we examined earlier, allows for fulfillment in diverse ways, is juxtaposed against metropolitan amenities. However, it is the pronouncement of the community as young and progressive that makes it similar to the other locales discussed here. For in doing so, the town is disentangled from the narratives that accompany country areas in everyday life. As a place of excitement and vibrancy, it no longer resembles a hamlet from yesteryear. At the same time, the retaining of the charm of the golden years is a cultural commodity worth holding on to.

The problem of this balancing act is that inevitably, it breaks down. Places that adhere too much to the "metropolitan" lure soon lose their "rural" feel, which then breaks down notions of a country/city distinction.

Once this occurs, those city escapees identified by Benson and O'Reilly (2009b) as those unable to break the mold of city living (through habitus), begin to flood the area. For other Seachangers, these are they who seek no transformation in lifestyle, just a scenic place to live. While motivations may be underpinned by a similar desire for more meaning and more self-authenticity, older Seachangers view these new types as essentially fake or inauthentic. Their impact upon the everyday life of country/coastal towns causes some to lament that their authentic place is lost. Perhaps these latter people can best be described as Lifestyle Migrants, rather than Seachangers. We shall return to this idea in a later chapter.

Reflections and Departures

This chapter has shown that sociality is an important value in the pursuit of authenticity. Present-day Seachangers' perceptions on the conditions of the metropolitan persona appear in some respect to be advanced cases of Simmel's (1997[1903]) beliefs on the city, within the Seachanger narrative. Cityscapes produce hedonistic, individualized, and socially reserved people. The country holds the alternative. Here, social networks are trustworthy, warm, friendly, happy, and engaged. Communities are tightly knit and, a deep sense of place is embedded within the collective but also individual psyche. This notion of the meaningful is ingrained in Relph's (1976) contentious "placeless" theories where locales can develop attributes that disallow a connection between the subjective and objective. Culture here plays a role. In particular, the ability of communities to embrace one another further enables a sense of place in collaboration with the natural landscapes that visually define them. Of course, nostalgia is a key player. Visions of the past, collectively at times but also individualistic at others, underpin these Seachange places. Places steeped in history are reflective of a generation where life was simpler, less materialistic, and communally focused. Artifacts that symbolize the past also express the roots of the place often as a colonial outpost in the exploration of rich new lands. Yet, places that identify too much as a country locale are unlikely to attract Seachangers seeking the best of both worlds. Thus, the liminal or ludic narrative that characterizes the rural town, while at times endearing, is matched with a theme of progression, hipness, and chic commercial interests. It is not uncommon to find, for instance, several cafes, nightclubs, and other citylike social spaces emerging in Seachange places. However, the balance between these and tradition is one fraught with danger.

Two binaries are thus constructed within the social aspects of this phenomenon. One features the Seachange place as distinct from the metropolis

and the other as distinct from the ludic country town. They are illustrated in tables 3.1 and 3.2 below.

As this chapter has demonstrated, the maintenance of the distinction between the city and the country is a delicate balancing act. Ensuring that Seachange townships remain attractive to those seeking escape from the city means also overcoming traditional notions of country towns. Yet, accommodating too far for the "progressive," vibrant and diverse fields begins the fall from grace for the Seachange town. The narratives explored in the beginning of the chapter are challenged by new migrants and the values they bring. Certainly researchers such as Diaz-Orueta (2004) have shown the devastating impacts on the aura of a place that unrestrained migration can have. This new generation of migrants seeks perhaps not the deeper transformation in lifestyles and community relationships, but the environmental amenity promised in chapter 2. They are less Seachangers, and more simple lifestyle migrants. These questions are important not just for this research, but for the future of the Seachange phenomenon in general. As mentioned earlier, the movement is proving to exemplify the shifts in themes or narratives that can define an area.

However, is it also that easy to overcome the "ludic" experience of the country town? How do issues such as ultraconservatism impact upon the notions of warmth and community caring? Is there a discrepancy between

Table 3.1 The Binary Coding of the City/Country Sociality

City Sociality (Profane)	Country Sociality (Sacred)
Strange	Familiar
Dangerous	Peaceful
Materialistic/Selfish/Individualistic	Community Minded
Cold/Reserved	Warm/Open
Blasé	Involved
Fast/Advancing	Historical/Traditional

Table 3.2 The Binary Coding of Traditional Country Towns and New Seachange Communities

Typical Country Town (Ludic)	Seachange Country Town (Sacred)
Racist/Conservative	Accepting
Stagnate	Progressive
Old	Youthful
Singular Culture	Diverse Culture
Lacking Service Amenity	Abundant Service Amenity

the "experience-far" and the "experience-near" (Geertz 2000)? In other words, do the perceptions of the communities found within these locales match real experiences? And if not, how does this challenge the authenticity of an area? In a later chapter, we will explore the shift from the liminal to the sacred in more detail. While it is shown above that the "ludic" is at times endearing to the country locale, it is also a challenge for participants seeking for refuge in communities of value. "Themes of absurdity" (Smith 1999) detract inevitably from the sacred experience of the Seachanger.

Chapter 4

The Culture of Planning: Coding in Policy Initiative

In recent times, cultural sociology has revealed not only how narratives impact on culture and collective behavior, but also how these in turn challenge political and institutional powers. This is no more apparent than in Smith's (2008) *Punishment and Culture,* where by using empirical evidence, Smith stakes a claim for a bottom-up transformation of state-led punitive action. In another instance, Alexander (2006a) has also shown how democratic structures and narratives can be and have been altered through collective action. Rather than power being jealously guarded by the elite in an oligarchic or disciplinary-type society, cultural codes and narratives can inspire civilizations and collectives to impose their voices on the powerful. Entire paradigms of revolution, freedom, and similar causes are born through culture. Understanding this allows us to push aside tendencies to view society in a top-down fashion, with political powers and institutions dominating public discourse rendering the civil sphere helpless. Within the Seachange drama, there are instances of this bottom-up resistance that creates local solidarity against urbanization and perceived evil greed.

In this chapter, I wish to expose how the binaries that surround Seachange impact upon local governance. Rather than understanding social movements and illustrating the impact of a civil sphere in revolt, this chapter will reveal how in planning discourses, those same issues of the authentic and the inauthentic sit deeply in the thought of officials. In particular, controls on development that restrict or govern design, protect heritage, and maintain a sense of aura are explored with reference to the cultural narratives already discussed. At times, the impact of growth on a place makes it difficult for a place to remain "untouched" and "pristine." However, through

creative planning methods and zoning requirements, the visual aesthetics that define a place can be sustained, even enhanced. Furthermore, the slow aura of a place can also be maintained by regulating mobility. Vehicles and other transportation systems native to the city can be avoided, protecting certain spaces from overuse and traffic congestion. Underpinning this all is exactly the defining characteristic that motivates Seachange. In order to demonstrate this, I will examine different case studies that exemplify these. Questions of the effectiveness and the development of counternarratives are discussed at the conclusion of this chapter. In particular, I will show that with the expansion of Seachange, fighting the power of development through the improvement of townships and local economies is difficult to sustain.

Nonhuman Technologies and Sacred Landscapes: Planning for Protection of the Authentic

It could be argued that environmental amenity is essential to the attractiveness of the Seachange locale. Indeed, the ability to immerse oneself in areas cut off from the outside, profane, cultural, and technological world is an important dimension for participants in this movement. Being at one with nature allows a connection of the objective to the subjective that promotes a self-authentic state not found in cityscapes. Subsequently, local authorities whose councils and municipalities thrive on this population phenomenon economically and also socially take caution in the sustainability of their natural commodities. The ignorance of sustainability concerns and unrestrained development create potential disasters for regional attractiveness and the aesthetics of authenticity. Country locales with high environmental amenity can fall victim to "themes of descent" (Frye 1976) similar to those discussed earlier concerning the city. Seachange policy and planning advisers Gurran, Squires, and Blakely (2006, 15) have the following warning for coastal locations:

> [T]he image of uncontained growth forming a pattern of homogenous [*sic*] urban "sprawl" has come to epitomize bad planning in coastal areas, both in Australia and internationally. The particular characteristics of the coastal environment—a linear coastal strip which forms the focus of residential, tourism, and recreational activities, facilitate this type of development. Demand for water view and close access to the beach leads to pressure for the settlement of environmentally sensitive areas, impacting on coastal water systems including lakes, estuaries, and mangroves; and areas of high wildlife habitat or scenic values... Often a local community has undertaken a deliberate strategy to promote their natural assets, only to find that they have actually stimulated a rapid population growth that threatens the very values that inspired it.

Examples of bad governance are found across the Western world, where migration in the quest for beach or mountainside lifestyles has transformed once-serene landscapes through the homogenizing influence of urban and commercial development. At times, the once-traditional cultures that accompany pristine landscapes are transformed into simulated attractions and "tourist traps" (see Diaz-Orueta 2004 and Mantecòn and Huete 2008). Quiet rural towns, especially on the coastlines, can soon become vast commercial centers attracting significantly different development such as theme parks and shopping parks that commodify the region's past in a McDonaldized manner (Ritzer 2010). Scenes such as parts of the Spanish coastline or the Gold Coast in Queensland challenge traditional perspectives creating new paradigms, often ludic or profane.

The conundrum facing local authorities is the need to protect and sustain their environmental amenity in the wake of population turnaround and the services required for it. As Moss (2006) and Gurran, Squires, and Blakely (2006) argue, resources such as telecommunications, commercial interests, and general infrastructure feed the attractiveness of regional locales for city escapees. Furthermore, the need to overcome stereotypes of country communities through a development of hip/chic genres also pressures local councils into action. However, at a more mundane level, population turnaround results in a need for everyday service to accompany new development. Delivering these without penetrating the natural wonders of landscape is a significant issue as it has possible social dimensions, from equity through to conflicting with local place value. The following citations from three separate policy documents illustrate further the worries that authorities face:

> The impact of residential development on Noosa's natural resources, open space and clean environment, as well as the degree to which development is integrated with the landform and landscape *will have a significant bearing* on *residents' perceptions of the place they live*, Noosa's *character* and *natural environment* and *residents' lifestyle* (Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2008, 3.8, *italics added*).
>
> A fundamental objective of this Comprehensive Plan is to *preserve rural character* and enhance it where possible; to allow development, but to make sure that new development is consistent with rural character. Primarily, rural character is defined by *large amounts of open space in relationship to the floor area* and volume of structures. Therefore, preserving a rural character requires that very large amounts of open space *be set aside as development occurs* (Town of Jackson 2002a, 3.2, *italics added*).
>
> We recognize that Canmore is both geographically bounded and ecologically significant. Further, we acknowledge that Canmore is part of a wider ecosystem and that we as human residents share the valley with many other species of plants and animals. Accordingly, we acknowledge that our

> geography and ecology impose limits that cannot be ignored... *We work towards our common future without squandering either our cultural or natural capital* (Town of Canmore 2008b, par. 1, *italics added*).

In all three quotations, the power of natural capital is shown to impact heavily on local policy planning. Future success, both socially and economically, depends entirely on the ability of governments to regulate development in a manner that sustains landform and enhances a communal sense of place. The visual attractiveness of natural form here is all important. As witnessed earlier, the identification or subjectification of landscape is a highly prized value for Seachangers.

The task of maintaining the binary classificatory systems that distinguish the metropolis from the regional locale motivates many local authorities to construct stringent policy and planning activity that governs development and future growth. Much of this initiative is symbolic work externalized through rigorous physical controls. In some instances, design surveys are enacted to determine what "character" is important to locals and tourists alike. Here, everyday mundane objects are transformed to fit within a "style" that reflects local values and the mythological aura of the place. However, often, the nonhuman artifact can merely be blended or even hidden amid natural splendor. Using two cases as a guide, the Surf Coast Planning Scheme (Surf Coast Council 2011) and the Noosa Plan (Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2008), three themes emerge that illustrate empirically the magical impact of the aesthetic world on planning decisions. They are as follows:

(a) Technology (even mundane, nonhuman objects) is blended into natural form so as to remain relatively hidden. In this respect, the objects in question are through physical alteration transformed from their profane or mundane symbolisms to be at one symbolically with environmental surrounds.
(b) In some cases, hiding technology completely is achievable. The object functions according to its design or purpose, and is also unseen, reducing impact upon areas of major visual interest.
(c) In other more difficult cases, significant visual interest is added to residential and business infrastructures in pursuit of adding to the region's "sense of place." Here, objects that cannot be blended or hidden are constructed in a manner that represents the area's authentic heritage and thus does not detract from the holistic aesthetic appeal of the natural world.

In the case of (c), councils such as the Surf Coast Council (2011) appeal to new developers to ensure that new buildings reflect the local flora and fauna

as well as place heritage and identity. Urban design overlays and design studies guide these processes here.

In what follows, I wish to examine points (a) and (b). In these instances, mundane objects necessary for tourism and lifestyle development are the focus for planning initiatives. For example, telecommunications towers that deliver mobile technologies and services impact significantly on skyscapes. Yet, the design and needs of local communities are such that their presence is inevitable. Without them, a town can be completely isolated from the networks of communication that allow businesses and sociality to flourish. There is no doubt, however, when reading through policy controls that these needed services impact on the visual attractiveness of a locale. Within the Noosa shire for instance, this is acknowledged and dealt with by governing the placement of towers. They (the mobile networks) are to be designed so that the towers can be hidden from prominent visual positions; in particular, from those areas that are significant for the locale's image and narrative. The purpose of such planning rules is to allow opportunity for people to "work and study from home and access goods and services from the Internet" (Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2008, 3.10) while also ensuring that views and vistas such as "watercourses, beaches or riparian corridors" remain clear and free from intrusion (Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2008, 3.7). This simple initiative recognizes the potential that these vital nonhuman actors have to confuse or blur the distinction between pristine land form and city environs. For if a telecommunications tower were to be built behind the primary dunes shadowing the ocean and bright golden sands, the landscape would be at risk of losing its special aura. Other examples of the hiding away of these potentially degrading mundane objects include guidelines that govern advertising billboards, posters, and visitor accommodation signage, which is to be kept separated away from the view of coastlines and watercourses (Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2008, 10.356), the purpose being to retain regional character and remove the symbols of consumer capitalism and cityscapes from iconic scenery.

At times, though, mundane technologies offend the senses not just through the visual dimension but also through smells. As Ingold (1993) argues and also as we have explored earlier in the experiences of natural beauty, smells, sounds, and tastes are all embedded in the experience of landscape. Normative expectations of what sensations one can expect include pure smells and the sounds of fauna and flora. Deviations from the norm detract from a sense of place as significantly as the sight of clogged commercial development in prominent lookouts. Within towns themselves, the ability of intrusive sensations to infringe on experience is highly probable. Planning documents therefore include is a design framework that reduces the capacity of mundane technologies to degrade a place's aesthetic. In the

Noosa Plan for instance, the need for rubbish storage is understood as a necessity. However, their impact upon the streetscape, which has significant character and contributes to the "beachside" feel, is negated through careful planning. Specifically, large garbage containers that emit offensive odors are to be screened off from customers and passersby (Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2008, 9.48). Although the documentation mentions only the visual aspect, it is clear that the need to protect other aesthetic features of the locale underpins this objective. Other spaces such as parking facilities and storage areas are also hidden away in such a manner, the former being an important factor in planning guidelines for the Noosa area.

Automobiles have a power in modernity to develop strong "themes of descent" (Frye 1976) that challenge authentic aesthetics and the perception of slowness that permeates smaller townships. Essential to life in the city and producing a freedom unfounded in past civilizations, the car also produces profound side effects of congestion, stress, and anger. As Urry (2005, 28) contends, the proliferation and affordability of the car for all people results in lifestyles that are flexible but also time-compressed. The car itself is now a symbol of the "iron cage of modernity," routinizing, rationalizing, and colonizing the temporalities of life, producing time pressures and stresses for city dwellers previously not experienced. The Seachange narrative, as seen earlier, speaks often of the debilitating affect of these unintended consequences of mass car use. Traffic congestion, or more specifically being stuck in long processions of stationary cars, produces negative emotions. Life in Seachange locales, however, is seen as freer, and the open roads are distinguished from the everyday hustle of metropolitan transport scenarios.

However, as development continues to build momentum within Seachange places, the inevitable build-up of population leads to an increased use of roads and streets. Often, coastal and regional townships are not prepared or designed for this. Instead, they struggle to maintain their sense of peace with increased congestion. Slowness, contemplation, and meaning are replaced with the frustration of time stresses as one waits in line at traffic lights and intersections built originally for minimum use. Recognizing this, the Noosa Plan has considered strict policies that encourage different modalities of mobility. In particular, to protect the aura of freedom, openness, and slowness, the scheme endorses the construction of walkways, bikeways, and public transportation. While understanding that eliminating the use of cars is impossible, the council here attempts to limit the possibility for negative citylike problems.

> Transport around the Shire is predominately by private motor vehicle however the scheme encourages the use of public transport, cycling and walking . . . the

> scheme provides for the improved cycling and pedestrian movements and end of trip facilities throughout urban settlements (Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2008, 1.8).

Policy advocates such as Gurran, Squires, and Blakely (2006) proclaim that such initiatives can serve to further strengthen a town's character and attractiveness. They write,

> Promoting pedestrian environments and opportunities for cycling are key strategies for coastal and amenity communities. Such strategies can enhance the lifestyle and tourism appeal of the local area and can even support small business ventures such as bicycle renting and touring…pedestrian and cycleways can often be incorporated in development charges or as planning requirements for the release of new urban areas (Gurran, Squires, and Blakely 2006, 50).

While the integration of these slower forms of transportation enables a person to enjoy different sensations and experience healthier lifestyles (Soper 2007), there is a symbolic purpose to this that seeks to ensure that the townscape is protected from urbanization. Specifically, the heavy profane attributes that car use can imbue in an area are to be avoided for fear of their impact on the atmosphere of the area. The promotion of walking and cycling also serves to maintain the narrative of simplicity and encourages the individual to connect more with the outdoors. These activities help one to feel the sense of place and enjoy more the sensations of local environs.

From this, it can be argued that the council is attempting to hide away the profane, or to separate it from the sacred. This is made even clearer when within one of its major towns, it attempts to conceal the automobile entirely. For instance,

> On-site covered and open carpark areas are generally screened from the street to avoid visually dominating the streetscape and detracting from the pedestrian orientated character of Hastings Street (Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2008, 9.46).

In this instance, the symbolic weight of cars and the spaces they occupy is recognized as unappealing and dealt with accordingly. Again, the cultural coding of city/country dialectics contributes to such governance strategies. However, eventually the ability to retain an authentic sense of place is challenged by the construction of mundane objects within the townscapes. From the exotic (such as the telecommunications tower mentioned earlier) through to the highly mundane, development impinges eventually on natural form.

In answer to this, local authorities such as the Sunshine Coast Regional Council have evolved controls and instruments that work to inhibit visual impact. This occurs even at the very micro level of construction. For instance, objects such as fences, which in some cases divide businesses and residential properties from beaches and waterways, are designed and placed in a manner that avoids conflict with the locale's natural character. The planning documentation advises,

> Fences between buildings and the beach are designed and sited *to be sympathetic with the scenic amenity of the beachfront and do not degrade beachfront character*…Fences between buildings and the beach (a) are no more than 1.5m in height; (b) are of open construction (at least 50% transparent); (c) *incorporate light materials*; and (d) *incorporate dark colours to blend with the natural landscape* (Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2008, 9.46, *italics added*).

In other instances, roofs, awnings, garages, and other structures reflect the color dynamics of their surrounds, a symbolic gesture. Although the council is unable to restrain (and in some instances encourages) growth and urban advancement, it can "blend" metropolitan-style technologies into dominant panoramas. Through construction design and color scheming, the objects form part of the landscape in unobtrusive ways. Subsequently, visual stimuli maintain their aura in line with the narratives that underpin them.

Blending the mundane into the sacred is one pathway for the maintenance of authenticity within place. Other measures take more creative steps. In particular, the creation of design frameworks established through research (often via consultants) guides new development through a style distinct to the place. In some cases, this reflects a vision of authentic and iconic infrastructure of past generations. However, in other cases, a locale's distinctiveness is represented in colors, styles of housing, commercial infrastructure, and even roads. The Sunshine Coast Regional Council (2008, 1.8) for instance declares that "rural roads" have character that should be integrated into the urbanization of the area. These add symbolically to the overall "feel" of the locale as a rural and slow place. New infrastructure, however, requires more significant symbolic work. In the case of the Surf Coast, the need to maintain the distinctiveness between this iconic coast line and that of nearby Melbourne or Geelong resulted in the construction and implementation of the Surf Coast Planning Scheme.

Built through an inclusive community consultation approach (initially conducted in 1996), the *Surf Coast Style,* which has led to implementation more recently in the Surf Coast Planning Scheme, provides policy for developers and home renovators in order to maintain the aesthetic values that

rank high on collective impressions. Specifically, one purpose of the scheme is to "ensure new development or redevelopment contributes to community" by requiring "development to respond to its context in terms of *urban character*, *cultural heritage*, *natural features*, *surrounding landscape* and climate" (Surf Coast Council 2011, 15.01–1, *italics added*). Threatening this are the proliferations of buildings that are out of character and not in sync with the identity of the area. Consequently, certain key elements are vital to the avoidance of the development of these profane infrastructures. The following is an example of these:

1. Development must respond and contribute to an "existing sense of place and cultural identity" (Surf Coast Council 2011, 15.01–5).
2. Development must respond to "context" and reinforce "special characteristics of local environment and place" by focusing in on "natural landscape character", "heritage values" and the "values, needs and aspirations of the community" (Surf Coast Council 2011, 15.01–5).
3. All development must not impede "landmarks, views and vistas," which should be "protected and enhanced" (Surf Coast Council 2011, 15.01–2).
4. Some buildings in specific areas (Airey's Inlet to Eastern View Hinterland) must use "warm, natural and earthy colour schemes that allow buildings to blend with natural surroundings" (Surf Coast Council 2011, Schedule 11.1.0)
5. Buildings are to be designed to "preserve the night sky ambience of the hinterland" (Surf Coast Council 2011, Schedule 11.1.0)
6. Urban infrastructure in areas of high tourism appeal such as Torquay are encouraged to produce a "vibrant street life and active retail frontages to provide a positive experience and high amenity for pedestrians and shoppers" (Surf Coast Council 2011, Schedule 7.2.0)
7. Development in areas that are dispersed along the famous "Great Ocean Road" are to ensure that they do not protrude over or above "ridgelines or form a silhouette against the sky when viewed from the Great Ocean Road or any other significant viewing point" (Surf Coast Council 2011, Schedule 1.2.0).

Some of these components are also found in the plan for the Noosa region explored earlier. The use of colors that complement or blend into the natural form as identified in item number 4 above is highly similar. However, as some of the points demonstrate, there is a significant attempt to maintain a specific aesthetic in development that cannot be simply hidden.

Of interest to this research here is the binary coding at play underneath some of the provisions outlined. Light counters heavy, interesting counters

mundane, simple counters complex, and natural counters man-made. At a broader level, these micro aspects of place add to the "nexus" of the locale. These planning instruments serve to demarcate the Surf Coast region from nearby cities and other shires. Interestingly, one objective of the municipality is to preserve and maintain a "green wedge between Torquay and Geelong to provide visual separation" (Surf Coast Council 2011, 21.06–5). In other words, the feel of Torquay, the major lifestyle migration/Seachange and holiday destination of the shire, is to remain distinct from that of a city. Journeying from nearby Melbourne and Geelong thus is to feel as if one is leaving metropolitan environs and moving into an area that is distinctly coastline. In order to achieve this, the council acknowledges that aesthetics play a significant role in achieving this. Thus, the "green wedge" is a vital characteristic that cannot be removed.

The above discussion points suggest that collective and personal identity are important attributes to develop, enhance, and maintain in planning for places such as the Surf Coast and Noosa. The deep divisions between nature and city identified in the preceding chapters are contributors to a communal sense of place. Indeed, to have a collective identity that is separate and distinct is demonstrated in this policy initiative as highly valued and important for the Seachange narrative. This type of initiative is carried out in a number of Seachange locales across Australia and the Western world.

An area of growing importance to contemporary culture, as identified by Macnaughten and Urry (1998), is buildings and structures that have heritage status. For the Seachanger, history and the ability to stand amid places in their authentic states provokes deep subjective reflections of simpler lifestyles. The cultural coding of the past is such that structures representing these time periods are held authentic and sacred. Within policy and planning documents, this "theme of ascent" (Frye 1976) is heavily influential not only on the preservation of buildings but also in the style of new developments. For instance, within the Noosa Plan, there is a strong sense that local heritage plays an important role in sustaining Noosa's sense of place. One of the guidelines within this policy instrument recognizes this and proposes that new infrastructure and old infrastructure should share space within the locale:

> *Character areas in rural towns and villages* have also been identified where it is *desirable to protect and build upon the existing heritage values* within the streetscape. The *relocation of historically significant buildings to such character areas and other rural areas of Noosa is preferable to their demolition*. The adaptive reuse of such buildings for compatible uses is also promoted (Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2008, 1.7, *italics added*).

In this instance, historical buildings are protected as if they were religious artifacts, sacred to the community. Destroying them or locating them within inappropriate areas is shunned. Combined with new infrastructure that is constructed in accordance with the "heritage values" of an area, these relics of a bygone era contribute to an overarching authentic aura.

A more exemplary example of this lies in the formation of policy in the Town of Jackson. Within this predominantly rural setting, the municipality has enacted measures that ensure the "flavor" of the township is retained against the oncoming tide of urbanization. Like Noosa, the ability to achieve this lies in the preservation of both heritage and a historically inspired built environment. The image of the locale is highly important for community identity but also for visitors seeking distinction and individuality. This character is linked quite explicitly to a colonial past as illustrated here:

> Much of what can be described as *community character is directly reflective of Teton County's history*. The importance of the County's ranching and agricultural heritage is apparent. Ranches and farms make a *very powerful statement about the community's image and values*, and the fact that they are still such a major part of the landscape is appreciated by residents and visitors alike. *Many of the county's agricultural buildings are historically significant, dating back to this area's earliest settlers* (Town of Jackson 2002a, 3.8, *italics added*).

Like Noosa and the Surf Coast, the collective values held within the community are reflected in built environment. Old structures such as the "Moulton Barn" or "Mormon Row" project norms and values developed through collective nostalgia. Enquiring further on this is not required. However, important for the continuation of this discussion are the steps that the local authorities take in the preservation of this sense of history. Strong policy enables this cultural value to remain intact. It is an example, I propose, of hermeneutics guiding planning cultures rather than rationally located discourses. The Town of Jackson, for instance, has committed strongly to the "Preserve America Community," a federal program designed for the preservation and enjoyment of "our priceless cultural and natural heritage" (Preserve America 2010, par. 1). Undertaking such an initiative is considered vital for social and economic progress as it recognizes the potential for "our heritage" to be used for profit not only economically but also socially (Town of Jackson 2009, par. 7). It recognizes that not just visitors but also locals and lifestyle migrants will enjoy "local historic resources" that connect to the township's identity and cultural iconic value (Town of Jackson 2009, par. 7).

In other documentation, the flavor of these historical resources is located as a style to be emulated in new infrastructure, similar to other locales. Consider the following:

> In the Town of Jackson the character, quality, and scale of the built environment all reflect the history of Jackson Hole. Jackson began as an agricultural service center, or "cow town," but it quickly gained prominence as a gateway community to Yellowstone National Park. The *rustic flavor of the western architecture* which has resulted, particularly the use of logs and other natural structural materials, help set Jackson apart from other communities and lend it a uniqueness as a destination resort (Town of Jackson 2002a, 3.8, *italics added*).

Similar to the Noosa example above, mundane objects and their construction are a focus of policy. Spectacular natural surrounds, which are valued highly in the area, are foregrounded by infrastructure that maintains specific character. The early constructions that "built" the town are now considered to be the area's peculiar charm. The "rustic flavor of western architecture" in particular provides the place with a symbolism deeply embedded in the American cultural landscape. However, the construction of new infrastructure that adheres to this historical style is quite clearly intended to maintain the town's individualized identity against urbanization. The loss of this "flavor" would result in a loss of the place's savor. Certainly, the underlying message here is that authenticity is at stake. New residents, new developments, and new contemporary resources all threaten to bring the township's unique aura into a modern age.

Policy to Preserve and Enhance the Authentic Community

In modern times it has been fashionable for local and state authorities to promote social development through programs and policies. Entire departments with the sole purpose of ensuring equity, engagement, and a sense of collective identity within communities have been developed, an indication of the advancement of liberalist techniques (see Rose 1996). Within Seachange towns, these programs are as important to the future of townships as the environmental/aesthetic protection measures that were explored earlier. In the face of massive population growth, these once-small areas are faced with unprecedented populations and consequently, all the urban trappings that can create issues of isolation, individualism, and social reserve. Gurran, Squires, and Blakely (2006, 24) observe:

> Amenity communities subject to rapid population growth often experience a loss of sense of community or connection to social networks, due to the

> influx of new residents and visitors, and population instability or turnover as many new residents move on to a new destination within a short period of time. This has been described as "migration turbulence," referring to the impact on community cohesion as new migrants take time to settle in and participate in social life (Stewart 2000, 374). Exacerbating the phenomenon is the high proportion of migrants who ultimately find they are unable to establish meaningful social (or economic) connections in their new locality, and thus move on.

Communities built upon foundations of social harmony and inclusion are therefore challenged by the social dynamics of in-migration through Seachange. As the warning implies, the inability of urban escapees to ground themselves in an area promotes an unsettling of identity and a loss of place value. However, it is not just new migrants that can find the impact of Seachange disconnecting. Population turnaround often brings wealthier people into the area seeking their haven from the city, or it brings second-home buyers looking for holiday homes and investments for seasonal tourist accommodation. This leads to the imminent prospect of value conflict and an open pathway to gentrification, resulting in a nonhostile takeover of townships that become places for the rich. Issues such as these degrade an area's attractiveness to the lay public, causing rifts between the ordinary and the upper classes. A by-product of such counternarratives is a loss of meaningful social/cultural ties and a society lacking in cohesion; or, in other words, the decline of the authentic community. The maintenance of the collective and the promotion of harmony is therefore of high importance within Seachange policy discourse.

Realizing this, several Seachange towns have begun working on measures that combat "population turbulence" and avoid the pitfalls that plague metropolitan areas and societies. In particular, social planners target isolation, which causes individuals to feel excluded from social networks and a place-specific identity. For new migrants, some locales provide "welcome packs" that attempt to integrate individuals into collective groups and introduce them into their new lifestyle (see Gurran, Squires, and Blakely 2006). In other areas, stronger initiatives are introduced. In Brighton and Hove, for instance, a strategic partnership has been established with the aim to promote a "place where communities are strong, inclusive and cohesive and have opportunities to get involved and influence decision making" (Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership 2010a, par. 1). The latter point relates significantly to the notion of recognition and equity in democratic systems, a site of dramatic tension within social theory and philosophy (Fraser 2001; Bauman 2001; Honneth 2001 Douglas 1993). I will return to this point shortly.

First, initiatives that aim to alleviate the problems of societal disunity are examined. A range of options are explored by local councils that appear to draw heavily upon the idea of uniting individuals through meaningful activities. Providing resources that promote and sustain volunteer programs appears as one of these avenues. In the Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership, the continued support of these is vital for the strengthening of community bonds. Alongside enabling opportunity for political engagement from the "third sector" with local councils, the organization also aims to "increase opportunities" for volunteerism, which is acknowledged to develop "local social capital and transferable skills" (Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership 2010b, par. 19). The faith in the ability for such programs to establish collective cohesiveness is further demonstrated in the organization's future objective of promoting volunteering as a significant contributor to community and the ability it has to increase "the capacity" for "third sector" services (Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership 2010b, par. 20).

We could juxtapose these actions against the "themes of descent" (Frye 1976) established in earlier chapters. In particular, the lack of meaningfulness that causes many socially aware Seachangers to lament on the state of the city is fought against through volunteering programs. Working with others, for free and for causes counter to the materialistic and individualized metropolitan persona, creates opportunities for members to be involved in meaningful areas. Volunteering forms part of the transformation from city to rural lifestyles for the Seachanger as illustrated in one participant's comments: "Since I've been up here I've been fighting with the community to not put high rises up . . . and I wouldn't have bothered in Sydney" (Osbaldiston 2006c). Opportunities to serve in capacities outside the world of money economy promote a sense of self-authenticity and esteem. However, underlying the motivation for Brighton and Hove's advocacy of volunteering is a desire to develop collective identities. "Community engagement" translates into collective well-being. As diverse people are brought together, strangers in a common cause, the doorway to a communal sentiment is opened, as highlighted by the Seachanger's comments above.

Brighton and Hove are not alone in these sentiments. Across the Seachange landscape, locales are developing strong programs that promote opportunities for people to be together in a collective. A recent report developed by the advocacy group "Volunteering Australia," for example, urges regional locales to treat volunteer programs as a valuable tool in the promotion of social harmony, collective interests, and community engagement (Lee-Ack 2009). It is the heart of country life. However, volunteer initiatives are not the sole avenue for these objectives. The Clarence Valley Council for instance in 2010 approached the issue of social cohesion through sport,

cultural, and other community groups based on leisure and creative pursuits. Targeting the issue of isolation as a matter of high importance and using the World Health Organization as a guide, the council argued that "social exclusion" results in "major impacts on material and impacts society as a whole" (Clarence Valley Council 2010a, 53). A collective cohesiveness that reflects the cultural narratives of "warm," "friendly," "peaceful," and "caring" is considered as a major resource for the locale to protect and enhance. In a new social plan the council declares,

> The Clarence Valley has a large number and range of volunteer organizations, hobby and self-help groups and clubs, resulting in strong participation in that sphere. The range of these groups is another major strength contributing to the lifestyle enjoyed by residents…The Social Plan recognizes that whilst these assets strengthen community, there are sections of the community who are unable to access them (Clarence Valley Council 2010a, 54).

Through community forums and focus groups, the council has located part of the problem with access as related to promotion and resourcing of these community groups. Subsequently, plans to provide capital for funding are in place. However, my purpose here is not to elucidate further on the technical processes. Rather, it is to illustrate how cultural narratives that characterize regional locations are embedded in the development of policy and planning at the social level.

Subsequent to the development of this social plan, the Clarence Valley has initiated programs to promote significant cultural and creative events in the shire, the purpose being to provide a festival setting where temporal moments can be shared in mutual celebration. These times could be considered as sacred without the mythologies of religious sentiment attached (see Hubert 1999[1905]). In other words, they are settings that promote collective effervescence. An illustrative example of this promotion at work is the resourcing of community celebrations of Australia Day (national holiday), where the council supplied numerous community organizations and community groups with "BBQ Packs" in order to assist people in celebrating the day in a "truly iconic Australian way" (Clarence Valley Council 2010b, par. 4.). Using the "spirit" of the event, the local council promoted opportunities for people to come together and enjoy events such as "billycart derby to lawn bowls" (Clarence Valley Council 2010b, par. 5).

The purpose here is clear. Using this iconic annual event, social planners aim to facilitate a festival-type atmosphere among individuals. The "spirit" of Australiana, or the narratives that underpin an Australian identity, provide the motivation for such initiatives. Neighborhoods are to come together in collective reverie under the guise of acknowledging country

and kin. However, like volunteering programs, the design of this social plan is to unite strangers under a common cultural icon, allowing individuals to identify with the place and their neighbors. Of course, the inherent danger of such festival-like "secular" worship is that it often leads to moral transgression. Sacred "times" are easily led toward the ludic through excess (Durkheim 1995[1912], 387; Hubert 1999[1905]). Recent events in the region as reported by the Community Safety Precinct Committee (2009) suggest that there have been alcohol-fueled problems on this day. As a result, the committee has called for a ban on alcohol in public spaces such as beaches, where ludic behavior such as brawling and swearing have become common sites (The Coffs Coasts Advocate 2010). Though this example is quite specific, descent from a sacred time into the liminal or even profane in this manner is replicated in a variety of other celebratory events across the West.[1]

Along with a motivation to bring communities together to strengthen collective sentiments is the desire to increase community interest and engagement with the political sphere. This could be viewed as simply an aspect of good governance, but as will be shown later, the dislocation of the public from the political can lead to significant distrust and ill feeling among community members. In relation to development, which can lead to the loss of important spaces for some residents (including Seachangers—see Gurran, Squires, and Blakely 2006), the lack of procedural engagement often results in manifestations of anger toward local authorities. In some instances, a clash of cultures occurs when two different groups attempt to advocate for or protest against urbanization.

Local councils bid for the hearts of their community members and Seachangers in order to combat problems of distrust through outreach programs and consultation initiatives. The role of these is to promote a belief among locals that they have a voice that can be heard, especially in relation to the aesthetic destiny of the place. Brighton and Hove, for instance, have established strong communication networks for individuals to make comments on proposed developments, infrastructural changes, transport issues, and other important policy issues. Through these networks, the council aims to develop a culture of understanding between government organizations and the community they serve. Programs and initiatives in particular are key strategies that are developed to enable "residents" to "find out about current consultations and give their views" (Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership 2010c, par. 1–2).

The purpose of this community consultative approach is to ensure that council decisions result in good will among the residents. The residents' concerns become the council's concerns. Dealing with small local communities in such a consultative manner is frequently recommended by social

researchers investigating coastal and regional townships (see Moss 2006a; Gurran, Squires, and Blakely 2006). For those towns impacted upon by Seachange, it is vital for local governance to ensure that local community perceptions of what is "sacred" about their towns are acknowledged in future urbanization. Failure to do so could have catastrophic results, with areas falling into liminality or the profane (Gurran, Squires, and Blakely 2006).

Authorities, however, ensure that these opportunities for voicing concern are not simply colonized by the powerful and the dominant. In order to achieve equitable representation, many attempt to reach into minority groups and provide them with the power to speak and impact policy development. While structural equity is important, recognition is as valuable (Fraser 1997, 2001). For example, in the Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership's aims and objectives, "youth" is considered to be at a distinct disadvantage in procedural justice. Thus, part of the area's continued equitable future means ensuring that "young people" are drawn into the program to ensure that their voices are heard in consultation (Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership (2010b, par. 28). Underlying this type of approach are the cultural narratives of freedom and engagement that surround democracy. With an increased participation in local decision making within communities, there is a potential for stronger relationships and a better bond between council and constituents, potentially reducing possible ill feeling between the two groups.

Reflections and Departures

With Seachange growing in attractiveness across Western culture, the development of policy grows in importance for local authorities. As has been shown above, the narratives or themes that promote an area are threatened through the very act of amenity-led migration. Protecting high-value areas from the onslaught of population turnaround is a difficult task. Moss (2006a) and his associates demonstrate this clearly in their work. However, what I have endeavored to illustrate above is how these cultural codes feed policy initiative. The purpose in maintaining specific "styles" or "visual" heritage is to ensure that the binary distinction between authentic and inauthentic is sustained; or rather, that the separation between city and country remains in force. Thus, the spectacular landscape, the pristine natural world, the aura of "old" infrastructure, the presentation of cultural heritage, and the connected, friendly, and engaged community all form part of a town's unique character to be protected and enhanced from profane threats. Policy design therefore cannot simply be viewed as institutional discourse designed to "govern" townships according to biopolitics. While there is perhaps scope to understand local Seachange town policies as disciplinary, it

is clear from the examples above that cultural coding influences decision making. Cultural forces matter.

In particular, the maintenance of those binaries that are important for the distinctiveness of country/coastal communities is what underpins policy here. The increasing penetration of metropolitan style services and the high in-migration of ex-urban residents strains this distinction, however. As in the previous chapters, we are left with questions about the future of these policy initiatives and whether their aims are achievable. As always, narratives can often be challenged by "experience near" (Geertz 2000). Is it the case that for instance, that social isolation or "strangerness" can be overcome? How do clashes of cultural values between ex-city residents and traditional residents influence the ability to develop collective identities? Furthermore, as the need to satisfy the demands of ongoing growth in tourism and lifestyle consumption (such as second home buying) intensifies, how much can a local council actually protect the aesthetic values of a place? Last, and perhaps of great importance, how does the now-dominant narrative of climate change impact upon the narratives of Seachange towns? This last point is one that at this stage is in embryo. As state-led responses to climate change increase, the desire for more housing in areas of high amenity, particularly the coastline, begins to collide with the need to secure the future of townships in the wake of climate change impacts. The ability of local shires and municipalities to deal with these competing paradigms is limited and further research is required to investigate how amenity-led migration will adapt to climate change in the future.

CHAPTER 5

THE PERILS OF SEACHANGE: THREATS, UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES, AND THE FUTURE OF PLACE

THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER SERVES AS THE INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN THE previous two chapters and what follows. For the aim of the last chapter was to illustrate the relatively precarious position that Seachange places are currently in. Councils and municipalities are often torn between the need to maintain economic growth for rising generations and a requirement to maintain those aesthetics that attract lifestyle residents and tourists alike. As the Seachange phenomenon continues to influence the dynamics of urban/regional landscapes, the enormous pressure on amenity resources that provide places with their character also grows. The ability to balance economic and cultural values is often the focus of township plans and policy development. Furthermore, discussing these issues has also found its way among texts and research grants as local authorities turn to the intellectual community for answers to this problem (see Moss 2006a; Gurran, Squires, and Blakely 2006). Yet, as the questions raised in the final remarks of the previous chapters suggest, the problems of Seachange and the threats that it imposes upon sacred place are multifarious. Dealing with these is a mammoth task, especially for underresourced and often underfunded local councils.

Entertaining policy further is not the aim of this book, however. In this chapter and the one that follows, I seek to reveal those counternarratives that threaten the very foundations of Seachange places. Specifically here, the focus is on the physical nature of place and how this is threatened through

Seachange itself. The inception of this movement into areas of once-limited development provides a beachhead for urbanization. Often, as policy watchdogs warn, the very environmental amenities used to attract potential lifestyle migrants and tourists later become an endangered feature of place. Landscapes can evolve into rolling hills lined with cluttered infrastructure or developments that are "out of character" with natural scenery. The production of this results in the degradation of environments not just aesthetically but also physically. Perhaps here we begin to see the split between a socially based movement such as Seachange and a more general migratory phenomenon such as what Benson and O'Reilly (2009b) discuss as Lifestyle Migration. Through the latter, metropolitan mind-sets are brought to regional locales, impacting upon not just places, but also the community that inhabits them. Places can invariably be destroyed through urban escapism as more people aim to discover coastal or country paradises. Yet, this is not the only cause for concern. As our knowledge and the narrative of climate change grows, the future of Seachange locales grows less certain. While we could discuss at length the potentially devastating effects of sea-level rise and tidal inundation here, I demonstrate how places and their identity are being challenged by a need to tackle with the future through mitigation and at times abandonment. Thus, while Seachange places are not through this narrative being degraded by the advancement of the phenomenon itself, they are being challenged by an overwhelming paradigm that impinges on local values of landscape and place identity.

The Shifting Sands of Seachange: Development and its Impact on Authenticity

Repeatedly through this book it has been asserted that the natural world is the backdrop for Seachange both visually and aesthetically. The peace and tranquility of landscape that is narrated by themes that often relate to a colonial or pioneering past enables the transformation from a fast-paced lifestyle to a slow-paced one. Note here, however, that slowness is not simply "living slowly"; it is living with contemplation, purpose, and meaning (Parkins and Craig 2006; Lindholm and Zuqúete 2010). As we have seen, the ability to engage and be "at one" with nature, both flora and fauna, is an important element in the Seachange narrative. The need for these moments to be free from those intrusions akin to city living, such as structures that impede upon a spectacular landscape, is paramount. However, as Michael (2000) attests, being free to experience nature in romantic solitude (not just alone but at times with others) is often at the mercy of other humans and nonhumans alike. His discussion of the walking boot as both a facilitator and at times an inhibitor to the sublime experience is

an exemplary example of this and should not be ignored. Yet, here we are concerned mainly with those factors that influence "place" identity at a larger collective level.

Across the Seachange terrain, the negative influence of urban sprawl associated with amenity-led migration and tourism is evident. Boundaries between city and country that provide places with their esteem are blurred through the paving of landscapes. This is no more evident than in the degradation both culturally and physically of the Spanish coastline, which perhaps once reflected a "true" Seachange destination. Mostly however, it has been more indicative of the "lifestyle migration" phenomenon established by Benson and O'Reilly (2009b), where metropolitan mind-sets have transformed places into ludic and profane areas. Most people moving to the area are less concerned with transformations of the "self" but rather with the climate that the place offers, similar to places in the United States such as Florida. As such, the location is often held up as an example of bad policy design to cope with amenity-led migration (see Gurran, Squires, and Blakely 2006). In particular, the Costa del Sol, Iberian Peninsula, and Costa Blanca regions have, over the course of several decades, developed uncontrollably into a mass of chaos and concretization. Local academic literature has been scathing in criticism of the colonization of natural form and cultural heritage (see Diaz-Orueta 2004; Mantecòn and Huete 2008). These changes illustrate for planning advisers the threats to Seachange areas and the end result should local authorities fail to act accordingly. In particular, the decimation of natural form through urbanization has had a very real environmental impact on the Spanish coastline. As Gómez-Pina et al. (2002, 326) suggest here, the foundations for the area's natural beauty has been under threat for some time:

> In Spain, the large scale urban development carried out on the foredunes during the tourist boom of the sixties and seventies caused the destruction of many Spanish dune systems. As a result of such massive dune occupation, most of the Spanish coastline started to show signs of erosive patterns, particularly in most tourist spots.

Despite policy development in Spain that reduces dune use and establishes restoration practices to provide a more sustainable setting, the area remains in a precarious situation. The inability to balance the desire for development and the protection of ecosystems has resulted in both environmental degradation and dissonance between community and institutions (see Suárez de Vivero and Rodriguez Mateos 2005).

Over time, this setting has allowed counternarratives to develop on the attractiveness of this once coastal mecca for lifestyle migrants from the

United Kingdom mostly. Costa del Sol in particular is an illustration of themes of liminality and overdevelopment:

> Stretching east from Gibraltar along the southernmost coast of Spain, the Costa del Sol is the most famous, *party-hearty, overdeveloped string of beaches in Iberia*. The beaches feature superb sand, and the Mediterranean waters are calm and warm throughout most of the year. *But these charms have brought throngs of visitors, making this the most congested string of coastal resorts in Europe*. The most important resorts here are Marbella, Torremolinos, Málaga, and Nerja. Look for soaring skyscrapers, *eye-popping bikinis, sophisticated resorts and restaurants, lots of sunshine, and interminable traffic jams* (Prince and Porter 2010, 10, *italics added*).

Despite the "superb" natural features of the area, the place itself now resembles a "new urban landscape" that is "chaotic" (Diaz-Orueta 2004, 115). Sacrality gives way to a range of behaviors and situations, like traffic jams, that are characteristic of the city. Furthermore, the carnival-like atmosphere or party-town theme results in the loss of the authentic cultural heritage, replaced instead by simulations that commodify and present cultural form in McDonaldized manners (Ritzer 2000).

However, more recently, these places have also developed strong grotesque narratives. For instance, as a result of the abduction case of Madeleine McCann on the Portugal side of the Iberian coastline, a theme of distrust and significant risk to person has grown. A newspaper commentary on the development of such a narrative argues that this level of distrust in regard to crime and danger is the product of "coastal destruction" that has been "unleashed" through the development of a "concrete hell" (Schoengrund 2007, para.1–9). Schoengrund (2007, para. 9) further argues that if outsiders support and develop rapid growth in urban/city style infrastructure, such as "cement boxes and clubs," in areas like the Orihuela Costa, then they should also be blamed for the "ecological and social problems."

The damning counternarrative that has developed here suggests that alongside the degradation of natural beauty through irresponsible development are the social ills akin to the concrete jungle known as the city. Calls from outsiders to avoid the Iberian coastline for its profane qualities (such as the McCann abduction) are met with significant local hostility. Communities believe, as the above newspaper commentator suggests, that in-migrants and the colonization of natural landscape are to blame for the resulting ecological and social problems. In this case, two cultures are in conflict presenting a social and environmental landscape that is hostile, distrusting, and dangerous. In this instance, the distinction between city and coastline is blurred and "themes of descent" (Frye 1976) flourish.

This is perhaps an advanced example of an amenity-rich locale gone wrong. The degradation of landscape is linked quite explicitly to a degradation of sociality and local culture/community. Admittedly, the Spanish coastline has arrived in its present condition through a long process of urbanization and development. Other smaller and more specific Seachange locales are being impacted upon through built environments in less dramatic and yet similar ways. Here, scenery and natural form, which provide place with character, are challenged by new construction, often from the wealthier classes. In some cases, the increasing movement of people from urbanity through to population turnaround regions leads to a "gentrification" of areas where traditional residents are squeezed out of the housing market. However, it is the introduction of housing that is "out of place" that creates powerful discourses of disgust. For instance, Piha beach in New Zealand, once a mecca for those seeking escape from the urban madness, has received unwanted attention due to unnatural and inauthentic development. In an article discussing this area and the reaction of community members, one commentator makes the damning assessment that through urban style development, "we're losing something unique about the New Zealand way of life" (Matthews 2004, par. 6). He further comments that through rapid growth and inappropriate housing, Piha is turning into a miniature version of "Surfers Paradise" in Australia.

It is significant for this respondent to hold up this iconic piece of Australian culture as a metaphor for the degradation of Piha as a "New Zealand way of life." This cultural icon (Surfers Paradise) is now, similar to Iberia, characterized by themes of absurdity and grotesqueness. In more recent times, it has become a hot spot for "assaults" and is considered one of the more dangerous sites in Queensland (The Courier Mail 2010, para. 12). However, what this commentator demonstrates clearly is the power that built environment has on the character of natural environment. The place is transformed negatively through inappropriate construction. In the case of Piha, this negates the sense of New Zealandness. Matthews (2004, par. 7) for instance contends that through the property boom, and perhaps through a rise of income of those living in nearby Auckland, Piha has begun to attract "large, flashy, prominent houses" that stand out amid natural amenity and that are "better suited for smaller, more discreet places that blend into the bush." He further describes a new place that protrudes out from the nearby "forest of pohutukawa" and begins to "dominate" the views and vistas of the location (Matthews 2004, par. 7). To finish, Matthews (2004, par. 7) suggests that locals are "furious and mutter darkly" about inappropriate developments and the taking over of their place.

The counternarrative at play here conflicts with the place itself. The natural landscape is one that accommodates humans, rather than humans

occupying nature. In other words, humans blend in with their surrounds, leaving the aesthetics of the coastal scenery intact—such as what is built into the Surf Coast Planning Scheme (see previous chapter). In this example, though, the characteristics of homes that are "in style" amid urban/metropolitan places are considered as "monstrosities" that dominate the landscape (Matthews 2004). However, as we have seen in earlier discussions, the major concern here is not simply views, but rather the clashing of two characters and the demise of the binary between city and coast/bush. Stepping out of time and into the "glacial" becomes problematic when confronted with images of the metropolitan present. Furthermore, the flashiness of new houses symbolizes the movement of wealth into the area and the encroachment of people who are perhaps out of character themselves with the locale; or in other words, are like the fake Seachanger seeking not to transform his or her lifestyle, illustrated by their conspicuous consumer-driven approach to their homes.

Threatening these places, then, is development. Property booms that are described in the above quotation as the impetus behind the degradation of Piha are fed by the belief that allowing urbanization allows for economic growth. For areas traditionally left alone in population migration, the prospect of attracting potential capital investment into an area is at times too tempting for local authorities to pass up. Providing opportunities for future generations in industries such as tourism is considered a priority. As we will see later, at times this narrative clashes heavily with Seachanger values. However, the impact of development and in particular the encroachment of second-homes is such that it tears at the fabric of the "authenticity" of a place. Residents themselves begin to decry the continued dividing up and selling off of land parcels that at times stand unoccupied. For instance, one resident in the quiet coastal hamlet of Stanley in Tasmania contends that properties in the township are no longer being bought for the purpose of living in them. Rather, they are bought to serve as "holiday homes," which means more empty houses for most of the year (Vowles 2010, 16). This resident laments that the continuation of such trends is "dangerous" because it takes "the soul out of the town" (Vowles 2010, 16).

While this situation does not detract too greatly from the aesthetic wonders of Stanley (see comments in previous chapter), it does serve as a warning sign for this participant about the future of the township. Indeed, second-home buying and the resulting social "emptiness" has significant impacts upon the "soul" of the small town. If we consider community to be an integral part of the authentic make-up of Seachange places, then losing that to a largely transient population degrades its aura. In some cases, this type of situation results in a no-win scenario for locals. Local residents in areas

such as the Coromandel peninsula in New Zealand, where development has flourished and second homes dominate landscapes, have not received the promised economic boosts (Matthews 2004). The faith shown in allowing urbanization for a greater good is perhaps misguided. In actuality, unrestrained development can lead to eventual economic pitfalls, including housing price hikes, which squeeze out locals.

The threat of these counternarratives on values is evident in the Piha example from the collective "grumblings" toward new properties that stand out of place. In some ways, however, these perils serve to increase a community's solidarity. Impinging upon the moral conscience of collectives within these Seachange places is a united resistance that we can see throughout the phenomenon. Underpinning this is the desire to maintain a distinctive sense of place that is seen to be slipping away with the push for development; in other words, the loss of the authentic has come about. This is illustrated in the Australian northern New South Wales township of Hastings Point where residents (Seachangers and locals alike) have banded together in a campaign called "Save it, don't pave it." Catch cries such as "it's the beach not the city" and "not Dubai, it's called Hastings Point" demonstrate the power of the narratives that distinguish the locale from the city. Proposals for the construction of new residential apartment blocks and other commercial development have resulted in the whole locale being "at risk" of overdevelopment. The authors of the campaign argue vehemently that the place is on the "verge of destruction" through the arrival of greedy developers (Save Hastings Point 2010a, par. 3). Yet, through a community initiative that seeks support from broader audiences via social networking sites such as YouTube, the campaign organizers report that "the tide is beginning to turn" (Save Hastings Point 2010a, par. 3).

It is through communal solidarity that the campaign has begun to impact upon the destiny of the township. Yet, it remains at risk. Two areas within the place are specifically threatened, a strip that runs through the township and another wetland area now fully developed. Once again using a binary coding, the campaigners argue that the main "coast road" is now in danger through proposed developments that are currently with the local shire or in the court system. These particular sites are described as "high density, concrete slabs more suited to the Gold Coast" than to Hastings Point (Save Hastings Point 2010b, par. 2). The campaigners are convinced that should these places be approved for construction, it would leave "Hastings Point in ruin" (Save Hastings Point 2010b, par. 2).

Again of interest is the comparison of what could be conceived of as a "ruined" paradise (the Gold Coast) to this untouched coastal hamlet. Structures that promote domination of built form over nature are abhorred

and blur the boundaries between village and city. In particular, the campaigners contend strongly that the "treeline" that "create[s] character" and "break[s] building form from the sky" will eventually fail under these developments (Save Hastings Point 2010c, par. 2). Threatening this is the construction of units that will stand above and disrupt the continuity of views and vistas. Thus again, the blending of humanity into the natural form rather than the dominance of the human hand is imperative for the maintenance of sacral-like qualities in Hastings Point.

The comparison of the Surfers Paradise–type strip to Hastings Point is a symbolic point of reference beyond urbanization and the towering resort-style structures that shadow the golden coastlines. It also refers to the rampant commercialization of the area, and the degradation of the slow-paced aura that once flourished in the locale. Spatial spectacles such as gigantic malls and shopping arcades have transformed places such as the Gold Coast into massive "cathedrals of consumption" (Ritzer 2010). The symbolic distance between metropolitan areas and the regional locale is therefore intrinsically connected to the ability to keep out commercial enterprise. In Hastings Point, the threat of a "Gold Coast"–style strip means the threat of the demise of its distinctive character. Developers are deemed "evil" and portrayed as only interested in profits rather than environmental, social, and community concerns. A further poignant example of this is the Sunshine Coast Hinterland township of Maleny, which has been fighting for some time to keep development at arm's length. In particular, the community has fought fervently in recent years within the public media against the proposed construction of a massive supermarket from retail giant "Woolworths."

In this case, the place became a battleground for Seachangers and residents to fight against commercial enterprise from the city. For them, at stake was the natural beauty and biodiversity of the area, which had and still has high collective value for Maleny. In particular, it was proposed by community groups that a large platypus colony would be destroyed through the construction of the supermarket. Despite the best efforts of the community in opposing this issue, which held nationwide interest, the corporation won the ensuing legal and planning battle. The campaign website argues that the land that is now home to the supermarket was not only home to platypus, but also would have been a "vibrant habitat" that could have been used for "parkland" for the community (Maleny Voice n.d., par. 12).

The example of Maleny demonstrates the power of not only landscape but also animal life to connect to community values.Developments such as this supermarket are considered destructive for natural habitats while also ignoring the potential these spaces have for community enjoyment.

However, it is not just the contestation over environmental degradation and land-use planning that has resulted in collective resentment and disdain. The *Maleny Voice* (n.d., par. 16) argues that many Seachangers choose to come to the town because of its "small town atmosphere." Large supermarket chains, retail outlets, and other global fast-food giants, according to these campaigners, do not enhance this value. Rather, they condemn them as socially irresponsible, often destroying local markets by undercutting "smaller competitors" and exploiting local "primary producers" (*Maleny Voice* n.d., par. 16).

Such a rejection of large multinational corporations in small country/coastal townships is a recurring theme across developed nations. In the case of Maleny, the commercial retailer is considered out of character for a small town. They are capitalists in the cruelest sense, known to "exploit" and squeeze out local competition. In other words, they are unfriendly, unwelcoming, individualistic, and socially and morally inept. They represent the city culture and lifestyle that "many people chose to move to Maleny" to escape from. Thus, in the losing campaign, Seachangers stood to battle for what they collectively (with local residents) valued the most.

This resistance known as the "Obi Obi" creek movement maintains its fight despite losing the battle to this day. Its supporters argue with deep emotion that retail giants who seek for profits and nothing else "rip the heart out of small communities" without providing any return for local communities (*Maleny Voice* 2006, par. 7). In recent times, this collective has focused their energies on boycotting the new retail store and ensuring that "newly arrived residents," or Seachangers, are educated on the issues that have transformed the township. This act can be seen as a way to sustain the social solidarity that accumulated during the protest years prior to the completion of the Maleny supermarket. By providing new locals with information on how values that attract Seachangers were compromised, the organizers of this ongoing campaign attempt to use narratives to sustain the community. This example demonstrates not only the power of cultural coding and the "evil" influence urbanization or commercialization has on an area, but also perhaps how Seachange places can maintain a collective will against the degradation of their "sacred" places.

The Maleny and Hastings Point cases serve to demonstrate how a shared value system between Seachanger and local resident can drive forward protest for the protection of natural and cultural amenity. However, these examples should not be considered as generalized across the Seachange landscape. As we will see in the next chapter, cultural turbulence and the "stranger" discourse can act against the narratives of warm and friendly inhabitants that mythologize the country community. Yet, in a counter to the previous two case studies, there are illustrations of Seachange values conflicting

with resident's desires for progress and development. For instance, in the northern Queensland township of Kuranda, a significant fight between new urban escapees and locals has resulted in a feeling of animosity in the community. The situation has developed mainly through the blocking of a number of developments by the green environmental group Kuranda Envirocare. In one particular case, this community organization stopped the clearing of a landscape in a small township called Myola that would eventually house eleven thousand new residences. The basis for fighting against this, according to the organization, was the area's environmental value and sensitivity. In particular, a "rare palm" and "recently discovered new frog species" were at risk from a proposed shopping precinct (Kuranda Envirocare 2007, par. 3). Once again, commercialization butts against natural values. However, unlike the aforementioned cases, these values are not shared. A newspaper report entitled "Greenies Loving Kuranda to Death"[1] quotes from a local businessman who argues that those who have entered the region from "down south" have begun to impose their beliefs on the local community, which he describes as "very selfish" (Bateman 2010, par. 4–6). He continues that although they're relatively new to the area, newcomers believe that they have "exclusive rights" to the place and subsequently deny others, especially those who have lived there for a long time, the ability to modify their surrounds according to their own needs.

In this example, the Seachangers themselves are considered to be quasi-colonialists imposing their values upon a burgeoning community who uses their amenity for financial advantage. Comments following the newspaper article allow us insight into the broader community response. In many cases, the contributors are scathing in their attacks on the Kuranda environment groups. For instance, one commenter argues for the locals to "claim" back what was taken from them by "Greeny Southerner Blowhards" (David M 2010). They follow on from this and suggest that those who oppose the progress of the region should leave. Another commenter decries the Kuranda group's intention as it limits the potential for growth for local families. He contends that Seachangers move into the area and "lord it up over the locals" with their specific cultural concerns (John Tang 2010).

The counternarrative here is clear. Seachangers are seen as the enemies who impose their values on traditional residents. As these comments show, the quest to save natural form and fauna is opposed to progress and the possibility of wealthier futures. Small principally disadvantaged communities are held back from experiencing local property booms that can bring in much-needed income and jobs into a region. However, as the earlier Coromandel peninsula example proves, there is doubt as to whether development does bring long-term economic gains for communities.

Regardless, the Kuranda example is brought to the fore to demonstrate how in some cases, Seachange values conflict strongly with local aspirations for the region. Perhaps this is further evidence of the lack of trust and engagement between those traditional residents and urban escapees. The urban escapees are cashed-up, wealthy, and powerful, imposing their values upon the landscapes of local destinations. Yet, despite this, the president of the Kuranda Envirocare group, who is himself a Seachanger, argues that the progress of the town is found in the ability to use natural heritage to touristic advantage. Development will only degrade this potential. But to get into this debate would detract from the purpose of this example. However, returning back to comments from the newspaper article demonstrates that not all residents agree with the beliefs of other commentators. One particular author, Oliver (2010), contends that in capturing their "little bit of paradise" in Kuranda, it is expected that many would fight hard against development that would destroy their sense of place. Ironically, as the commentator suggests, it is those moving to the area that are indeed "part of the destruction." Subsequently, the answer for this person is clear: stop developing residential homes which would cut off the supply of new housing for potential migrants.

These responses not only provide further illustrations of the value conflict occurring in Kuranda, but also hint toward what is the "irony" of Seachange. As the phenomenon grows and more people seek after the lifestyle promised to them through myth and narrative, the more likely it is that the "themes of descent" (Frye 1976) discussed in this section are going to infringe on collective values. The natural world, the very thing that draws people out of city environs, is now under attack from those very individuals who seek what it has to offer. What the Kuranda example demonstrates is that on one side, urbanization and the lure of regional living promise potential economic growth and on the other, threaten the natural world that gives Seachangers (and tourists) a sense of place. The resulting conflict and animosity between the two parties creates a dissonance in the narratives that underpin country towns (narratives of warmth, friendship, solidarity).

A Changing Climate: The Specter of Global Warming Haunting Seachange

The growth of the amenity-led migration phenomenon has been shown above to be contradictory in nature. This is an important thought to contemplate further. However, in this brief section, I want to explore the development of another narrative that impinges upon landscape and place value

for Seachange locales. In particular, the narratives associated with anthropogenic climate change and saving our planet have resulted in policies and commercial ventures that threaten place value. Dealing with climate change has begun to influence Seachange policy considerably in recent times. In particular, "planning" for future risks within vulnerable communities that are hotspots for future population growth have become a highly important task for policy actors and stakeholders who seek to limit damage and liability for governments (Gurran, Hamin and Norman 2008; Tribbia and Moser 2006). While townships such as those on the coastline have long encountered issues such as flooding, the scientific discourse from climate authorities suggests that these dangers will be potentially more frequent and more devastating. The ability to endure natural disasters therefore is problematic, resulting in a need for local councils to invest in research that understands how they might adapt to climate change impacts and what resources will be needed for their communities. In many cases, particularly in coastal locales, the option of managed retreat, or abandonment is an option heavily explored. Such policies prove difficult for Seachangers in places where mitigation works such as seawalls and groynes are required in order to maintain their "paradise."

Understanding climate change in the cultural sense is something to consider briefly before discussing the specific examples of where the narratives of climate change butt against Seachange themes. Recent explorations from sociology tend to focus heavily on the risk aspect of the human-made phenomenon within the political arena (Wynne 2010; Beck 2010). This is entirely justified. Understanding scientific discourse, political wills, and interaction with societal/cultural values and behaviors is imperative when interrogating how risks are constructed and negotiated by the lay public (Beck 1999; Wynne 1996, 2010; Szerszynski 2005). Certainly, recent occurrences in the public/science divide such as the "climategate" scandal tend to reduce climate science publicly into discussions of "credibility" rather than correctness (Wynne 2010, 290). From this perspective, the authenticity of the "performance" of the climate change advocates in the public arena is a highly important issue (Alexander 2006b). As deniers and skeptics step up their attacks on the science through significant media channels, trust is an issue. The difficult nature and uncertainty of climate change science means that audiences are at times left to their own reflexive thoughts, drawing upon cultural schematics and perceptions that are perhaps not scientific at all, but affective and emotional.

Of course, understanding how texts and processes within climate science operate could be considered as another important arena for social science to interrogate. This would allow insight into the production of information that is then fed into the institutional decision making that alters future policy

and planning. As Callon, Rip, and Law (1986, 222) argue, "Science should be viewed as politics pursued by other means." Certainly an examination of the resourcing of funding, which is fought for vehemently and which flows freely in climate change research, demands some consideration. The monolithic structure that is climate change science is the result of years of using scientific discourse o attract institutional interest and economic support (see Callon, Rip, and Law 1986). Opening up space for investigating this further would no doubt help us to understand the dominant nature of this discourse and the powerful narratives that pervade modern society, often perhaps to the detriment of other "social justice" issues (see Lomborg 2007)

The legitimacy of climate change science within the political arena is hotly contested, especially in Australia and the United States. However, for the most part, policy and planning officials are convinced that anthropogenic climate change is real, demonstrated through a framework of risk reductionism or precaution. In other words, while climate models and graphs are embedded in probability rather than certainty, authorities often choose a pathway where potential dangers and future liability issues posed by climate science are avoided. The discourses of climate science essentially work in a panoptic sense, causing governments to monitor and reflect constantly on their practices as new information continues to come to hand (Barnett and Campbell 2010; Barnett 2009). One of these transformations is in energy production and consumption. In terms of the latter, significant efforts from local councils and municipalities to decrease energy waste have led to large-scale "green" initiatives (Bulkeley and Kern 2006). For the most part, such work detracts little from Seachange locales and their attractiveness. In some cases, it can actually enhance natural amenity by lifting standards and embracing green values. Conversely, at a larger statewide planning schema, the desire to meet growing regulatory demands underpinned by climate science (to meet CO_2 emissions targets for instance), has the potential to degrade Seachange areas, as in the case of wind farms, discussed below.

In particular and of most interest to this book is the growth of technologies that answer the call for sustainable future but do so at a cost. For instance, wind farms that offer clean energy are often viewed by local residents of communities where they flourish as impinging upon their place value. In other words, these structures pose potential threats to the Seachange locale. Various opposition groups such as the UK's *Country Guardian* propose that these alternative energy providers offer little and degrade much. In particular they argue that places where wind farms often develop are "our last remaining wilderness" where people can escape to for peace and tranquility (*Country Guardian* n.d. par. 4). Wind power corporations threaten these without regard for the cultural value that landscape has for not only locals

but also for tourists and lifestyle migrants. The group's website also carries a tone of conspiracy suggesting that places of high amenity have been targeted by wind farmers in the ambition of spoiling the landscape to a point that it "can no longer be advanced as an argument for protection" (*Country Guardian* n.d., par. 5).

At stake therefore are those sacred spaces that remain romantically in tune as antidotes to the ills of life, a place for the "mending of broken souls" (*Country Guardian* n.d., par. 4). Once again, interestingly, it is *corporate greed* that is blamed for the potential degradation of landscape. While in the instance of urbanization, population growth and the attraction of wealth can act as catalysts for "themes of descent" (Frye 1976), here it is discourse embedded in saving the planet. Ironically, the very act of delivering in accordance with an intergenerational justice paradigm results in counternarratives that dislocate the sacral qualities of natural beauty from a landscape. However, like the critiques of out-of-character development from greedy property developers found in narratives in the previous section, those opposed to wind farms often consider that greed is an underpinning motivation for the destruction of their landscape. Campaigners in Scotland's highlands attack those behind wind farms as "money-grabbing developers" who do not consider the impact that their structures have on not only natural beauty but also on the local environment in general (Musgrove 2007, par. 10). Certainly, elsewhere around the world, the concern with wind-power generation has expanded from arguments about natural amenity through to major health concerns. In Australia, for instance, petitions from concerned community groups have resulted in the formation of a federal Senate committee whose role it is to examine the potential health impacts of wind farms (Herbert 2011).

However, predominantly, the outcry over alternative energy sources relates to the NIMBY principle ("Not in My Backyard"), which directly impacts on Seachangers. In another example on the Victorian coastline, proposed wind farms have triggered an emotional response within Seachange places. In these instances, urban escapees seeking for peace and visually clean views respond bitterly to the proposed development of mass wind farms. Already however, some wind towers are in place. The resulting argument from campaigners against them is exemplified here:

> What makes this wind farm proposal somewhat disturbing is that there are many neighbouring properties which are totally residential, that is, the land is residential only. The surrounding area is not all "farmland," nor pine forest. A dozen or so residences . . . were constructed because of their *location and view south toward the ocean and Wilsons Promontory* . . . The owners have built or acquired their home on the basis that they may *enjoy the right of a quiet existence with fine rural and distant ocean views. One residential property . . . was*

> *purchased under the sole incentive of the excellent rural view, quiet existence*, and proximity to the township of Yarram in *order to raise a child, and continue a profession as an author. Others on Bolgers Road were built to enjoy a quet rural environment away from the metropolis of Melbourne and indeed the township of Yarram* (Yarrampa n.d., par. 12, *italics added*).

In this instance, initiatives that aim to mitigate and control the future destiny of the climate are shown to be incompatible with place value for Seachangers. It should be noted, though, that these values are themselves contested, with some areas divided on the issue of sustainable energy and the placement of wind farms. Indeed, some Seachangers fight vehemently for the development of alternative sources such as these. Yet, the uproar over these structures has caused developers and national governments (and other more localized ones) to consider placement of wind farms in areas of less appeal to communities. These include offshore sites that are at times quite costly but less socially expensive. However, as shown above, the inception of policy initiatives has already resulted in some aesthetic degradation. Green technology here is at odds with aesthetic charm.

Similar situations perhaps can be seen in the construction of hydro-electricity plants, dams, and desalination plants. These solutions are often aimed at mitigating future climate transformations. However, the growth of scientific data on inevitable outcomes results in a different type of planning, that of adaptation. Simply put, this refers to the development of initiatives and resources that are used to help communities deal with climate change impacts. Mostly evident in coastal towns and cities where the specter of sea-level rise and storm surge-events threatens livelihoods and property, planning for climate change futures is a big policy arena. Modeling, mapping, and other scientific measures that produce knowledge that science then disseminates into everyday discourse constrain authorities from acting for two reasons. One is the future possibility of liability issues and the other is the potential threats to persons that climate change may bring. While there is often discussion of sea-walls and other engineering options to keep out the effects of sea-level rise and storm-surge activity, most of the discussion in this space involves managed retreat/relocation. This will obviously in the future play a significant role in Seachange. For the meantime, however, those working in planning and policy circles within local and state governments are concerned with ensuring that townships are prepared for the worst. In an interesting way, the phenomenon that threatens the natural and cultural heritage of Seachange places also serves to provoke instrumentation that preserves them.

There are several instances now emerging where Seachange locales that are iconic are beginning to feel the burden of planning for future climate

change impacts. In particular, some locales that are sustained actively in order to capture their sense of iconic place are being abandoned or retreated from because of the dangers posed by the natural world. In other words, adapting to climate change can result in the degradation of natural amenity though a politics of abandonment. One such example in the United Kingdom was the controversial *Making Space for Water* policy developed in 2004, which has since been superseded by another managed consultative approach to climate change adaptation. The aim of this planning instrument was to "manage the risks from flooding and coastal erosion" through projects that were to enable sustainable options for coastal locations by concentrating on social, environmental, and, importantly, economic issues (Department forEnvironment, Food and Rural Affairs 2008, par. 8).

This policy and subsequent ones that followed on from it developed in recognition of the changing nature of the English coastline and the long-term impacts climate change potentially brings. Most significant of these are coastal erosion processes that threaten townships. Often it has been the case in England that in the past, riverine systems and coastlines have been managed by authorities to preserve natural beauty and heritage, often to the detriment of biodiversity. In other words, the English coastline has been cultured rather than left untouched. One such space, Cuckmere Haven in East Sussex, has long been tended by governmental institutions to construct a place of beauty. The area itself is in essence a symbol of the English coastline, and its nearby towns (at this stage not Seachange hotspots) facilitate a swarm of tourists and adventurers each year. However, the *Making Space for Water* initiative meant that the haven became a site of much controversy. In particular, the proposed future for Cuckmere Haven was to allow it to "revert to what it was before man began tinkering with nature: a tidal estuary with saltmarsh and mud flats" (Fletcher 2008, par. 2). Environmental managers working within departments that enacted such policies argued that nature was now to be worked with and not against (Fletcher 2008, par. 5). However, underpinning the decision to abandon the man-made cultivation of the local system was a need to facilitate reallocation of funding to combat climate change impacts in more populated coastal locales.

Of course, the initiative resulted in public outrage, with the Cuckmere Valley potentially turning into swampland, consistently inundated by seawater according to tidal flows. Campaigns such as *Rescue the Cuckmere Valley* were launched to raise concern about the inevitable loss of character that would have resulted from this abandonment policy.[2] One participate in this campaign argued that flooding the area would turn it into a scene similar to the World War I site of Passchendaele, a "dreary" wasteland (Fletcher 2008, par. 6). The symbolism again calls upon a binary distinction between something revered and something disdainful. Significantly, the outpouring

of public protest resulted in a more consultative approach to the Cuckmere Valley which is at the time of writing currently being enacted. Locals and institutions charged with the maintenance of the flood mitigation defenses are consulting with engineers and other expertise about what is the best practice looking forward for the region.

However across the developed world, climate change adaptation work is currently in embryo. Consistently, the discussion hinges on issues such as managed realignment or retreat of towns, the erection of bulky sea-walls, or the abandonment of some locations. In the case of the latter, nature is conceived of as too strong and unable to be controlled especially in the wake of climate change. In the UK, for instance, managed retreat is becoming a more accepted vernacular (Fletcher 2008, par. 8). However, any policy of such a making is not always considered appropriate. Belief and faith in modernist practices to control the impacts of nature, such the Dutch's building of dykes, remains firm for some. One local land owner argues that "managed retreat is embracing defeat" (Fletcher 2008, par. 22). What is clear from policies such as these discussed above is that as climate change discourse advances, Seachange locales are also under pressure. In particular, local municipalities that predominantly deal with local planning decisions will continue to feel pressure as their future liability in relation to climate change impacts is called into question (McDonald 2007). In other words, while local planners may feel the pressure to develop locales through Seachange, they are also mindful of the potential for legal action in the future if they allow development to occur in places designated as vulnerable to climate change impacts. In some instances in Australia, higher authorities have stepped up to impose a more cautious approach to development in coastal regions. For example, recently in Lakes Entrance in East Gippsland Victoria (a significant Seachange locale), a state planning tribunal has imposed a strict decision that effectively denies intensive development on a piece of low-lying coastal strip. This they did on the basis of a possible sea-level rise in the future.[3] Such institutional decisions will likely become more important in the future for coastal shires grappling with not only Seachange as a migratory phenomenon, but also with climate change as an environmental problem.

Reflections and Departures

Smith's (1999) analysis of *Place de la Bastille* highlights the fluid nature of cultural conceptions of places. Through different cultural coding, a once-sacred site can soon become an area of mundane or profane values. Similar thoughts could be applied to notions of time, such as festivals that have become celebrations of the ludic rather than the sacred. In the case of Seachange, the transition from a place of authentic aesthetics and high

value is ultimately challenged by the very phenomenon itself. As I have highlighted in the first half of the discussion above, "themes of descent" (Frye 1976) such as overdevelopment, environmental degradation, and other attributes akin to city lifestyles are by-products of population growth. The very act of seeking paradise can ultimately lead to the "death" of the soul of a place. That emotions are connected strongly to these areas is evident in the resulting public disputes that arise when development rolls into town. Angry residents and Seachangers at times bond together with the explicit aim of protecting their sacred grounds. Such occurrences are similar to a religious zealot seeking to preserve holy ground from profanation. However, despite efforts from these protest organizations, often places eventually fall victim to the discourses and promises of development. Wealth and the encouragement of economic growth are often too tempting to avoid for local authorities. At times, as witnessed in the Kuranda example, some local residents also put their faith in these ideas too for future generations.

Looming over the Seachange phenomenon is of course climate change. In this chapter I have sought to offer examples across the Western world where the cultural narratives that define a landscape's value for the migratory phenomenon (and tourism) are challenged by the need to mitigate and adapt to the climate change problem. Wind farms, managed retreat, and other planning controls all serve to problematize a Seachange future for places that are vulnerable to the impact of climate change or for important landscapes for climate change mitigation techniques. Important to our journey here however, is how issues such as wind farms are linked back to corporate greed. The fight in the public arena for hearts and minds is fierce, often referring to the cultural value of an area. One narrative conflicts with another. Often, the mammoth task of answering to future generations now supersedes the need to satisfy current connections with place. The earth is considered precious, fragile, and valuable (sacred) and must be protected from the profane influence of humanity.

Table 5.1 Counterbinaries Working against Seachange Towns

Seachange Place Narratives (Sacred)	**Counternarratives (Profane/Liminal)**
Pristine	Overdeveloped
Slow	Chaotic/Carnivalesque
Natural	Out of Character
Unique	Mundane and Familiar
Small-Town Feel	Commercial Hub
Untouched	Crowded
Authentic	Fake
Pure Wilderness	Damaged (by humans)

Thus, like the binaries that are considered above, we can now start to see another table emerge where attributes of areas that are highly valued are being challenged by counternarratives or counterbinaries. Those that I have attempted to elucidate in this chapter are reflected in table 5.1. These serve to destabilize the distinction between the commercial hubs of the metropolitan centres and the slow promoting country townscapes. They lead the place itself down paths of the mundane, the liminal, or even the profane. I will demonstrate this fully in the final chapter later.

CHAPTER 6

The Local Experience, Seachange Communities, and Mythologies

In the previous chapter I outlined how the sense of place that is so important for the Seachange phenomenon is challenged by the development of counternarratives, some of which are unintentionally produced by the participants themselves. It is quite evident, furthermore, that the impact of man-made infrastructure upon the communities is heavy. The development of cityscapes within areas of significant visual appeal can result in the transformation of communities of peace into communities of danger. These are relatively stark counternarratives, where places such as Iberia are considered to be sites of significant crime. The discourse of the stranger and the psychosocial reserve of the metropolitan are here in full effect (Simmel 1997[1903]).

The counternarratives that relate to the social/cultural amenity of Seachange, however, need not be confined to the deleterious and the dangerous. In many instances, the "experience-near" (Geertz 2000) or the actual experience of the Seachanger does not always match with the "community in the mind" (Pahl 2005). The narratives that color the sociality of regional places as warm, friendly, caring, and meaningful are often challenged by reality. At times, there can be substantial dissonance between the metropolitan and the local resident. Distrust is certainly one attribute at play here. Perhaps this is related to the potential influence wealthy people can have on a community. In the previous chapter, we were able to see how wealth can

transform places through inappropriate development and second-home buying. In this chapter I wish to extend this further by showing how, through Seachange, entire areas can be gentrified to the point that traditional residents are pushed or squeezed out. For the average urban escapee, increasing bourgeois influence can have long-term ramifications for the attractiveness of an area. In particular, a once-viable Seachange place can be labeled fake, losing its genuineness and charm. In this chapter, I will illustrate cases where this has occurred for some participants in Seachange, demonstrating once more the degrading influence that rapid urbanization, or even the gradual inception of urbanity, can have on sleepy, slow, and authentic communities.

Strangers and Rejection

In the cultural theories of Simmel (see Nedelmann 1991), sociality is a major focus. The achievement of a social experience that is pure and independent of objective concerns or ulterior motives is for Simmel an ideal that is perhaps lost to modernity (Simmel 1997[1911]). This is no more evident than within the metropolis where social life is reduced by money to flatness and rationality. However, how this "pure" sociality is achieved is left ambiguous by Simmel. Others who have attempted to utilize his theoretical work in a grounded manner have often pointed toward a postmodernist reading where social experience is fragmented and playful (see de la Fuente 2007).

However, here I wish to avoid further deep theoretical contemplation, though the concept of an "authentic" sociability is one worthy of further consideration. Rather, I wish to use Simmel's (1950[1908]) focus on the "stranger" to help understand further the dimensions of Seachange communities. For as Simmel writes, a person within a social circle can be "near and far at the same time," indicating an acceptance of the individual but also a distance, an embracing but also a reserve (Simmel 1950[1908], 407). Despite a lengthy period of residence, the stranger remains an outsider to the core of the social group. Within the Seachange phenomenon, this theoretical/conceptual insight is at times the lived experience of certain individuals. Unlike the "themes of ascent" (Frye 1976) discussed, local residents are not always sociable, communal, and welcoming. Comments from a Seachanger in a 2006 study illustrate how this "community in the mind" (Pahl 2005) does not match actual experience for some:

> I had a very different concept of moving to the country, 'cause when we moved into the house and we've got neighbors you know, there are about six of us reasonably close, and I have access to their letter boxes and I thought that you know, *they would run over with casseroles and stuff…never heard a*

> *thing*. One woman rang about a month later, and I thought, God, *I thought country people were friendly* (Osbaldiston 2006c).

It should be noted before progressing on that this example is not necessarily congruent with other experiences of urban escapees. Indeed as shown in previous chapters, many find their new homes to be welcoming and highly accommodating. Successful integration projects, such as those found in Maleny, enable local community members to gel immediately with their new neighbors, allowing solidarity on issues such as development. However, expectations that are derived from the deep-seated myths and narratives embedded within Seachange do not always match with reality, as shown here. In this case of social isolation, the new migrant is treated with reserve and perhaps distrust. The reasons for doing so may well be highlighted in the next section on gentrification and the stigma of wealthy people who are viewed as invaders and destroyers of place in these areas. However, the rejection in this example is relatively silent.

In other situations, the societal rejection of new community members is vocal. City escapees are treated with disdain with unwelcome noise and a distrustful attitude. Comments in a local newspaper from a failed Seachanger are evidence of this. In response to an article about the state of Seachange locations, this person reflects that he was never welcomed into town and was treated with "city-like indifference," even garnering some "abuse" for being an interstate migrant (dr_news 2010). In a rather cynical manner, he continues that the only group of people who were friendly and welcoming were the shop owners. In a last swipe at regional communities, the failed Seachanger suggests that in the country and contrary to the romantic notions, he never felt like he belonged (dr_news 2010).

The comments from this unhappy individual, though subjective, suggest some contradictions to the mythologies of small communities that characterize the narratives carried by some into the regional setting. In this case, the individual is totally rejected, according to them, because of their outsider status. The social boundaries between them and the community are strong and cause some antagonistic behavior from local residents—for instance on the road this particular Seachanger experienced abuse because of his interstate number plate (dr_news 2010). Of interest to us here is the collapsing of binaries. The binary of sociality in the city as opposed to the communal feeling in the country collapses through such comments. The manner in which the individual mentioned above felt exposed to "city-like indifference" demonstrates this explicitly. Here, the binaries are blurred and, for this Seachanger at least, the counter-narrative of the place is enough to act as a "theme of descent" (Frye 1976), limiting the value of the place. The cultural response from local residents in both cases illustrates the potential for urban escapees

to be treated not just with indifference but also with hostility. According to various planners and policy experts, this churning and turbulence is a concern for a number of population turnaround regions (see Gurran, Squires, and Blakely 2006; Moss 2006a).

Potential reasons for this distrust relate heavily to the perception of the influence and impact new migrants have on place values. Even after years of residency among traditional residents, this culture of *strangering* the immigrant can remain. Within Dowling's (2004) work on the phenomenon, for instance, there is a unique case that demonstrates this principle further. On arrival in his new destination, an urban escapee comments on his experience in the following:

> It was not long after the family and I had arrived in town. I wanted to introduce myself to the locals, and *the pub seemed the best way to do that*. I spent half an hour virtually chatting to everyone in the place, but it was hard work. It's true what they say about country people being friendly—*but only up to a point*. *They like a stranger* as long as you pass through town and keep going. When a stranger wants to stay in the town, however, *the locals are very slow to accept them into the community* (Dowling 2004, 77, *italics added*).

In this instance, the narrative of sociality in Seachange areas is conveyed by the participant and causes him to attempt to validate it through experience. As shown, the perception that the country town is a place of hospitality and warmth sends this individual to the "pub," where conviviality is at its greatest. Unfortunately for this participant, the "experience near" did not in this case match the "experience far" (Geertz 2000).

Further discussion from this participant reveals a darker side to this community that perhaps the Seachange narrative attempts to counter. While "quirkiness" is considered to be possibly an endearing charm of a regional place, there are other alternative attributes that are less appealing. The following comments reveal this:

> I'll admit that the amount of racism in the place surprised me more than anything. I'd grown up in middle-class Sydney where, even if you had those kinds of opinions, you kept them to yourself. Here the locals are much more open about expressing themselves. And they don't appreciate it if you disagree (Dowling 2004, 79–80).

These attitudes, when compared with the experience of the failed Seachanger above, suggest that despite themes that promote Seachange communities there is an impure or ludic side. Interestingly, the established boundaries between city and country are reversed. The metropolis here is promoted as progressive and politically correct whereas the country collective is a site for

racist ideology and radical conservatism. From this perspective, the coding of the city and its boundaries is confused. These liminal elements are those that local authorities seek to challenge within the Seachange narrative.

Of further interest to our discussion, however, is the manner in which this Seachanger is treated like a stranger, despite staying with the community. After five years, the family is still yet to claim a rightful place amid the township:

> I didn't expect the locals to greet us with a marching band when we came into town . . . but after *five years you'd think they would have accepted us by now.* The kids are fine, but [we] are still *treated as though we don't quite belong.* Everyone's friendly enough, although some of the men are pretty quick to tell me I don't know what I'm talking about if I offer my views on just about anything (Dowling 2004, 80, *italics added*).

The community treats these outsiders as strangers, even though they are "near." The emotional bond between the Seachangers and the community is weak. Subsequently, their desire for a new place that is communal, warm, and friendly is unfulfilled It is striking, for instance, that in these comments the individual notes that his opinions are meaningless among local men. In this statement, the commentator demonstrates a clash of cultures where Seachanger's values are devalued. This resonates also with the Kuranda example in the previous chapter. Urbanites maintain a set of distinct cultural norms and behaviors that are not concurrent with local values, suggesting that the quirks and ludic nature of small country communities are stagnant and difficult to negotiate and even overcome.

It would be interesting to note whether these participants managed to find their way into the social setting eventually after being treated as strangers for so long. Furthermore, whether they were able to connect deeply with other "Seachangers" is another question deserving answers. For as Pahl (2005, 634) concedes, "The imagined communities may have greater resilience" in being lived on the ground rather than simply being a fleeting narrative easily torn apart by reality. Those themes we have considered in earlier chapters may well be the impetus for social actors to live in a manner that fits. In other words, entering a Seachange place with the "mind-set" that the area is sociable and communal can impact heavily on the behavior of an urban escapee. This is perhaps why a number of Seachangers become volunteers, choosing to become active seekers of social networks rather than being passive victims of isolation. Websites and forums are full of illustrations of Seachangers doing just this. In one example, some commentators recount that within their new locations, they immediately decided to be "part of the community" by joining groups, volunteering with the local firefighters and environmental

groups, and mixing with neighbors (Grahame 2010, par. 3). Despite reservations, they have eventually begun to establish social networks and developed good friendships and "acquaintances" (Grahame 2010, par. 3).

Moments such as these remotely reflect the behavior of the Christian colonialists of Jerusalem who, according to Halbwachs (1991[1941]), transformed the city to fit perceived Christian dogma. As another participant later suggests, Seachangers can "create change from within" by behaving in a manner fitting specific values (in this case, "green" political or environmentally progressive norms) (ecodharmamark 2010, par. 3). Despite the lack of deep societal connection at times, these participants live the narratives that attracted them to the country. The values they bring are seen as true and can alter local cultural customs and perceptions. In other words, the cultural narratives that feed the phenomenon are firm in the face of counternarratives and realism.

However, as highlighted in the Kuranda example in the previous chapter, these value preferences can at times cause disharmony within communities. Furthermore, despite attempts to integrate into local collectives, many find it difficult to "crack" the social boundaries. In particular, as exemplified in examples above, it is difficult to overcome the "stranger" category. Interestingly, this is a boundary that in certain places can never be overcome, according to some Seachangers. For instance, in a post from Springtide (2010, par. 7) on a forum dealing with the movement, it is suggested that in parts of Tasmania, Australia, you will never be accepted unless you are a direct descendant of the area or an intergenerational member of the community. Some commentators suggest that some of their friends who have Seachanged into the area in question have "generally given up on trying to be social," instead choosing to meet up with other Seachangers in the community to socialize (Springtide 2010, par. 7).

Interestingly, observation work from this author in 2006 (Osbaldiston 2006a) suggests that unless the Seachanger is moving into a readily available social network within the regional locations, such as a church or sporting team, they can find themselves isolated for a while. Some participants live out expectations by finding other like-minded Seachangers and forming their own subgroups. Whether this promotes communal harmony or disrupts it is a question that needs further consideration.[1] However, what is clear here is that Seachangers can find it difficult to overcome the "stranger" label in rural and regional townships. In some instances, such as those discussed above, a lengthy period of isolation or being "strangered" can place significant strain on the Seachange experience and eventually lead one back to the city. Indeed, as has been stated by a number of studies (Ragusa 2010a; 2010b; Osbaldiston 2006b; Dowling 2004), leaving behind one's social network in the city is at times one of the greatest risks undertaken in Seachanging.

Cashed-Up Urbanites and Social Impacts

Understanding the rejection of newcomers into areas of high aesthetic importance may relate to a long-standing tradition of disliking the city and those who come from it. This is alluded to in Simmel's (1997[1903]) comments that country people look upon metropolitan people with an air of contempt for their socially reserved attitude. Perhaps this is also evident in the manner in which Williams (1973) discerns that country life is traditional and "old," whereas the city is progressive and "new." In this way, urbanites and metropolitan folk are nonconservative and challenge well-established value systems within the regional locales. However, it is clear that one of the underlying sources of discontent with city escapees is the danger they pose to natural and cultural heritage. Indeed, as shown in the previous chapter, older Seachangers alongside local residents complain about the manner in which wealthier second-generation Seachangers alter landscapes and vistas. The demise of place here is led by the development of buildings that stand against the values that are inscribed in the "spirit" of the area. Certainly, the impact of out-of-character houses in Piha beach in New Zealand has residents feeling resentful, as discussed in the previous chapter.

However the development of distrust toward new Seachangers is not just the result of visual scarring on sacred landscapes, but also a result of their impact on community life. As one Stanley, Tasmania, resident lamented previously, investment into the housing market from second-home buyers tears at the core essence of the place. Policy and planning researchers have also expressed concern about these issues. Moss (2006b) contends that wealth is in particular an issue amid smaller communities. The divide between rich and poor can grow in areas of high environmental and cultural amenity when "cashed-up" urbanites enter an area that is not wealthy. Gurran, Squires, and Blakely (2006, 25) comment that the

> [d]emand for residential and urban development gentrifies high amenity areas by increasing property prices, and redeveloping traditional low cost housing stock, like older weekenders, holiday houses and flats, and caravan parks (which are often an important source of affordable retirement and crisis accommodation for low income households). Housing affordability is one of the key socio-economic issues affecting high amenity destinations in Europe and the United States.

Thus, Seachange locales that traditionally have low-cost housing and a marketplace populated by low-income earners are injected with wealth from urban escapees who have (at times) significant capital resources.[2] Housing stock becomes colonized, having a significant impact upon poorer community members. The "increased capacity of new migrants to pay for housing"

thus creates a polarization between the wealthy and nonwealthy, forcing some traditional residents into an increasingly expensive rental market.

For instance, in one of the "original" or traditional Seachange locales of Byron Bay (northern New South Wales, Australia) which is known for its pristine beaches and laid-back culture (it was once also a hippy haven), it is now reported that middle-class residents, not just the lower classes, are struggling with housing problems. Howden (2009, par. 2) reports that these people are now paying over "half their earnings" on rent and find it difficult to obtain reasonably priced land and homes. Other coastal locations that surround this now high-status area are also enduring similar conditions. The Ballina shire, for example, has an average weekly income of $779 (AUD), which is almost $250 (AUD) below the Australian national average. However, housing value in this region doubled from 2001 through to 2006 (Howden 2009). As a result, residents are squeezed out of the region. Lower- to middle-class families and individuals seek escape from these stressful situations by migrating to satellite regions where cheaper land and property still remain. In the case of Byron Bay above and the region of northern New South Wales, areas inland, away from the coastline (and the lifestyles that are found there), are accommodating these regional refugees. Such changes have created a polarization not just of townships, but also of regions. In other words, there is a distinct gentrification and spatial distinction occurring between classes. The differentiation of places according to class then makes it difficult for towns to retain their authentic image across the classes. Rich people are viewed at times as colonizers and inauthentic.

In another example, in Teton County, the cost of housing has consistently for the last two decades exceeded the US national average, mostly due to the wealthy buying up "second-home" property. The Town of Jackson's government and planning authority reveal their concern over the matter in the following report about the situation:

> Since second home owners *can generally pay more* than residents when purchasing property, the price of property in Teton County has become unaffordable to most Teton County residents. As a result, many of those employed in the County have been forced to find housing outside the community, share housing with others, live in substandard or inadequate housing, or hold more than one job in order to afford the limited housing that is available (Town of Jackson 2002b, par. 1, *italics added*).

Situations such as this are common across the Seachange phenomenon, where in areas of high international and domestic tourist status and lifestyle migration, "actual" residents are forced into other lower cost areas (Buckley et al. 2006; Moss 2006b; Stefanick 2008). While the issues discussed here

are structural, they have cultural consequences. Most important, of course, is the manner in which this situation is strikingly similar to that in cities. Often, people within urban environments are pushed further out as prime real estate is colonized by the wealthy. In particular, the squeeze on middle-income earners to seek cheap land and housing in "perimetropolitan" or fringe cities is becoming an increasingly familiar phenomenon in major cities (see Burnley and Murphy 2004). The inability of lower- and middle-income earners to enter the housing market, at both the purchase and rental level, is a symptom perhaps of the transition of a coastal/country mecca into a mini-metropolis.

In relation to this, working-class advocate and social commentator Barbara Ehrenreich has much to say. In a piece in the publication *The Nation* entitled "This Land Is Their Land,"[3] Ehrenreich condemns the wealthy takeover of rural America. She argues emotively that "if a place is truly beautiful, you cannot afford to be there" (Ehrenreich 2008, par. 4). The wealthy have colonized areas of aesthetic significance to the detriment of middle- to low-income earners. Ehrenreich (2008, par. 5–6), interestingly, discusses Teton County as an example of this. She recounts a time when she herself was a resident of the area where the rich and the workers enjoyed the "same scenery" and were able to "hike along the same pine-shadowed trails." However, as wealth and celebrities began to enter the region, family estates and old farms became "vast dynastic estates," turning one area, Driggs, into an "unaffordable" place to live (Ehrenreich 2008, par. 5).

In what is a highly charged attack upon the manner in which the wealthy have taken over once-equitable spaces, Ehrenreich (2008) demonstrates the influence the rich can have on an area's appeal. Whereas previously, aesthetic values were shared equally and enjoyed without discrimination, those with enormous capital resources have now taken over, squeezing out the low-income earners and renters and subsequently degrading original charm. Seachange from this perspective is becoming an unaffordable dream, it would seem. However, the impact of wealth upon local communities is felt most strongly in relation to the cultural perception of the authentic. On this subject, Ehrenreich (2008, par. 14) argues that despite marketing techniques that claim that areas such as the "Hamptons" retain their charm and character, the "human sources of local color" have been usurped by the rich. Small villages are now swamped with "million-dollar second homes" (Ehrenreich 2008, par. 14). In other words, the charm that gave these places their identity and fame has now been lost to the fake, inauthentic, wealthy classes, who blur the lines of distinction between city and country/coast.

While Ehrenreich's comments are indicative only of her opinion and are obviously subjective, it would appear that the anxiety over wealthy immigrants is common. Here, she reveals how gentrification can rip out the soul

of a community's identity. Places which are underpinned by "themes of ascent" (Frye 1976) such as community warmth and a small-town atmosphere are overrun, according to Ehrenreich, by the interests and lifestyles of wealthy migrants. Certainly, the opinion and view of locals, even from Seachangers themselves, towards these newcomers is often geared toward the negative. Places of rich subjective enjoyment and high environmental amenity are also considered to be developing only to satisfy one type of class. While housing is one area that causes heated debate, some complain that towns are now beginning to accommodate metropolitan "tastes" as well. This again is demonstrated in comments in blogs and newspaper websites. In one particular example, a local resident in the town of Byron Bay argues that the place has transformed to "accommodate" the wealthy Seachangers and tourists alike (Hildreth 2010, par. 6). They continue by stating that those who enter the town recently are a "new breed" who generally come from Sydney and who are rich. In a final scathing comment, this resident argues that these particular Seachangers are "fake" and contends that many do not last the distance in their migration to small-town, beachside living (Hildreth 2010, par. 6).

This damning assessment of the impact of Seachange upon an area is important to consider briefly. Here the disdain for the wealthy elite is evident. Their cultural tastes or habitus are main drivers of change in this area, according to the commentator. As various commentators suggest and hint at, Byron has become a hub of consumerism driven by a motivation to satisfy new rich migrants; or conversely, to capitalize on the rich procession entering town. Thus, as housing is becoming increasingly an area for only the wealthy, so too is the aura of the township, according to one resident. In this resident's final comments, urban escapees are labeled as fake and at times unable to "last" away from the cities. The issue is that these new and wealthy people are inauthentic and of themselves are "out of character" with the setting. However, rather than people transforming to accommodate their new objective surrounds and culture, places themselves are transforming to satisfy consumerist tendencies and urban-like values. Dowling's (2004) work narrates a similar story in which a Seachanger avoids the Noosa area now because of its "mini-metropolis" feel, acquired as a result of shopping strips and other "boutique"-style infrastructure. These serve only the consumerist desires of wealthier immigrants (Dowling 2004, 96). Subsequently, these counternarratives serve as a motivation to Seachange away again in search of more remote and disconnected places.

Gentrification then is a principal destroyer of place for the earlier Seachangers and local residents. The thirst for consumerism, coupled with wealth to "buy up" the pockets of idyllic paradises, are a cause of great concern. As always, the play between authentic and inauthentic, sacred and

profane, is at stake. People and their tastes and habits are also binarized in such a manner. Seachangers lament that new immigrants often do not come to these locales with the proper "Seachange" mind-set. In one blog comment, a local resident complains that in their place "greed" is a massive threat to their lifestyle and place identity (paradisi 2010, par. 4). In particular, the commentator argues that the inappropriate subdivisions and the consumerist habits of those entering the area can eventually "ruin the place" (paradisi 2010, par. 4). In what is an interesting comment, the author finishes by asking anyone seeking to do a Seachange to examine their lives to see if they are truly seeking a transformation, otherwise they will "help ruin" the area they move into (paradisi 2010, par. 4).

While this commentator is evidently complaining mostly about development and the inappropriateness of the way some people build in areas of high amenity (much like the Piha example mentioned earlier), the undeniable sentiment is one that condemns new migrant attitudes. Similar to earlier comments, this person distinguishes between fake and real Seachangers. Their advice to those seeking after a Seachange indicates here that there is a growing narrative of authentic *Seachanging* and inauthentic *Seachanging*. The former involves a dramatic transformation in subjective lifestyles through the embracing of a new objective culture. The latter can ruin an area, such as Byron or Noosa, where consumerism and mass development has led to significant "themes of descent" (Frye 1976) for some. This view, however, is only one, and certainly as Pahl (2005) has shown, one should not impose one's own "community in the mind" when approaching such topics. Yet, what I aim to achieve here is to offer evidence of a growing cultural counternarrative according to which new urban migrants and their attitudes can ruin a place. It is attitudes and value conflicts such as these that perhaps further feed the desire to "stranger" outsiders. Overcoming this is a priority for social and community planners (Gurran, Squires, and Blakely 2006). At times, however, a community can take action, as the Maleny example discussed in the previous chapter shows. Here the onus of ensuring social solidarity and a shared value set is taken on board with the collective itself.

Yet as shown earlier in the example of Noosa for the participant in Dowling's (2004) work, when areas become too gentrified, some simply migrate elsewhere in search of the more authentic setting. As one social commentator writes in the *Wall Street Journal*, there are many new areas that are "unspoiled" that the "rich haven't discovered" yet (Frank 2008, par. 8). In particular, those small towns that remain "uncool" to the wealthy are potential opportunities for those who seek the authentic (Frank 2008, par. 8).

Thus, despite the gentrification and colonization of spots of beauty and unspotted landscapes, there are plenty of "other" sites that one might find in the quest for that authentic place. Urban sprawl, where mobile people

shift in reaction to the overpopulation of certain areas, is one indication of this quest. This is why edge cities (Garreau 1991) or perimetropolitan areas (Burnley and Murphy 2004) have grown in popularity. However, such thoughts are themselves counter to the narratives that provide the natural world with its sacred dimensions. In a comment on Frank's (2008) piece, one respondent argues that a mentality that seeks for the next new place around the corner free from the elite is irresponsible and "childishness" (DK 2008). Specifically, this disgruntled commenter contends that society needs to "grow up" and be responsible not only to the "land" but also toward the communities that are out there (DK 2008).

The message behind such an attack is that environments are fragile and need to be protected from human hands. As the commentator argues, the attitude that seeks to satisfy the appetite for environmental amenity ignores questions about sustainability. This relates not just to environmental concerns or climate change, but also to the societies who are already located in these Seachange locations. The underlying sentiment is that seeking selfishly for one's own piece of "Walden" impacts directly upon a natural and social order that is fragile and under threat from human development. These arguments are shared by many environmental groups, particularly those in coastal locations, that seek the protection of precious dune and estuarine systems.

As a final point, it might be noted that the views expressed throughout this chapter are perhaps contrary to the identified growing narrative that "progressive" and "hip" Seachangers are of value within the phenomenon. As demonstrated in chapter 3 on community, age and the ludic "charm" of the country person is something to be overcome. Towns perhaps stereotyped as racist, unaccepting, or ultraconservative by the disgruntled "failed" Seachangers mentioned earlier are sought to be rebranded as places inhabited by likeminded people with progressive attitudes. Furthermore, the need to avoid the norm where country locales are like elephant graveyards for the elderly causes some governing councils to seek after metropolitan-style attractions that provide an impetus for young people to both migrate and stay. We can speculate that part of the motivation behind this is to secure the future of the town economically and socially. In other words, to ensure that towns survive and indeed flourish in the future, regional bodies and local councils attempt to attract those who will not only live and work within their communities but will also spend money within them, thus boosting the local economy. However, the need to keep up with the ever-growing transformation from agrarian-style industries to the service and tourism sectors is a significant motivator to move beyond the liminal. The delicate balance, as this chapter has shown, is allowing the right amount of growth while maintaining the pure aesthetic charm of the townships. Such a balancing act is dangerous for local councils, but perhaps one they cannot avoid

in this late-/postmodern culture where cities are becoming increasingly the realm of the profane.

Reflections and Departures

The purpose of this chapter has been to expose the weaknesses of the Seachange phenomenon from the social perspective. Previously it was shown how development can degrade landscapes through visually dominating buildings and out-of-character infrastructure. This chapter shows that culturally, people can themselves through their behavior provoke "themes of descent" (Frye 1976). This occurs through "stranger" discourses, where community members are isolated because of their outsider status. Those who arrive in Seachange locales with the expectation of being welcomed with open arms by warm and friendly people may well find themselves experiencing different realities. At times locals and even older Seachangers are distrustful of their new residents. The reason for this is related to an old discourse of city/country dichotomies expressed in Williams (1973) and in Simmel's (1997[1903]) previous works. However, in this instance we can surmise that one of the contributing factors for this distrust is the manner in which new, wealthier, and materialistic Seachangers at times bring a different value structure to a place. As demonstrated, reactions against these wealthierurban migrants suggest a cultural dissonance. Materialism brings change to regional environments, cultural dimensions, and the essence of the place. An improper Seachange attitude that seeks not to transform with objective surrounds but to transform it through development and consumerism is inappropriate for some. Thus there is a growing narrative that defines what true or authentic Seachanging is and what is essentially fake (see table 6.1). The latter degrades authentic Seachange locales and reflects Benson and O'Reilly's (2009b) "lifestyle migrant" who is trapped inside urban behavior and does not seek the deeper subjective transformation that underpins Seachange.

Table 6.1 The Binarization of Seachangers: Between the Authentic and the Fake

Authentic Seachange (or Seachanger)	**Inauthentic Seachange (or Lifestyle Migrant)**
Transforming	Stagnant
Real	Fake
Postmaterialist	Materialist
At One with Place	Out of Character with Place
Complementary to Community	Compromising Community
Deep	Shallow

However, as I conclude this chapter, it is wise to consider that these narratives discussed as counternarratives are culturally located. In other words, the belief that towns and communities are being destroyed by wealth, development, and consumerism is potentially representative of certain social groups or classes. . In reality, social life is much more fractured. Those who are the ones "destroying" may well see these places as sacred or of high value. A place like Surfers Paradise, which is abhorred by some of those quoted in this chapter and in the previous chapter (and used as a benchmark for a ruined sacred aesthetic), could provide the scenery, culture, and other surrounds that entice migration for some. This is the nature of places. They are not collectively perceived but fractured according to social norms and expectations among classes, status groups, and environmentalists (Smith 1999). However, in this book I wish to illuminate the dominant discourses and narratives that flourish around the Seachange phenomenon. For now, these are strengthened through acts of resistance such as those identified in chapter 5. Those places that are untouched, pristine, new, spectacular, and wild are located as areas of high value for the Seachange collective, and subsequently can be considered as "sacred" according to Smith's (1999) framework.

Chapter 7

The Seachange Story: Authenticity, Place, and the Self

> I had this advantage, at least, in my mode of life, over those who were obliged to look abroad for amusement, to society and the theatre, that my life itself was become my amusement and never ceased to be novel. It was a drama of many scenes and without an end. If we were always, indeed, getting our living, and regulating our lives according to the last and best mode we had learned, we should never be troubled with ennui. Follow your genius closely enough, and it will not fail to show you a fresh prospect every hour (Thoreau 2008[1854], 56).

Throughout this book there have been traces of the spirit of *Walden* within the discourses of the Seachange phenomenon. Though Thoreau's experiment was temporary and the dream of escaping the city permanent, the underlying motivation to chase after a lifestyle lost to modernity serves both him and the Seachangers. This occurs, of course, at differing levels. For some, immersing oneself into a different world surrounded by objective cultures and environs that are distinct from the city means a complete transformation of the self. Like Smith's (1999) proposition of the sacred place and its impact upon reflexive processes and body awareness, the Seachange locale alters behavior and maximizes a sense of self. However, the transformative power of these places varies for different groups and individuals. Furthermore, as we witnessed in chapters 5 and 6, areas with high amenity can become havens not for those from the heartless world, but for those who seek capital gain. The urge to own property by the sea or amid snow-capped mountains can transform once-serene landscapes and diverse communities into a homogenized paradise for the rich. Once this occurs, we can add,

"themes of descent" (Frye 1976) take hold, enforcing a counternarrative upon the places. It is my contention that once this occurs, the ability to pursue a discovery of the authentic self, for some, is stifled.

I began this book by suggesting that it was of vital importance to consider the "on the ground" narratives that construct Seachange. Cultural sociology, in particular the American brand of Alexander and Smith (2001), suggests to us that only by describing the codes that underpin these narratives can we meaningfully engage with phenomena such as Seachange. Culture needs to be put first, rather than being viewed as simply a by-product of rationalistic and instrumental decision making at the policy, political, economic, and planning levels. As shown earlier, institutions such as local councils and regional governing bodies are essentially bound by the same coding that is found within narratives among the collective. In some cases, societal pressure and values shape and contour planning decisions within Seachange places. When decisions affect the collective, the response can be one of protest. As the Maleny example discussed in chapter 5 shows, these responses or resistances may well fail, but they serve a wider purpose of creating social solidarity. Yet, differing values within the collectives themselves can vary to the point that Seachangers and environmentalists end up fighting against the very communities they immerse themselves into (as in the Kuranda example). The tensions here, however, are still guided by affective emotions and values rather than by technocratic organizations and institutions.

Because the nature of this book has been to describe the inner logics of the cultural organization in Seachange, there has been minimal engagement with theory to explain it. While I have used the Durkheimian conceptual reworkings of Smith (1999) and a great deal from others such as that great social thinker Georg Simmel, I have not engaged in a thick theoretical discussion of the points uncovered. Some may consider this a mistake, while others may consider social theory as a separate entity somehow disconnected from the empirical world (see Turner 2003). However, my contention is that in order to first understand Seachange, we must see how the codes operate. Although at times it is messy, as cultural life often is (Smith 2008), it is somewhat clear that often a binary distinction between good and bad, purity and pollution, sacred and profane, or authentic and inauthentic guides the Seachange story. The dichotomy between the city and the country is one entrenched in a long history, but is also colored continuously by new themes and narratives. For instance, the pristine and clearness of the country as opposed to the ever-growing and pollution-ridden city is one example of the binaries in action. The contrasts between the two are perhaps exaggerated and romanticized or demonized; however, as Durkheim suggests in his account of religion, understanding the constructed nature of these binaries by no means diminishes the power of their influence on human and social behavior.

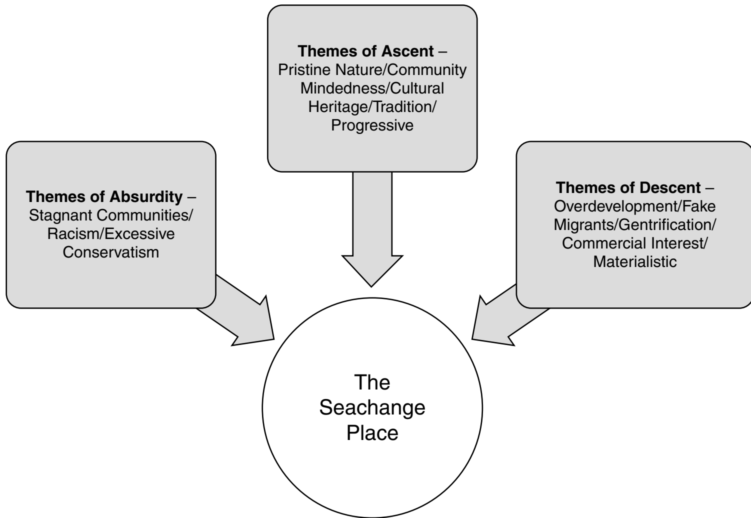

Figure 7.1 The Elementary Forms of Place in Seachange

It is clear from the empirical discussion above that the Seachange place is a contested space. While there is significant effort within the narratives that define it to rid country locales of the usual liminal or absurd perceptions others have of them, these are challenged by "themes of descent" (Frye 1976) that threaten to make Seachange places descend from their state of sacrality into one of normality or profaneness. As shown, local councils have the delicate task of maintaining a certain level of authenticity, which is problematic as amenity-led migration continues. This is especially true when the phenomenon of Seachange begins to adopt less radical motivations. As Benson and O'Reilly (2009b) demonstrate, more contemporary migrants seek less the deep subjective transformations, instead maintaining metropolitan-type lifestyles in areas of high amenity. Seachange then becomes an act of conspicuous consumption rather than a quasi-social movement (see Ragusa forthcoming). The various narratives that operate within the Seachange space are simplified and illustrated in figures 7.1 and 7.2.

As can be seen, the contestation over how these places evolve culturally is quite complex. What I have demonstrated above in the empirical chapters is that through these, the Seachange place progresses along a journey that often arrives at the site of the mundane or, at a later date, potentially the profane. It suggests that culturally, these sites of authentic communal and physical presence have a limited life span. As the push for amenity-led migration continues, the burden upon local councils to maintain the aesthetic

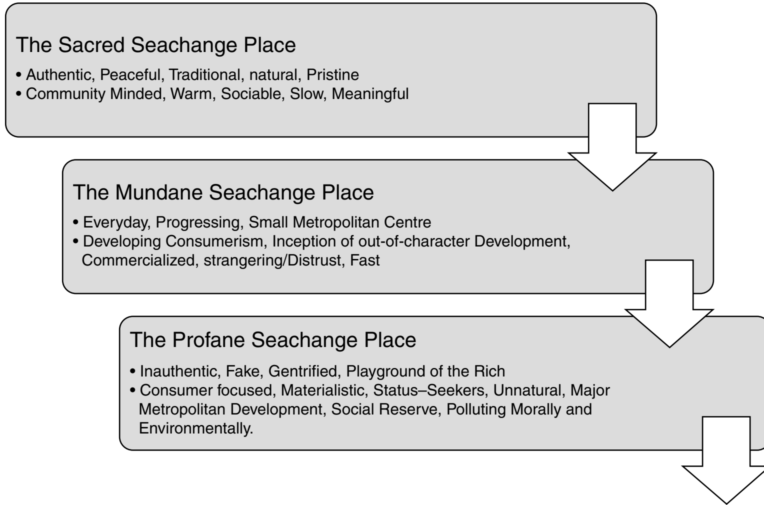

Figure 7.2 The Conceptual Pathway of the Seachange Place

of authenticity intensifies, and often the very powerful players inside the development industry win. As the "themes of descent" (Frye 1976) begin to encroach upon an area, the distinctiveness and separation of the town from the city, the place the person sought to escape, is blurred, creating a perception that the once-pristine Seachange locale has now become the "ruined" sacred. We could argue that protesting against the increased development of areas and the inception of the "fake" Seachanger is effective, but only for a while. As the Maleny example displays, eventually these places fall to the onrushing tide of consumerism and capital markets. As Simmel found in his attempt to find solitude from the city, eventually capitalism catches up. While some places will undoubtedly remain untouched and also perhaps liminal, most places of high environmental amenity have begun attracting the eye of those seeking a better life outside of the city. Once this occurs, the eventual decline of the place into the realm of the mundane is a matter of time.

The development of the phenomenon in this direction is obviously messier than this neat presentation. Structural forces collide at times and can imbue places of high amenity with powerful "sacred" dimensions, as we saw in the case of Maleny and Hastings Point. It is also true that most Seachange places will not devolve into a "profane" place, designated by rituals of avoidance, for a long time, if at all. Yet, what is clear from the discussion in this book is that many sites of high amenity that have an authentic feel fall victim eventually through those counternarratives that challenge the high value of the areas in question. Once this occurs and those attributes of the

city that Seachangers seek to remove themselves from find their way into sacred places, the value of the place diminishes.

With this in mind, it is now important to consider why it is important to the Seachanger for these values to remain intact and for the binary distinction between the Seachange locale from the city to remain in force. Empirical work can only expose part of the puzzle. In my view, theoretical explorations help to conceptualize these a little further, revealing core processes that are at play in Seachange. In this book, as suggested in the introduction and throughout, I contend that self-authenticity is a guiding focus in the escape from the city. Finding oneself and engaging with objective cultures and environments that match the core values (constructed, of course) of an individual help to secure a sense of self that is genuine and whole. Recently, Vannini and Burgess (2009, see also other authors in Vannini & Williams 2009b) have reminded us of this concern that once haunted sociologists of modernity, and that was perhaps sidelined by theorists of postmodernity (Taylor 1991). Unlike those in the Frankfurt School (and perhaps New Age public sociologists like Schor 1998), these two sociologists and others like anthropologist Lindholm (2008) make it a point to suggest that the notion of self-authenticity is nothing more than a cultural construction. However, as they also contend, even so it is still a very real phenomenon. Vannini and Williams (2009a, 3) for instance argue,

> Authenticity is not so much a state of being as it is the objectification of a process of representation, that is, it refers to a set of qualities that people in a particular time and place have come to agree represent an ideal or exemplar. As culture changes—and with it, tastes, beliefs, values, and practices—so too do definitions of what constitutes the authentic.

Thus, much like the sacred for Durkheim (1995[1912]), the authentic object, place, time, or even person can only be located within specific contexts that are temporal, spatial, and, most importantly, cultural (see also Levi-Strauss 1966). Once removed from these contexts, the authentic has little power. Throughout this book, the evidence of what is the "authentic" within Seachange places is uncovered, as are the dangers to it. However, in these closing remarks, I wish to consider the role of the search for self-authenticity in places of high sacral value some more, firstly using Simmel's (1997[1912]) prolific accounts of the self in modern culture.

THE TRAGEDY OF CULTURE AND THE GREAT URBAN ESCAPE

In order to thicken the description of the data further, I pose a pertinent and important question: Why is it important for participants to experience their objective surrounds as authentic? Following on from this is the vital

question, Why do they seek after the "sacred" place in the first instance? The answers to the two questions are closely related, as will soon become clear. Perhaps it already is from the data discussed earlier. Seachange is an escape from the profane setting of the city, sparking rituals of avoidance. However, there is more to the story. The ethical and moral issues that concerned the humanistic geographies of Tuan, Relph, and Buttimer (see introduction) on the loss of place and value or the serious concerns of early sociological thinkers such as Adorno, Kracauer, and Durkheim himself on the loss of something meaningful with the rise of capitalism and industrial modernity are perhaps insights into the thinking of the lay public. Without taking sides on the debate over authenticity, as is the case in the philosophical world, we can see from the data above that questions of meaningfulness and self-actualization are driving forces for the adoption of new lifestyles. This is not simply true for Seachange either. Downshifting, voluntary simplicity, slow food, and other quasi-postmaterialist movements all appear to resonate with the idea of finding the authentic (see Lindholm and Zúquete 2008).

In Seachange, the authentic is the place. The objective surrounds, whether they be nature, culture, or community, need to have a certain aesthetic or charm that resonates with the participant. Turning to Simmel's (1997[1912]) work on the tragedy of modern culture can provide insight into this. In this particular essay, which samples some of his many theories of cultural life in modernity (Nedelmann 1991), the German reveals his own Kantian influence by speaking dramatically on the impact of capitalism upon the subjective self. For Simmel contends, as repeatedly shown above, that the opportunity for self-cultivation is significantly hindered by the progress and enormity of objective culture in the city. These notions must always be taken as socio-cultural constructions, something Simmel and others appear not to consider too deeply in their work. Indeed like the Frankfurt scholars, Simmel seems to believe that the essence of the self is eroded through modern practices, in particular the money economy. My claim, as suggested above, is that these same concerns that drive Simmel's theoretical contributions resonate with the current narratives found in Seachange. The same core problems of self-cultivation, which Simmel proposes, are the fundamental issues at hand for participants in this phenomenon.

To make this point clearer, Simmel's (1997[1912]) theoretical take on cultivation must be considered further. Implicit in his writings is a positioning of the self as inherently seeking cultivation. This process is only achievable, however, through the cultural objects, forms, rituals, and institutions that form everyday life or objective culture. He writes,

> The specific meaning of culture is thus fulfilled only where a person adds something external to that development, where the path of the soul leads

> through values and scales that are not themselves subjectively psychological. Those objectively intellectual constructs... art and morality, science and practical objects, religion and the law, technology and social norms... are stations through which the human subject must pass in order to acquire the specific personal value known as its culture. Individuals must include these constructs and constraints within themselves, but they must really include them within the individual self, and not simply allow them to continue to exist as objective values (Simmel 1997[1912], 57–58).[1]

Objective culture in these forms then serves as the "intermediary station between the not yet cultivated subject and the cultivated subject" (Nedelmann 1991, p.185). Thoughts such as these perhaps echo Durkheim's own view that individuals operating within a societal structure are required to master moralities or social norms in order to become and maintain strong membership. Yet for Simmel (1997[1912]), cultivation of the self requires more. Involved in the journey toward becoming whole, which is a messy process and has an unclear end goal, is a process of feedback between the self and objective culture. The person reflects upon certain cultural institutions or objects/artifacts and adopts them into his or her personality. For instance, the consumption of visual art is one of the many sites where self-cultivation for Simmel is made possible. Identifying forms and narratives that feed these cultural artifacts enable the person to progress toward a unified, whole, or, in the case of this book, authentic self.

The *tragedy* of modern culture for Simmel (1997[1912]), as evident in some of the earlier discussions, is that objective culture has grown into a leviathan, dominating everyday life through the explosion of signs and symbols but also impinging upon the individual's ability to cultivate a strong sense of self. The sheer enormity of these outgrows the capacity of the individual to adapt the objective into their subjectivity. This dominance should not be read however as a crushing of human motivation or desire, as Simmel (1997[1912], 73, *italics added*) summarizes in the following:

> There thus emerges the typical problematic condition of modern humanity: the feeling of *being surrounded by an immense number of cultural elements, which are not meaningless, but not profoundly meaningful to the individual either*; elements which have a certain crushing quality as a mass because an individual cannot inwardly assimilate every individual thing, *but cannot simply reject it either, since it belongs potentially, as it were, to the sphere of his or her cultural development.*

The site where this is most evident for Simmel is the metropolis, which he describes almost a decade earlier as a place where flatness and colorlessness abound. It is a cultural landscape where on the one hand there are

thousands of social actors found within small spaces (such as trains), and on the other hand multifarious signs and symbols that once were limited to art galleries and other similar cultural institutions. The response to these from the individual is the tragedy. Perception is flattened by the flourishing money economy, sociability is limited (reserved), and the objective culture once used to cultivate a strong self deadens the senses (the blasé attitude). Within the Seachange narrative, this cultural condition is often identified by participants as "the profane attribute" of the city.

Postmodernists have often utilized this Simmelian take on modern life to support the notion of fragmentation in identify formation, which is characteristic of an age in which the grand narrative no longer applies (see Featherstone 2007; Weinstein and Weinstein 1993). This subject is hotly debated (Frisby 1987). My purpose in discussing this is not to add to this perhaps past conversation, but rather to demonstrate conceptually the importance of the disjuncture between the city and the country in Seachange. The contention is that like Simmel, the Seachanger perceives the objective world as a sphere crucial to the development of his or her "natural" or sacred self. However, the tragedy is that cultivating the inner self within the city is problematic for these participants. Subsequently, Seachangers who recognize the profane elements of the metropolis seek for the even, peaceful, calm, and "natural" setting of the regional locale. In other words, they replace the hectic and overwhelming metropolis with the objectively slower and simpler country or beachside place that is rich with subjective meaning.

Subsequently, the search for the authentic place is inherently tied to the search for the authenticated self. Inner values that are exposed in the narratives of Seachange find their congruence in the objective culture(s) of the nonmetropolitan area. However, Seachange is more than simply being amid pristine natural surrounds and genuine communities. The transition to a Seachange life encourages transformation in behavior. As people embrace the experience of a distinct and separate town, their actions change, much like the visitor to a war memorial (Smith, 1999). This is the core motivation for leaving the city, a change in activity that is congruent with values. Vannini and Burgess (2009, 104) write on this search for authenticity, which is a common trait in contemporary culture, in a similar manner:

> This is not to deny that people do not rationalize self-incongruent behaviors or find ways of accounting for such conduct. Rather, our claim is intended to suggest that when actions are defined to be congruent with one's values one will feel affirmed and authentic. In sum, authenticity refers to "living by laws of [one's] own being" (Berman, 1970:xvi). These "laws" consist of core values and beliefs about self—as defined and experienced by the self, regardless of its object conditions.

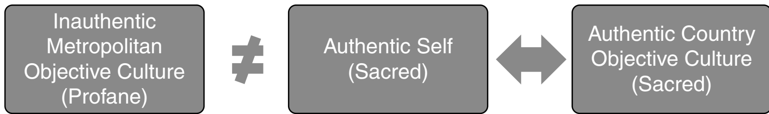

Figure 7.3 The Process of Authentication via Simmel in Seachange

Cultivating an authenticated self, as Simmel (1997[1912]) advocates, through objective culture is only "affirmed" once behavior matches values. Smith's (1999) thoughts on the reflexive impact of sacred places upon the microbodily action of the individual are confirmed here. The force of the sacred place in Seachange creates transformations in lifestyles, allowing the cultivation of the self. This is represented in figure 7.3.

Of course, one of the main messages of this book is that this process is always threatened through, perhaps ironically, amenity-led migration itself. Once untouched environments and the small, simple communities that accommodate them are colonized by the masses, the ability to discover the authentic self is clouded. Development, in particular, which is symbolic of the city, serves to blur the distinction between the city and country. The same objective culture that motivates the urban escape can follow after the refugee. When this happens, as we have seen in examples throughout the latter chapters, the same difficulties that for Simmel (1997[1903]) characterize the modern metropolis can also emerge. Places that fall victim to this urbanization process do not always become profane places (or mundane perhaps). At times, the quasi-carnivalesque nature of an area, such as parts of the Spanish coastline, the Gold Coast (Surfers Paradise in particular), and other residential migration hotspots, causes it to be narrated by the absurd. In these instances, the authentic is lost to the ludic. Transgression of moral boundaries abounds, even if temporally. The seeker of the "true self" seeks elsewhere.

The Quest for the Authentic: The Sacred Self in Contemporary Modernity

Understanding what individuals seek for in their Seachange locale, an authentic objective culture for a transformation in behavior, is only part of the puzzle. I wish here to offer some thoughts on what is perhaps the broader narrative at play in Seachange as well as in other everyday actions. It could be said that the "quest for the authentic" is redolent of a wider thematic that promotes "working on the self" through various avenues. Finding one's true self sits alongside other contemporary concerns that are at times tied together. This includes the need for self-determination (arguably an

attribute of an authentic self), self-worth, love, happiness, and meaning (see Rosati 2009). Of course, developing these is the subject of those self-help therapists, life coaches, and psychologists that adorn the lifestyle sections of the nearest bookstores. In a day when religion is apparently done, the new priests of the late-/postmodern age are flourishing.

Understanding how this is the case is a matter of two opinions, it would seem. On one side lies the Durkheimian-inspired vision of the cultural coding of sacrality and profaneness, which is proposed by the strong program in cultural sociology to be evident in social phenomena such as is the focus of this book (see Alexander 2006a; Smith 2008). On the other lie the more dominant contributions of the Foucaldian-inspired school of thought where expertise is the main contributor to the shaping of the private self (Rose 1996; Foucault 1980, 1990; Miller and Rose 2008). From the perspective of the former, culture has a power that can transform institutional thinking (such as how local councils approach planning and policy for housing and other aesthetic issues, as seen in the earlier chapters); from the perspective of the latter, institutional thinking has a significant impact on not only what but also how people choose to live their lives. Both provide interesting points that relate to Seachange; however, both are incongruent with each other. Before engaging further with this however, I will entertain these two schools of thought by interrogating the notion of the self with reference to the phenomenon in question in this book. While Simmel (1997[1912]) can perhaps show us what is sought after in these Seachange places, these two other theoretical frameworks can expose the broader question of why.

While discussing a subject as crucial to the phenomenon as the self, one need not look much farther than Durkheim and his nephew Marcel Mauss. In particular, Durkheim's work on the subject has delivered an insight into how the "soul" is envisaged in our modern times. Loosely developed in the *Division of Labour* and subsequently explicitly described in "The Dualism of Human Nature," the self for Durkheim is an "abode" (1973[1914], 149) infused with certain characteristics that give it high collective value. In other words, the human soul is a sacred being, not unlike the wooden cross in religion or the ANZAC or 9/11 memorial in secular society. It demands protection from the profane world that requires ritualistic-type care. Through the specialization of the division of labor in capitalism, individualism has encouraged a certain liberty in which people are freer to explore lifestyle options. However, the apparent "liberty" of the individual and the sentiments of "free play" or development of our "own tastes" are "very rare" due to collective moral constraints (Durkheim 1984[1893], 336). Yet, the individual through the specialization of the labor force develops a sacralized aura among legal and economic institutions. Foreshadowing this is Christian

dogma, which for Durkheim (1970[1897], 333–334) has transformed the nature of the self considerably:

> [T]oday he (the individual) has acquired a kind of dignity which places him above himself as well as above society. So long as his conduct has not caused him to forfeit the title of man, he seems to us to share in some degree in that quality sui generis ascribed by every religion to its gods which renders them inviolable by everything mortal. He has become tinged with religion value; man has become god for men. Therefore, any attempt against his life suggests sacrilege.

He continues by adding that "we have an immortal soul in us . . . we must now be sacred to ourselves . . . we are kin to God" (Durkheim 1970[1897], 334). Such thoughts perhaps as Alexander (2005b) considers reflect the somewhat urgent desire of the leader of the *Année* group to distinguish his work from the materialistic concerns of the Marxist school.[2] However, it is clear that the incorporation of anthropological data was important for the development of an empirically based sociology that formed part of Durkheim's methodological project.

Christianity, therefore, is not to be ignored in the development of the contemporary form of the self. In a later essay, "Individualism and the Intellectuals," Durkheim makes this point clear by arguing,

> But are we to ignore the fact that the originality of Christianity consisted precisely in a remarkable development of the individualistic spirit? . . . First, it taught that the moral value of acts had to be measured according to intention, a preeminently *inward thing* which by its very nature escapes all external judgements and which only the agent could completely appraise. The *very center of moral life was thus transported from the external to the internal*, and the individual was thus elevated to be sovereign judge of his own conduct, accountable only to himself and God (Durkheim 1973[1898], 52, *italics added*).

On this very point, that being the transition from an external relationship to the church to an internal and reflexive relationship with deity, Foucault (1980, 1990) expounds to construct his *Care of the Self* arguments. Yet, this is where the two influential schools depart analytically, as will be made clearer later. Unlike Foucault, Durkheim and subsequent others such as Douglas, Levi-Strauss, Bataille, and the new Durkheimians (see Alexander and Smith 2005) envisage the cultural landscape as full of symbolisms and meanings that are derived through belief structures rather than institutional concerns. This is evident for instance in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life,* where through anthropological resources, Durkheim makes a deep

connection between personal totems and the collective within which the individual resides (Durkheim 1995[1912], 162).

However, it is through one of his last essays, "The Dualism of Human Nature," presented some two years after *Forms,* that Durkheim (1973[1914]) explicitly discusses the role of the body and the soul in contemporary Western culture. Morality, he argues, conflicts and antagonizes individuality. Like Rousseau's *Confessions*, Durkheim proposes that individuals have inherent desires that morality restricts. These deeply embedded "needs" are found in the body, considered profane, which threatens the soul, the sacred. On this subject he writes;

> In every age, man has been intensely aware of this duality. He has, in fact, everywhere conceived of himself as being formed of two radically heterogeneous beings: the body and the soul...This abode is the world of the sacred. Therefore, the soul is invested with a dignity that has always been denied the body, which is considered essentially profane, and it inspires those feelings that are everywhere reserved for that which is divine. It is made of the same substance as are the sacred beings: it differs from them only in degree (Durkheim 1973[1914], 150–151).

The inner and mysterious nature of the "soul" promotes its status. However, the body, which produces the profane daily (and is mundane—which as we have considered previously is itself an issue for Durkheim) is "denied" dignity. Whether we can still accept this dualism in our contemporary culture is beyond the scope of this book. However, it would appear through a casual reading of Western culture that an increasing understanding of the fragility of the body has increased its value amongst individuals to the point that we could classify it as "sacred."

That these notions were carried through to Mauss's influential "Category of the Human Mind" is confirmed by others such as Carrithers (1985, 239). Yet, for Durkheim's nephew, the thoughts on the self developed by his uncle required more precision. Using examples from ethnographic writings on the Pueblo as well as the Kwakiutl and later work on the Indigenous Australians, Mauss illustrates how the individual or the "notion of the person" could be witnessed in the ritualistic practices of totem worship, role assignment, masks, and ranks (Mauss 1979[1938], 66). However, of more interest to this discussion are his final comments on Christianity, which "made the moral person (developed through Greek and Roman legal rights and moral obligations) a metaphysical entity once they realized its religious power" (Mauss 1979[1938], 86). The "Council of Nicea," he argues, provided the Western notion of the human soul as "substance and mode, body and soul, consciousness and action" (86). From here, Mauss importantly

contends that this overtly religious sentiment and conceptualization of the soul (found in most cultures beyond Christianity as well) "haunted" efforts of theologians and scholars alike in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Mauss 1979[1938], 87). It is only within the sphere of Kant that we can see the impact of secularism, and underpinning it still the "individual consciousness, the sacred character of the human person" is the "precondition of Practical reason" (p.89). Thus, "from a moral consciousness to a sacred being" the self now arrives at its modern condition as a "fundamental form of thought and action" (Mauss 1979[1938], 90).

Thus the soul has had a long development, with its history well embedded in religious thought. Mauss makes clear however that the arrangement of the self, "the sacred character of the person," could transform once more, or simply disappear. Yet, it is my contention that the sacred dimensions of the notion of the person/soul, remain powerfully entrenched in late-/post modern Western culture. We can envisage this within Seachange. The deep desire of individuals to escape areas that are essentially profane and that inhibit the development of their authentic (or perhaps sacred) self, demonstrates the power of the self. To make it clearer, while Simmel (1997[1912]) shows us that escaping the city enables a congruence between subjective selves and objective surrounds, this Durkheimian trend helps us to understand why the soul is so important to "work on." Essentially, within our cultural coding and narratives, the self is sacred, and the profaning of it through environments, socialities, and negative emotions is something to be ritually avoided. From this perspective, Seachange is a ritual in the protection of the self. More recently Rosati (2009, 50) argues similarly that "the role of ritual and the sacred" in contemporary society remains a meaningful force that reveals itself in the realms of self-exploration, cultivation, self-help, and self-actualization. The "introspective conscience," constructed through Christianity, that seeks to develop a cultivated self is a main driver for the engagement with New Age techniques of spiritualism including activities like yoga or tai chi. As Eliade (1987[1957]) proposes, though religious doctrine may whither as a heteronomous force, the rituals and values that relate to the self and its search for authenticity remain firmly entrenched in culture. It is my argument that within a wide range of "quests" for the authentic such as slow food, slow cities, Seachange, downshifting, and even "slow sex," the conception of the sacred self is evident.

The alternative approach to self-actualization explored below places far less emphasis on ritual and narrative in the cultivation of the self. Instead, the emphasis is on governance issues and the imbuing of desires through institutional transformations and science. The important figureheads here are Foucault and the subsequent Nikolas Rose. For the former, and similar to Durkheim and Mauss, the self is traceable back through belief systems (Christianity) and philosophical reasoning (the Greeks in particular). Yet, as

Carrette (2000) suggests, Foucault's writings are less systematic and more fragmented than those of Durkheim and his followers. What is clear though is that like Durkheim, Foucault (1990) envisaged Christianity as a clear contributor to the inward, reflexive individual. Subsequent focus on how one engages with their self-awareness is where Foucault differs. Yet, as he comments in *Discipline and Punish*, there needs to be a clear acceptance of the "cultural" reality of the soul:

> It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning power that is exercised on those punished (Foucault 1991[1975], 29).

Although the acceptance of the reality of the soul in society (in this case prisoners) is clear, Foucault considers those institutional forms that surround the person to have a major influence on how it is shaped and perceived.

In later works, he exposes the peculiar obligations of Christianity to further his arguments about the impact of these forms upon the everyday person. He writes,

> As everybody knows, Christianity is a confession. That means that Christianity belongs to a very special type of religion, the religions which impose on those who practise them obligation[s] of truth. Such obligations in Christianity are numerous; for instance, a Christian has the obligation to hold as true a set of propositions which constitutes a dogma; or, he has the obligation to hold certain books as a permanent source of truth; or, he has the obligation to accept the decisions of certain authorities in matters of truth . . . But *Christianity requires another form of truth obligation* quite different from those I just mentioned. Everyone, every Christian, *has the duty to know who he is, what is happening in him.* He has to *know the faults he may have committed*: he has to know the temptations to which he is exposed. And, moreover, everyone in Christianity *is obliged to say these things to other people, to tell these things to other people and hence bear witness against himself* (Foucault 1999[1980], 169–170, *italics added*).

Thus, Christianity is not just a religion that calls forth a private search for meaning and truth with deity. Rather, its peculiarity is exposed in the necessity for individuals to confess their weaknesses and transgressions to a moral authority. Access to the "light of faith" that sustains the Christian can only be found in the "purification of the soul" (Foucault 1999[1980], 170). Thus, as Carrette (2000, 42) has more recently suggested, "Christianity shapes and controls the self through the coercive forces of silence and speech." For Foucault, who focuses on the manner in which Christianity enters discourse,

this emphasis on the confessional side of Christianity triggers a wider focus on the techniques of the self rather than on the belief structures that underpin them. Subsequently, Foucault's later works on the "genealogy of modern power" tend to argue, according to Fraser (cited in Carrette 2000, 111), "that power touches people's lives more fundamentally through their social practices than through their beliefs."

The impact of Foucault's work is enormous. Most significantly is the uptake of his final works on governmentality and biopower before his death. These particular points have inspired significantly the contributions of Nikolas Rose. In particular, his work *Inventing Our Selves* centers on exploring subjectivity in late-modern liberal societies. Unlike Mauss, however, Rose is less interested in exploring the "history" of the self here, but rather the history of its subjectivity. Continuing on in the tradition that Foucault (1999[1980]) developed, he focuses on the "techniques of the self" employed via institutions. In particular, Rose (1996) devotes his analysis to the exposure of liberalism and the role of the "psy" disciplines in developing the construction of the self. The relationship between the economic conditions of "enterprise" and "psy" is deeply intertwined:

> I suggest that we might throw more light on the relation between the vicissitudes of capitalism and the rise of the psychological disciplines by examining, instead, the political, institutional, and conceptual conditions that gave rise to the formulation of different notions of the economy, the market, the laboring classes, the colonial subject (Rose 1996, 45).

From this starting point, Rose (1996) then delineates the history and critiques the engagement of "psy" throughout liberal governance within the West. Specifically, the discourse of managing selves and ensuring one's happiness, he contends, is a result of the *techne* of psychology-related disciplines:

> An examination of the *techne* of psychology along this ethical dimension does not address itself to "morality" in the Durkheimian sense of a realm of values and its associated mode of producing social integration and solidarity... [O]ver the past fifty years, the languages, techniques, and personnel of psychology have infused and transformed the ways in which humans have been urged and incited to become ethical beings, beings who define and regulate themselves according to a moral code, establish precepts for conducting and judging their lives, and reject or accept certain moral goals for themselves (Rose 1996, 64).

Essentially then for Rose (1996), "psy" develops as a moral authority in the governance of people or the governing of the "conduct of conduct." The core success of it is the willingness to contribute to a wide range of areas that

touch social life. In particular, disciplines such as human resource management and self-help adopt "psy" discourses that allow the "techne" of psy to proliferate among institutional relations.

While Durkheim (1973[1898], 53) concedes that through the evolutionary developments of Christianity, "Christ delivered it [the self] at once to science and to free inquiry" (a departure point for Mauss's later study), Rose (1996) provides a full conceptualization of the "authority" that now dominates in the West. The disciplines of "psy" are important here, as well as the publicly engaged self-help industry that stands at the front line of authoritative discourse in contemporary Western culture.

> Self-help, today, entails an alliance between professionals claiming to provide an objective, rational answer to the question of how one should conduct a life to ensure normality, contentment, and success, and individuals seeking to shape a "life-style," not in order to conform to social conventions but in the hope of personal happiness and an "improved quality of life." And the mechanism of this alliance is the market, the "free "exchange between those with a service to sell and those who have been brought to want to buy (Rose 1996, 157).

Thus, while political discourse through the techniques of "psy" enable a responsibilization of the self to maximize individual and familial well-being and happiness, the self-help industry attains the status of a quasi-moral leader. The quest to find the authentic self, therefore, is a discursive construction that institutions have imbued through relationships with society. As the above quote recognizes, the market place, in particular the self-help industry, provides answers to those wanting to understand how to live their lives.

From this perspective, Seachange becomes another "technique" of securing an authenticity constructed through "psy" and other institutional cultures rather than a culturally imbued desire built upon through codes and narratives. In other words, self-help industries have encouraged a responsibility within individuals to "discover" their authentic selves through various avenues. The entire quest to find self-authenticity is a construction of the institutions. Certainly, in recent times there has been a significant rise the number of life coaches who seemingly provide expertise on how one should "drop out" of the rat race to find a simpler existence (see for instance Tan 2004; Elgin 1981). Furthermore, the rise of the self-help industry and the delineation of what is authenticity, based on psychoanalytic texts such as Winnicott's (1990[1965]) "true selves" framework, is widespread. Those seeking self-authenticity have their choices chartered by experts who utilize dominant psychological theories and concepts in their literature and other works. Strategies such as exploring creativity are created and found among

self-help gurus who advise that the only way to find your authentic self is to engage with arts that release inner creativities (see Good 1999 in chapter 2). What is genuine is carved out through words, images, pictures, paintings, or anything that can be created. Others also propose that in order to secure an authentic life one has to begin living in "synchronicity with our core values" (Scultori 2008, par. 5). The ability to tear ourselves away from the cares of the world and "tune in" to our "internal voice" enables us to live in line with what is our genuine self (Scultori 2008, par. 6). In other words, one must become disconnected from social expectations in order to understand what is truly authentic.

Self-help industries are crucial for realizing this potential for self-actualization. For Rose (1996) and others like him, chasing after this style of the authentic is the result of decades of "subjectivities" that have resulted in our current condition. In other words, authenticity is not derived through the narratives of cultural life, but through years of institutional power and liberal governance. Obtaining authenticity is then subject to the domain of expertise. In order to obtain the elusiveness of authentic living, one must pursue it with the help of those who provide the answers.

So with two sides of the story of the self in relation to Seachange explored above, the question remains, who is correct? In his excellent work on punishment where the Durkheimian school is used to counter Foucaldian dominance, Smith (2008, 178) fervently argues that the latter is ill directed. He writes,

> We live in a society where the range of relevant meanings has been closed down, where what the public thinks or says cannot make a difference to the conduct of punishment, and where there is no pressing need for critique to start with a hermeneutic moment. Or so Foucault would have it. He is wrong. We have seen that his position seriously underestimates the resilience of the sacred, which Durkheim correctly recognized as the most powerful, necessary, and indestructible of all social forces.

In a similar manner, I might argue that the development of the self, or rather the construction of the enduring sacred self, is often underestimated by those wishing to interrogate the self from the perspective of institutional power and governmentality (see Rose 1996; Foucault 1980). This book provides some insight into how within Seachange, place is a vital contributor to the continual cultural reasoning of enhancing a self-authenticity through actions that protect it from profane worlds. Falling in favor of this analysis are the empirical examples displayed throughout the book; illustrations that do not just shape human and social experience, but also challenge and work within institutional concerns, such as planning discourses. Yet, not

shown is the growth of "Seachange expertise," which seeks to provide the information, techniques, advice, and/or resources for people to make correct choices. Here, those who Seachange come to the market place seeking the answers to their lifestyle questions, and are willing to pay for it. This is also evident in the work of Benson and O'Reilly (2009b), who suggest that we have indeed arrived at a point where amenity-led migration is mediated by differing types of expertise, including the mass media.

However, the position that Benson and O'Reilly (2009b) adopt, like the work of Rose (1996) and others, which suggests that Seachange is an inevitable outcome of late modernity and the development of reflexive life projects, is one that perhaps denies cultural autonomy. Structural development here is the instigator of the phenomenon rather than deeper hermeneutic moments where culture has sought to reject the emptiness of the cities. Essentially then, we are presented with two different modes for understanding Seachange. How we discern them is a question that perhaps Smith (2008) himself grapples with in the final statements of *Punishment and Culture*. Here he claims that within his empirically based work there is room for the maneuvering of Foucaldian discourse among the landscape that he sketches. From here, he suggests that it might be possible to view the two competing discourses as "an analytic possibility rather than as an empirical reality" (Smith 2008, 180). Thus, rather than clambering for a messy framework combining the two theoretical angles or the continuation of an analytical binarism of right and wrong, perhaps it is better to contend that codes of everyday life are built from "bottomless layers of meaning" (Smith 2008, 180). Others may disagree, seeing social life as a process of order and disorder (see Kendall and Wickham 2001). The recent emphasis on global forms and their impact on the local suggests that there is yet another level of analytical possibility not considered here in this book (Parkins and Craig 2006; Elliot and Lemert 2006). However, what this work does demonstrate is the power of the affective or "hot" aspects of cultural life that promote certain social phenomenon such as Seachange. In particular, that quest for the authentic identified through Simmel and concretized through the old and new Durkheimians is woven together not just through institutional powers such as "psy," but through long-standing myths/narratives of the self. Ignoring how these cultural codings operate in the make-up of these is perilous and risks reducing culture to the backseat of analytical importance.

The Future of Seachange: Some Final Remarks

To return to the phenomenon in question, it is worth reflecting on the future of Seachange. The heart of this book has been to identify the cultural contradictions that threaten this phenomenon by exposing those that

underpin it. What is essential, then, is the maintenance of the distinction between profane and sacred places, city and country. Already we have seen incidences of the blurring of this binary through excessive individualism in home design, unmanaged growth in urban-style development, traffic congestion, population expansion, and the development of the dangerous. The collective response to this is at times is one of protection. The sacred place, revered by local communities, is fought over and contested by those seeking capital return and those seeking to fossilize their havens. In some cases, this shows the ability for the civil sphere to have a powerful impact upon local conditions through collective uprising. Individuals work together in the spirit of place to defend themselves and their sense of selves against advanced urbanization. Perhaps Alexander's (2006a) optimism on the role of the civil in modern democracies is justified here.

However, as generations grow older and weary of the urban environment, we can feel the air of pessimism voiced by those who lament on the future of regional places (such as Ehrenreich 2008). The development and real estate industries continue to lobby local governments in the ambition to construct lifestyle meccas such as in northern New South Wales. Here, once-sleepy coastal villages have become high-cost residential suburbias and tourist retreats. Classy resorts sit just behind the primary dunes of still-untouched beaches. However seasonally, with the continued development of tourist amenities and second-home ownership, these places themselves have become mini-metropolises. The reflections from the Byron Bay resident in the previous chapter suggest that the community response to this is one of angst over what is occurring. Questions about aesthetic and, indeed, physical sustainability are often at the heart of these reactions. Moss (2006a) and his colleagues have shown this in their interrogation of amenity-led migration to mountainous areas. A saving grace perhaps is the phenomenon of climate change, which halts the development industry through the uncertainty of rising sea-levels, coastal inundation, and the specter of destructive fires.

That the future of the phenomenon is under threat from these unintended consequences of Seachange's growth is a given. However, as I write this, another threat has developed in relation to the meaning of the word itself. Seachange denotes, as I argued earlier, a deep, meaningful renegotiation of the self through place identification. Often, it involves lifestyle changes that alter perceptions of consumption and even sustainability concerns, similar to the slow city/slow food movements. However, as the phenomenon has progressed, this has changed. Seachange is now a buzz word here in Australia, used in the real estate markets to entice those with capital to find their coastal idyll. Determining the "next hot spot" for this industry is an imperative as exemplified in a reality website that begs the question of where the next big thing is for "attracting the investor with a sea change in

mind?" (Abel Reality 2004, par. 1). Using industry demographers and other consultant groups, the development and reality industries have flooded mainly coastal areas with catch phrases like "seeking for a Seachange." Their market, however, is not those who seek a dramatic transformation ofthe self in the Shakespearian sense, but rather, those seeking after retirement, or a nice holiday home near the beach. Seachange no longer denotes transformation, but simply an opportunity to buy property near the beach or bush.

Reactions toward the commercialization of this phenomenon are at times highly emotive. As shown in the last chapter, one contributor to a gardening/permaculture forum contests that those seeking after a Seachange ought to understand what it entails and how it is to be lived. Similarly, the reaction in Piha beach is also one of anger toward those who enter the area with inappropriate attitudes to the place, the landscape, and the community. Ultimately, these people, inspired simply by living next to areas of high environmental amenity, are seen by others (original Seachangers perhaps) as out of sync with their authentic surrounds.

Recent research from Ragusa (2010a) suggests, however, that there are still those seeking the "pure" version. Seachange, or its variants, remains an important phenomenon among Western culture. Indeed, as seen in Dowling's work (2004), those who are dissatisfied with the current conditions of their once-ideal locale simply pack up and shift to other less popular areas. Of course, as Simmel himself found in his lone journeys into the icy reverie of the mountains, populations can eventually follow. Solitude amid untouched landscape is difficult to find in a globalized and highly mobile society. Perhaps this is why some find their solace in other countries such as Costa Rica, which has attracted significant Western interest in recent years. However, as it stands, Seachange continues to be adopted as a mode of living slowly in a fast-paced and instantaneous world.

Appendix

Brighton and Hove

Located along the southeast coast of England, the region/township of Brighton and Hove (population approximately 250,000) is considered one of the more populated seaside resort regions in the United Kingdom. The area has a unique and colorful history as a city by the sea thatdates back to the sixteenth century. Considered a resort town, Brighton in particular, since its growth and development in the late 1700s, the region has also developed a persona as being one of the friendliest places for the gay community in England. More recently, the gentrification of the area combined with its alternative outlook has allowed it to develop a metropolitan feel while remaining a resort-style township.

Byron Bay

Byron Bay is a small Australian coastal township (population approximately 9,000) on the northern New South Wales coastline. Renowned for its pristine beaches and stunning visual landscape, the township has a long history of also being a hub for alternative lifestyles. In more recent years, however, Byron Bay has become a hotspot for residential tourism, Seachange, and international visitation. As a result, Byron Bay is now one of the most costly places to live on Australia's golden beaches.

Clarence Valley

The Clarence Valley (Australia) is a region in northern New South Wales (population approximately 45,000) that encompasses a portion of coastline and a vast hinterland. Comprising regional town centers such as Grafton, the region that falls under the Clarence Valley Shire Council holds many amenities that are attractive for Seachangers. This includes coastal townships such as Yamba, Illuka, Angourie, and Brooms Head, which have iconic and relatively untouched beach settings; and small inland community-driven villages

such as Maclean (a village with Scottish heritage) and Ulmarra (home of the annual river festival). In recent times, the area (especially Yamba) has been identified as a potential hotspot for population growth. However, it has also recently suffered significantly at the hands of flooding.

Costa Blanca, Costa del Sol

Costa Blanca (White Coast) and Costa del Sol (Coast of the Sun) are two stretches of Spanish coastline that hold significance in the lifestyle migration/amenity migration discussion, specifically in works of Benson and O'Reilly (2009a). Home to spectacular scenery that includes wide and pristine beaches, a mountainous landscape that meets the sea (Costa Blanca's north coast), and vegetation akin to the tropics (e.g., palms), the areas are highly popular tourist locales but also, in more recent history, a hotspot for amenity-led migration from those in neighboring countries, specifically for immigrants from the United Kingdom. Various scholars and public commentators now lament that the areas are completely gentrified because of the attraction from overseas markets, while others report frequently on the inappropriateness of the development on the soft coastline. Costa del Sol has also in recent history attracted several criminals from the United Kingdom seeking to hide away, triggering the label "Costa del Crime."

Cuckmere Haven

Located in Sussex (southeast England) is the iconic English coastal region of Cuckmere Haven. Neighboring the infamous Seven Sisters chalk-faced cliffs and a range of old World War II embattlements, the region attracts significant numbers of tourists annually. It is also home to a small number of farmers and villagers and potentially a focal point in amenity-led migration. Of particular importance to the area are the meanders or estuaries that were created by human hand and are now maintained by national government bodies against a sea that naturally would claim the land as a marsh. The maintenance of the meanders is central for the survival of the iconic English landscape found in the Haven. However, in recent times these "defenses" against the natural order of tides and the sea has recently been called into question by government authorities who struggle with the resources needed elsewhere to protect places of significant infrastructure against sea-level rise and climate change. Subsequently, this traditionally English setting is now under threat.

Devon

The county of Devon on the southwestern coastline of England is a feature in UK-driven amenity-led migration. Places such as Dartmoor (population

approximately 30,000) and Torquay (population approximately 64,000) have drawn the interest of those seeking high amenity in their escapes from metropolitan areas. The region geographically ranges from traditional seaside resort–style settings to rural/agricultural pastures and farmsteads. Devon is also home to England's first and only world-listed heritage site, and most of its coastline is protected from development and private ownership. Historically dependent upon declining industries such as fishing, mining, and farming, the area is now dependent largely on agriculture and, notably, tourism.

Dorset

Predominantly populated by small villages and country communities, the region/county of Dorset on the southwest coastline of England has attracted some interest in recent times from those seeking authentic amenity and country-style living. Sharing the world-listed heritage site known as Jurassic Coast with Devon, the area is home to some spectacular and diverse scenery including Chesil Beach, Blackmore Vale, and Poole Harbor (a popular surfing site). The region has no cities, but it has a growing population, particularly in the seaside resort town of Bournemouth (population approximately 165,000). Historically a place for recreation and tourism (famously known as J. R. R. Tolkien's second home), the region is also known for being the first in England to use CCTV surveillance.

Hastings Point

The small coastal village of Hastings Point (population approximately 650) on the Australian New South Wales far-north coasthas recently attracted the attention of developers seeking to build tourist and residential accommodation akin to those found in nearby townships and cities such as the Gold Coast (north of Hastings Point). Home to pristine beaches where surfers, swimmers, and fishers go to play, the local community has recently begun a public fight over the future of the place as a small, underdeveloped locale. Described as the "Battle for Hastings Point," the small community has initiated a campaign targeted at constraining inauthentic development in their location. With the use of social networking sites and other forms of electronic media, the group is an example of the resistance to overdevelopment as a result of Seachange in contemporary culture.

Hastings Street

Located in the heart of Noosa Heads (Australia) and behind the popular Noosa beach, the Hastings Street precinct has a long and colorful history.

Once a relatively sleepy and laid-back strip that attracted day trippers from Brisbane as well as international guests, the street has been significantly revamped into a vibrant commercial center by local authorities. High-end fashion outlets, coupled with vogue restaurants and cafes and luxurious accommodation, now line the streets. The Noose Shire (now amalgamated into the Sunshine Coast Regional Council) has importantly stepped up in the past, planning controls to negate the overdevelopment of out-of-character infrastructure on the street. However, the place itself symbolizes for some amenity seekers an example of a place gone wrong. Yet, the spot remains a popular destination for international travelers, while the surrounds, such as Noosaville and Peregian Beach, still attract the eye of the amenity-migrant.

Kuranda

Described as a village in the rainforest, the township of Kuranda (population approximately 3,000), located 25 kilometers northwest of Cairns (Queensland, Australia), is a recent hotspot for Seachange activity, especially from locations in the south such as Victoria and New South Wales. A tourist attraction in its own right with its popular scenic railway and cable car access, the locale is positioned atop the Kuranda ranges and is surrounded by world heritage–listed rainforests. As the site begins to attract more amenity seekers to the area, the local municipality has recently invested into the idea of developing an area west of Kuranda for urbanization, called Myola. Local green groups, composed of local activists and Seachangers, however, have protested bitterly against this, claiming the ruination of local vegetation and fauna. Yet, small business groups and progress associations have clashed in public forums over this, claiming that these "green" groups are halting progression of their local economies.

Maleny

Similar to Kuranda, the township of Maleny (population approximately 1,300) has recently been the subject of much public discussion focused on the commercialization of the locale. Located atop the Blackall range and overlooking the Sunshine Coast (Queensland, Australia) hinterland, Maleny offers a small community vibe with the spectacular scenery and the natural amenity of mountaintop flora and fauna. A historically smallish community, recent activity from the Seachange phenomenon has seen an increase in urban-style development. In particular, and of much controversy, has been the construction of a major supermarket chain within the town. Local community groups protested, claiming that the shopping center would destroy a nearby platypus colony and would also be out of character with local values.

Although the supermarket was eventually built, these protesters continue to fight by publishing new material that they deliver to new residents to encourage them to boycott/buycott the store.

Noosa

The region of Noosa, located on the northern part of the Sunshine Coast (Australia), comprises some of the most iconic landscape in Australia's cultural vernacular. With a long and spectacular coastline coupled with a vast and largely protected hinterland and wetland area, the Noosa region attracts significant numbers of international and domestic visitors yearly. It also has in recent times attracted those Seachangers seeking life in high-amenity areas. Places such as the once-sleepy coastal villages of Coolum Beach and Peregian Beach have recently acquired many of these urban escapees. Noosa is perhaps most famous for its beaches, located at Noosa Heads and Noosaville, where most tourism is focused. Constant in-migration to the area, coupled with the usual demand for tourist accommodation, has resulted in the area becoming another Seachange spot clouded with the troubles of social, economic, and environmental sustainability. The country townships that lay inland from the popular coastline had maintained some isolation from these issues until recently, when places such as Cooroy and Pomona (all small inland towns) attracted those seeking environmental amenity from the cities.

Piha Beach

Forty kilometers from the metropolitan centre of Auckland lies New Zealand's most popular surf beach, Piha (population approximately 830). Located near the Waitakere Ranges and amid protected tropical forests, the town of Piha offers amenity seekers a diversity of scenery and lifestyle pursuits. Famous mainly for its iron-black sand and the dramatic rock faces that enclose the beach, Piha draws in tourists both domestic and international yearly. Seachange activity has been evident in the area. However, urban amenity has appeared in parts of the place, including areas overlooking the beach, drawing the critical eye of environmentalists and locals alike. With a strong individual community that has a well-developed sense of environmental sustainability, the town of Piha is adamant about maintaining its sense of place in the face of urban escapism.

Stanley

One of the smallest towns discussed in the book, the town of Stanley (population approximately 450) located on the northwest coast of Tasmania,

is a small community that has recently been the focus of some amenity-driven migration. Mainly a tourist destination now, the town has historically been a port for fishing, which remains one of its driving economies. Geographically, the town lies behind a virtually untouched beach that is shadowed by a volcanic plug known as "The Nut." Rising about 150 meters from the water and with a virtually flat top, the unique landmark provides a spectacular backdrop to this small community. In recent history, the place has acquired some very early amenity seekers. However, recently, the town has suffered in the wake of absentee landowners who come periodically for holidays. Stanley reflects the cultural problems at the local community level of mobility and second-home buying in Australia.

Surf Coast

Located west of Melbourne and Geelong (Victoria, Australia) is the famous Surf Coast region. Home to the world-famous surfing mecca of Bells Beach and the great tourist drive, the Great Ocean Road, the Surf Coast provides a mixture of unique and pristine landscape along with major cosmopolitan townships such as Lorne (population approximately 1,000) and the resort community of Torquay (population approximately 10,000). The development of areas such as these latter towns, including Jan Juc and Bells Beach, has meant that amenity-driven migration has accelerated in this region. Included in this is an increasing rate of second-home owners from richer metropolitan centres such as Melbourne. However, as the developers try and acquire more land, local communities have sought for injunctions, attempting to preserve their local sense of place. Importantly, the local council has produced significant policy controls to maintain heritage and distinguish the feel of the area from the major city centers nearby.

The Town of Jackson

The small country Town of Jackson (population approximately 8,500) is located in the famous Teton County in Wyoming (United States of America). Surrounded by places of intense environmental amenity such as Yellowstone National Park, the Grand Tetons, and the Wyoming Ranges, this small country township has attracted significant interest from those seeking to escape the city. The Town of Jackson is also famous for its historical significance as one of the sites that John Colter from the Lewis and Clark expedition passed through on the return journey. Photographs from subsequent visits of the area led to the federal protection of the iconic Yellowstone National Park in 1872, the first national park in the United States. Today, the area continues to attract tourist and amenity-led migrants

alike, creating concerns about increasing housing costs and population turbulence.

The Town of Canmore

Located west of Calgary, Alberta (Canada), the Town of Canmore has recently developed as a significant spot for amenity-led migration. Historically a mining town that collapsed in the 1970s, the township was brought to the spotlight during the 1988 Winter Olympics as it played home to the Nordic events. Since this time, the small mining community has substantially increased in size (population approximately 12,000). However, like other high-amenity locales, rapid growth and the influx of residential tourists, domestic tourists, and amenity-led migrants have resulted in a number of social and economic concerns, one being the large number of absentee landowners or second-home owners that currently hold property in Canmore.

The Town of Golden

The Town of Golden, located in British Columbia (Canada) and about three hours west of Vancouver (by car), is another of the mountainside townships that has recently been the focus of amenity-led migration and domestic tourism. Situated amid iconic Canadian scenery such as the Rocky Mountains and the pristine Kicking Horse River, the town's population has increased in size gradually in recent years (population approximately 4,000). Historically an entry point for mountain expeditions, the evidence of which remains today, the Town of Golden is also now home to various adventure sports, including white-water kayaking/rafting, skydiving, and mountain biking. The attractiveness of the region has resulted in problems such as those registered in the Town of Canmore (Alberta), including housing costs, social sustainability, and other related concerns.

Notes

1 The Great Urban Escape

1. For instance, both Lukes (1973) and Evans-Pritchard (1960) contend that Durkheim fails to fully conceptualize the profane. The outside world or the everyday as the profane neglects those objects, places, persons, or animals that truly invoke disgust and desires to destroy. These areas are partly answered by Hertz's (2009[1909]) discussion of the impure sacred, or that pole of the sacred that induces horror and dread. However, as Smith (1999) discusses, there are places that invoke ritualistic attempts at total avoidance. These places are profane, whereas impure sacred places invite participants to view the horror while sustaining a more pure sacred narrative (see Osbaldiston and Petray 2011).

2 The Promises of the Natural World: Escaping the City for Pristine Landscapes

1. See appendix for brief information about the towns listed here.
2. Macnaugten and Urry (1998, 187) discuss similar notions in their exploration of "true England." Here, landscapes are consumed through a romantic solitude that involves "quietly and unobtrusively" enjoying place.
3. Urry (1995), for instance, links the behaviors and norms of those in the Lake District to narratives that are derived from upper-/middle-class society. Hiking, row boating, wine tasting, and socializing in coffee houses are seen within these environs as being authentic ways of engaging with the place. Similar settings constrain activity in other areas such as Tasmania's southeast, where vineyards and cheese factories abound.
4. Risk taking, however, is not confined to the extraordinary such as extreme sports. It can occur in everyday life and interaction (see Tulloch and Lupton 2002, 2003).
5. Formerly known as the Noosa Creative Alliance, which was transformed when the Noosa Shire Council was amalgamated.
6. For instance, see also David Harvey's (1996) argument that the politics of recognition glosses over class issues.

3 A Sense of Community: Cultural Heritage, Nostalgia, and Sociability

1. There is some conjecture of the origin of this tunnel. Personal communication between the author and various officials suggests that the tunnel might have been built by others and not convicts. The point of this is not to debate the genuineness of the claim, but rather to demonstrate the power of the narrative, fact or fiction. There is still research to be done to ascertain who indeed built the Dalmortan tunnel. I wish to thank John Warrell from the Clarence Valley River Tourism department for his assistance in this matter.

4 The Culture of Planning: Coding in Policy Initiative

1. For instance, St. Patrick's Day, a religious festival embedded with religious sentiment and sacral qualities, has now well-developed narratives of excessive alcoholic consumption and Irish culture. Furthermore, similar sentiments are attached to other once heavily religious festivals such as Christmas or Easter, where excessive food and drink consumption is now characteristic of modern secular worship.

5 The Perils of Seachange: Threats, Unintended Consequences, and the Future of Place

1. This newspaper article was sparked by comments taken out of context from this author in a media interview. The original title was "Greenies Go Home." Complaints and a letter drafted to the editor of the paper by the author resulted in a changing of the title on the website and a publication of the author's letter in full. However, it is my view that this issue has resulted in a revealing of the two conflicting value schemas currently found in this area.
2. See http://www.rescuethecuckmerevalley.com/index.htm for more information.
3. *Taip v. East Gippsland SC [2010] VCAT 1222.*

6 The Local Experience, Seachange Communities, and Mythologies

1. This needs to be developed in further research. This can be achieved through a series of longitudinal surveys into Seachange locales.
2. This is not always true, however. Often, Seachangers are also low-income earners or middle-income earners with little wealth. A study conducted in 2006 found that one of the risks associated with Seachange is economic,

with participants jumping into the unknown without realizing that employment is difficult in rural/remote/regional places (Osbaldiston 2006a; see also Ragusa 2010a). This important point should be noted, especially at the planning and policy level, where often it is assumed that Seachangers are "cashed-up" baby boomers.

3. Which is an adaption from her book *This Land Is Their Land: Notes from a Divided Nation,* published in 2008.

7 The Seachange Story: Authenticity, Place, and the Self

1. In the instances where Simmel writes the term "culture" in this quotation above, he "talks here of culture in the sense of cultivation" (Nedelmann 1991, 185).
2. On this subject Alexander (2005b) contributes an important review of the "inner development" of Durkheim's theoretical logic. On the topic of the work on *Suicide*, Alexander (2005b, 148) writes, "[a]lthough Durkheim's systematic understanding of the religious nature of society did not appear until 1897, he had already begun to express this intuition in 1896, and in the final book of *Suicide* we find him arguing that legal and moral preceipts are the "sacrosanct" form of living sentiments." The push to differentiate the direction of the *Annee* from Marxism was perhaps accentuated in the development of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* and the works that surrounded its construction (for instance Hertz's (1960[1909]) anthropological account of *Death and the Right Hand* or Hubert's (1999[1905]) spiritually located *Essays in Time* and Mauss's (1979[1906]) *Seasonal Variations of the Eskimo*).

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