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MUSEUMS AND HISTORIC RESOURCES
AS DISTINCT PLACE TYPES

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IN PLACE OF MEMORY:
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By

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ABSTRACT

IN PLACE OF MEMORY:
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By

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Museums and historic resources help people to gain a sense of the past that is intimately connected to place and the processes of memory. However, the literature does not clearly define them at their most fundamental level *as* places. This thesis presents the argument that museums and historic resources exist as two distinct manifestations of place that embody fundamental concepts of place and memory in substantially different ways. It provides descriptions of the spatial identities of museums and historic resources by connecting latent information in the literature to a theoretical construct termed the "Four Contextual Domains," which illuminates what occurs between people, objects, and memory in the intimate relationship of place. Characteristics particular to *museum place* and *historic place* are used to establish descriptions for these two distinct place types, emphasizing how and why they are different and suggesting implications for research and professional practice.

To Dave Leach, for helping to make it all possible,

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

Place is a given in human life. Much has been written about place: the meaning of place, the "sense" of place, place connection, and the loss of unique places in the landscape. Despite its centrality to human life, it is sometimes difficult to define place and to describe just what place is. Place, as a concept, has been debated since antiquity. People buy, sell, and exchange place; they experience it and make it their own. Place is where we're from and where we're going. Often, it defines us. Place forms our environments and grounds us to the earth. In its role as a constant, place is a natural central point for exercising the processes of memory and gaining a sense of the past.

The need to encounter the past in place seems to lead naturally to museums and historic resources. In the United States, museums of all kinds and historic resources are a formative presence.[1] Estimates by the Institute of Museum and Library Services suggest that around 17,500 museums were operating in the United States in 2005 (American Association of Museums, 2007). Historic resources, including buildings, ruins, landscapes, battlefields, public monuments, and designated historic areas, are readily identified as manifestations of memory in place. The National Park Service administers over 80,000 National Register properties, including more than 2,400 National Historic Landmarks (National Park Service, 2007). The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 provided that each state create its own Historic Preservation Office; and all states, the District of Columbia, and U. S. territories have offices that maintain their own lists of historic resources. Local governments often define historic places through landmark

[1] In the following study, "museum" refers to physical, "bricks and mortar" museum institutions of all types. Though many of the principles explored below may be applicable to virtual museums in online environments, these types of connections will not specifically be made here.

designation and the creation of historic districts. Outside of governmental channels, citizens often informally designate places in their communities as important to the people who live there. The bond between places and the exercise of human memory and its continual construction and reconstruction is well established.

As physical places dedicated to connecting people with memories of the past, museums and historic resources perform many functions in society. In these places, people get information, learn, participate in recreational activities, and take advantage of opportunities to reflect and speak out. However, there seems to be something more to the "place" of museums and historic resources, something intangible that begs to be identified. Most fundamentally, museums and historic resources are *places of memory*: places created by memory, places that create memory, and places that encourage people to develop a sense of pastness through memory. Memory is not a static object from the past that can be "recuperated" at will, but rather a process that is the result of individual or collective searching in the realm that exists between historical events and our representations of them in memory (Huyssen, 1995, p. 3). Huyssen asserted, "The past is not simply there in memory, but it must be articulated to become memory" (p. 3). As elements in this articulation process, museums and historic resources become what Ernst (2000, p. 25) called "flow-through and transformer station[s]," channeling potent forces for creating, cultivating, and shaping memory. Place, the constant link to the physical world, provides the backdrop and stimuli for this pursuit.

Despite these connections to place, some of the most obvious questions about museums and historic resources and their identities *as* place have not been asked. In much of the museum studies and cultural resource management literature, basic questions

about place and space are rarely addressed. Most of the literature about museums and even historic resources do not have "place" or "space" listed in the index. Many sources focus on the *function* of these places; for example, much is made of how they serve populations, their uses, and their importance. However, in essence, everyone is talking around the their spatial characteristics as place. Information about place is often nested within other discussion but not articulated as a primary subject. As a result, there is no clear description in the literature of what museums and historic resources are at their most fundamental level as place.

This lack of foundational information and attention to the nature of place has blurred the lines between museums and historic resources as kinds of place. Much of the academic and professional literature counts institutions like historic sites and battlefields as "museums" and essentially treats them as offshoots of the museum realm. This situation often causes professionals in the cultural resource management and museum fields to treat both types of place as if they were largely the same, when in fact they have their own identities and characteristics as place that should be acknowledged. Without a clear knowledge of the differences between museums and historic resources, place-specific factors cannot appropriately be addressed.

The main argument of this thesis is that museums and historic resources exist as two distinct manifestations of place that embody fundamental concepts of memory and place in substantially different ways. To begin, I examine literature in the fields of museum studies and cultural resource management and extract unarticulated information about museums and historic resources as place from the literature. Descriptions of the categories I have termed *museum place* and *historic place* are established using this

information. Finally, museum place and historic place are compared, creating images of museums and historic resources as distinct place types.

Definitions of Museum Place and Historic Place

Museums include much more than the architectural footprint of the museum, and historic resources are not only the geographical sites of historic buildings or events. Because this study involves original descriptions of distinct place types, I believe it is necessary to designate new categories that acknowledge both the tangible and intangible characteristics of museums and historic resources. The terms *museum place* and *historic place* go beyond traditional definitions.

Museum place is the union of physical place (including museum buildings, objects, and exhibits) with the intangible "place" created within the walls of museums by the articulation of memories. Historic place is defined as any physical location that becomes "historic" in the memories of individuals or groups, with or without human-made objects connected to it. Historic place combines the physical properties of places with all of the elusive properties that people feel in places: a combination of physical sensory perception, mental and emotional connection, and the magnetism of memory.

Methodology

One of the primary goals of this thesis is examining the museum studies and cultural resource management literature from the 1970s to the present for information about the characteristics of museums and historic resources as place. To accomplish this goal, some method for approaching the literature is necessary. In *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre (1974/1991) argued that signs in existing space can be read like

signs in literary texts. He suggested that it is possible to apply principles of semiology to spaces to read these "messages" (p. 7).

> Terms of everyday discourse serve to distinguish, but not to isolate, particular spaces, and in general to describe a social space. They correspond to a specific use of that space, and hence to spatial practice that they express and constitute. Their interrelationships are ordered in a specific way. (p. 16)

Lefebvre posited that reading the messages of space will "enable us, on the basis of the words themselves and the operations that are performed upon them, to construct a *spatial code*" (p. 16, emphasis in original).

Following Lefebvre's example of discerning codes of place, I will use a detailed review of the literature relating to this subject to outline spatial codes for museums and historic resources. Discovering and analyzing the codes of museums and historic resources will provide some answers to questions about what is known about them as places and their characteristics as place. The information that will lead to answers for these questions are not readily found together; instead, they must be culled from diverse sources. Once compiled and connected, these ideas and concepts will reveal a more complete picture of what museum place and historic place are as distinct place types.

While identifying the codes behind space is useful, Lefebvre suggests that this process should be pushed a step further. In his work discussed above, Lefebvre was interested in finding a "supercode" or "code of codes" that would allow him "to trace the coming-into-being and disappearance of coding/decodings," in essence, to discover how and why the codes came to exist as they did (pp. 17-18). Lefebvre was attempting to get at what gave rise to codes of space, that is, their geneses. Applying his idea to this study, I seek to discover what factors give the codes of museum place and historic place their structure and substance.

As part of this project, I develop a theoretical construct for examining concepts of place and memory manifested in objects and places. This emerging construct features a series of four "realms" of physical and virtual place based on principles of place and memory studies. The system illuminates what occurs between people, objects/sites, and memory in the intimate relationship of place. Identified as the "Four Contextual Domains," the realms include the *origin domain, creation domain, display domain,* and the *experiencer-object domain*, describing both physical (tangible) and virtual (intangible) places (Figure 1). The four domains will serve as a means to discuss some of the things that give these place codes their structure and substance and to identify possible geneses of the codes of museum place and historic place, by examining the roots of each codes' elements in the domains.

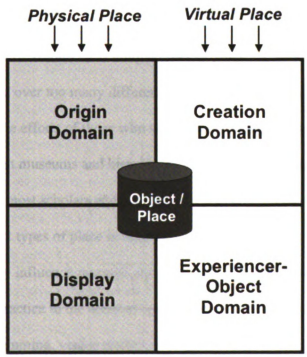

Figure 1. The four contextual domains

Because this study is by nature interdisciplinary, it relies on literature from a number of different fields, including texts by geographers, environmental sociologists, and architects in which concepts of space and place are discussed. Works in material culture, art history, memory studies, and psychology illuminate this literature, as one of my main contentions is that "place" is not merely synonymous with the architectural or even the physical but is also something intangible. Bringing ideas from contemporary and historical literature together will support this assertion. It is important to note that although there are many universal concepts evident herein, especially concerning how human beings experience place, the scope of this paper is limited to Western ideas and concepts, primarily as developed in the United States.

The Relevance of This Study

As discussed above, the literature falls short in providing satisfactory descriptions of museums and historic resources as unique types of place. Although latent information is present, it is spread over too many different sources and is not easily accessible to readers, frustrating the efforts of those who seek this information. It appears that the definitive books about museums and historic resources as types of place are yet to be written. As a result, most scholars and professional practitioners have yet to consider the importance of distinct types of place in relation to the work they do. An understanding of these differences may influence research and professional practices that hinge upon concepts of place. Practice in the areas of conservation, curatorial work, exhibition, education and programming, visitor studies, and institutional operations may change if professionals find that addressing place-specific differences will improve visitors' experiences.

For example, a museum exhibit designer might ask, "How does the 'place' we are creating reflect or not reflect the visitors who will experience it? Will they feel comfortable with the type of place we create, or will they be alienated by it? Will this place make sense spatially to people in terms of what they already know from absorbing spatial cues in their environments? How will this place help people to articulate memories of the past?" The historic site manager may ask the same types of questions, but the questions emerge from a thought process centered on an entirely different type of place, which possibly will produce very different answers. When critical distinctions between museum place and historic place are not acknowledged and addressed, important opportunities for improving professional practice and visitor learning may be lost.

This thesis answers some questions and opens up many others for discussion. It attempts to fill some of the gaps in the literature but really does more to raise awareness about the need for a new segment of museum studies and cultural resource management literature that specifically addresses issues of place. The attempt here to create descriptions of museum place and historic place is certainly not exhaustive. The differences between museum place and historic place that become apparent through this analysis are often not as sharp as they first appear. There are many shades of gray and points of potential overlap. Can historic place ever be part of museum place and vice versa? Might there be places of interaction within the four contextual domains, creating intercontextuality? By way of acknowledging these and other possibilities and necessarily limiting the scope of this project, I am framing this thesis as a starting point for a line of thinking about the characteristics of museum place and historic place and suggesting that this work be a catalyst for further discussion and research.

CHAPTER ONE

PLACE AND MEMORY

Two concepts are key to this thesis: *place* and *memory*. The descriptions of museum place and historic place rely heavily on these concepts. However, the meanings of place and memory have both long been contested. Before beginning an investigation into the codes of museum place and historic place involving memory and place, it is first necessary to state firmly what is meant by these terms. The following chapter establishes the vocabulary that will be used in this thesis and provides a brief background in the theoretical foundations of place and memory that will be interpreted and applied to this discussion.

What is Place?

Attempts to define space and place have continued throughout human history. Today, the two words are often used interchangeably, but historically, the terms space and place have not always been synonymous nor their definitions fully agreed upon. Contemporary scholars most often use these terms foremost to describe phenomena of human beings existing in and interacting with a physical plane. This is evident in current literature, and in this thesis, the terms space and place are employed in the same way.

On what are our current notions of place based? Ancient scholars such as Leucippus (5th c. B.C.E.), Democritus (5th c. B.C.E.), and Epicurus (341-270 B.C.E.) made the distinction between place and space by arguing that there is a difference between a void and that which may arise within a void, leading later thinkers to conclude that places must come *from* somewhere (Casey, 1997). Plato described space as a

container or "receptacle."[2] Aristotle refined this idea of space as a container, while characterizing place as something that surrounds the body, making a distinction between place, which remains motionless, and that which moves: things.[3] Human beings exist as things in places and move within places, which in turn are part of space itself. Casey described how these ancient concepts eventually led to the specific categories of infinite "space" and specific "place," which he asserts were firmly entrenched in Western thought by the Renaissance. In the following chapters, the terms space and place will be defined as follows: *space*, the infinite bounds of the universe, and *place*, specifically defined, bounded locations within space.

Scholars have continued to explore and stretch the meanings of space and place. During the late 1960s and early 1970s in the fields of cultural geography, environmental psychology, history, memory studies, and other disciplines concerned with space and place, changes in ideas about what place means and how human beings relate to place became more prominent (Hubbard, Kitchin, & Valentine, 2004). Although these treatments of the topic of place are greatly varied, certain recurring themes find their way into contemporary literature on place, for example, place as shaped by human meaning making and interaction with place, place as object, and place as the embodiment of memory. These common ideas, based on the scholarship of place, will help to identify

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[2] In the *Timaeus*, Plato wrote, "In the same way that which is going to receive properly and uniformly all the likenesses of the intelligible and eternal thing must itself be devoid of all character. Therefore we must not call the mother and receptacle of visible and sensible thing either earth or air or fire or water, nor yet any of their compounds or components; but we shall not be wrong if we describe it as invisible and formless, all-embracing, possessed in a most puzzling way of intelligibility, yet very hard to grasp" (51a) (Plato, 1965, p. 69).

[3] Aristotle argued, "Just, in fact, as the vessel is transportable place, so place is a non-portable vessel. So when what is within a thing which is moved, is moved and changes its place, as a boat on a river, what contains plays the part of a vessel rather than that of place. Place on the other hand is rather what is motionless: so it is rather the whole river that is place, because as a whole it is motionless. Hence we conclude that the innermost motionless boundary of what contains is place" (Aristotle, 2000, Book IV.4).

place-related signs within the museum studies and cultural resource management literature, without which it would be impossible to begin reading the codes or identifying a supercode for museum place and historic place.

One crucial point is that we cannot escape the landscape of place, because place is related to every factor that affects human life. Place plays a key role in the way we experience life. This thesis begins with the supposition that place is physically and psychologically essential to humans. As Relph (1976, p. 141) asserted, human beings have "deep psychological and existential ties" to place, to which they may often be oblivious. Concluding his discussion of Edmund Husserl's ideas on the relationship between body and place, Casey (1997, p. 226) contended, "A placeless world is as unthinkable as a bodiless self site," suggesting that places and people are inextricably intertwined. These ties are something unavoidable, as Martin Heidegger declared in *Building Dwelling Thinking* (1951/1971). He observed that "dwelling," by which in one context he means human existence, is synonymous with being. Heidegger suggested, "The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *Buan*, dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell" (p. 147, emphasis in original). Dwelling – being human – requires that one be emplaced and thus that there be places in which this process can occur.

But how is place created or defined within infinite space? One way is through human meaning making in space. Human beings cannot help existing, and they also cannot help making meaning in the places they inhabit. In place, Heidegger contended the existence of things "shapes space" and "causes it to mean" (1951/1971, p. 5). Yi-Fu

Tuan's (1977) distinction between "space" and "place" also rests on meaning making; for him, space becomes "place" for individuals only through the personal ability to distinguish the boundaries of a given location, mentally and physically, from other locations. The mental and physical work that creates place for human beings is the driving force behind the making of meaning in place or what Walter (1988, p. 21) called "topistic reality," which describes the data that come from "sensory perceptions, moral judgments, passions, feelings, ideas, and orientations" through which people shape places and vice versa. Thus, places are a reflection of the people and forces that make them.

The making of meaning in place over time is what gives places their identities. Input of the data that Walter describes, like the creation of memory, is perpetual in places. Every new generation perceives and creates place in its own way. Every society produces its own places; controlling defined place legitimizes a society's existence as a separate entity with power (Lefebvre, 1974/1991). Thus, place can accurately be described as a "chameleon concept," because place means different things at different times to different people (Davis, 1999, p. 238). Places consist of what Walsh (1992, p. 152) called "time marks," which are the "subjective recognition" of "elements in the environment, both humanly and naturally constructed...[that] make time 'visible.'" As these marks and the ways in which they are perceived change, the ways people approach, move through, and exist in place changes also (Leach, 1999). So then, the places in space upon which our bodies rest are the sum of unavoidable emplacement in the physical realm, the cache of human memory, and the meaning made of these factors by people.

However, with everything in places that is dependant on human interaction, memory, and making of meaning, do places have unique qualities independent of anything

human? If there were no people on earth, would place still exist as the "motionless something" that contains the physical environment within infinite space as Aristotle described? Although this question may be argued from many different perspectives, it makes sense here to concentrate on the definition of place as delineated by human memory and meaning making. Viewed in this way, places can be perceived with the mind and physical senses, as much of the literature outlined above suggests. Places are carved out of infinite space through human design, much as objects are shaped out of infinite matter. Because of this shared characteristic between objects and places, it is possible to think of place as an "object" that can be analyzed using material culture methods. Making place an object does not take anything away from arguments about the self-existence of places; it just makes it possible to focus on certain aspects of place.

What is Memory?

Looking to the past means looking to memory. Place is often described as it relates to human memory, both individual and collective. Without memory, place is impossible, because we would be unable to distinguish one location from another. But what is memory? Halbwachs (1925/1992, p. 183) defined memory as "a framework made out of notions that serve as landmarks for us and that refer exclusively to the past" and as "a rational activity that takes its point of departure in the conditions in which the society at the moment finds itself, in other words, in the present." In both definitions, a framework created by society is necessary for memory to exist. Halbwachs suggested that individuals remember because they are prompted to do so by other people and things in the environments and that "no memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections" (p. 43). Thus, if one

accepts this definition of memory, who and what exists in a person's environment is key to what and how she or he will remember.

Memory, in this sense, may belong to individuals or groups. The memory of groups is often referred to as "collective memory." Collective memory is not simply an aggregate of individuals' memories that together make up a group's memory. Instead, groups create their own frameworks of landmarks with which individuals interact and shape over time (Halbwachs, 1925/1992). Halbwachs' concept of memory as a series of landmarks also implies movement during a process, in this case, between the landmarks that refer us to the past. Huyssen (1995) described the act of memory as a process of individual or collective searching (French, *recherche*) in the realm that exists between historical events and our representations of them in memory. The memory process shuttles human beings back and forth between present and past, constantly building and rebuilding relationships between the two. Working continually in and through our social relationships, shared memories draw individuals and groups into a reciprocal relationship where individuals receive memory cues from society and societies, in turn, reinforce the remembrances we seek.

No matter what the reason, the desire to link with memory usually leads first to the most tangible and familiar forms. In material objects, people often believe they can readily access memories significant to their heritage. They treat things as virtual "keys" for accessing knowledge of the past. The authenticity, or perceived authenticity, of the object is central to its power to connect the viewer or possessor with the past. According to Huyssen (1995, p. 33), only genuine artifacts are imbued with this power, because they possess what he calls an "aura" of enchantment associated with their relationship to

history and status as repositories of memory. He argues that human beings position objects in sharp contrast with the transparent and fleeting images offered by modernity, essentially personally orchestrating and then falling under their own spell of object enchantment. In many ways, genuine objects provide a material reality that can act as a powerful guide and corrective for memories.

Like objects, many scholars argue that place is the embodiment of memory. Place is not merely a "trigger" for prompting memory; instead place is where memories are constructed and reconstructed. The tangible nature of physical places creates dwelling places for memory: Nora's (1989) *lieux de mémoire* ("realms of memory"), including ideas recorded in oral or written form, physical objects and locations, and rituals. Some scholars insist that place is created only by the experiences and memories of the people that inhabit and "live" a place, infusing it with their memories – the only process that creates genuine place (Davis, 1999; Del Real, 2004; Woessner, 2005). Specific memories of specific people create place as it exists. In his discussion related to José Martí's ideas about North American place, inhabitation, and imperialism, Del Real (p. 203) remarked, "For Martí, memory is tied to place, but only as an active participant, as an ongoing narrative. Memory acquires meaning when it engages space; and only then does it transform it into place." Del Real characterized place as a union of lived experience and memory. This connection to memory and living people makes place into something that continuously evolves, as Woessner (p. 152) suggested: "Unlike the thoroughly planned space of the engineer, the space of memory is never closed; it can never be fully mapped or demarcated. Instead, it is always open, like memory itself, to revisions."

Like authentic objects, places have a power, an affective quality related to being physically close to the site where events occurred. When a person is present in such a place, they often become emotionally influenced by the physical presence of the artifact – Huyssen's "enchantment" at work. The individual's physical location helps to shape the type of remembrance that occurs in that place. For example, the town of Gettysburg existed long before the battle of 1863, but its physical spatial qualities and identity were transformed by the events that occurred there, making it now impossible to separate the place from the event. The genuine physical sensory feedback from the environment one experiences while in the place cannot be replicated elsewhere, and this coupling of physical and emotional experiences affect how memory is acquired and shaped in particular places and the sense of pastness that is ultimately achieved.

The relevance of memory to places and objects is indisputable, for without memory we could not remember and understand what an object is, where it came from, or how to use it. Similarly, we could not make sense of the world, because the divisions of the world that we call places are created by and continue to exist in human memory. The attempt in the next chapter to extract codes of museum place and historic place from the literature reveals this codependence of the concepts of place and memory.

CHAPTER TWO

READING THE CODES OF MEMORY PLACES

> Might it not be a good idea, therefore, first to make an inventory of them [the signs], and then try to ascertain what paradigm gives them their meaning, what syntax governs their organization? (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 16)

Henri Lefebvre discussed the possibility of discovering codes consisting of the "signs" that allow place to be read like a text and to have their messages revealed. If one were to perform a "close reading" of a place, might it be possible to uncover enough of the individual signs necessary to illuminate a working code of that place? Although not always apparent or found in obvious places, codes of place, like codes of memory, exist. Petrov (1989) surmised that memory connects us to our own cultures and pasts and that we are connected through our customs, traditions, and folklore, whether or not we choose to remember. Even when apparently forgotten, the signs of memory shape culture and forge connections to the past. Similarly, the signs of place, even if unacknowledged, have the potential to reveal a code with connections to history and present understanding.

Concepts in the literature that consistently appear over time become signs, and the signs assembled together provide codes. Literature on museums and historic resources that provide close readings of place (although sometimes inadvertently) reveal the codes. To find these codes, this chapter involves a search for signs in this literature. The time span covered by this search will necessarily be limited. In the 1960s and 70s, a shift occurred when scholars in a variety of fields began to concern themselves less with space and place as a geographical fact and more about the production and meanings of place (Hubbard, Kitchin, & Valentine, 2004). Evidence of this shift is seen in the literature of

museums and historic resources, indicating that reflections of the shift affected philosophy and practice in these disciplines, as will be seen below. Because this change reflects the body of ideas that shaped museum place and historic place as they exist in the present, the literature examined here for the signs of place will be limited to that published between 1960 and 2007, except in some cases where historical comparisons are made.

The Code of Museum Place

In most of the literature about museums, the focus is not on place but rather on the description of museums physically, organizationally, or functionally. Many latent connections to place exist there but not articulated. One of the problems is the lack of a fundamental description of what the museum is as place. For example, museum place is related to the exhibition of objects, but it is not merely about the display of objects. Museum place is related to the architectural, but it is only partially about a built environment. Further, the history of museums is long. With all its complexity, how can a satisfactory picture of museum place be created? The following review of museum studies, cultural resource management, and material culture literature will produce a description of museum place.

A significant portion of the museum place signs reveals memory as central concept. Human memory, especially collective memory, and meaning making have a great influence on how all places are perceived and experienced. No matter what the identity of a place, people still seem to recognize that there is human agency and memory behind the delineation of locations in the environment. Maleuvre (1999, p. 71)

envisioned a "space of memory" in museums, in which objects separated from genuine place and existence survive as images of reality. Radley (1991, pp. 66-67), writing about the physical space of museums, concluded, "Perhaps more than anything else, however, museums are expressions of the ways in which societies represent their own, and others' pasts to themselves." Glassberg (1996, p. 17) illuminated this connection between representations of the past, places, and memory in his study of public history and memory: "Historical consciousness and place consciousness are inextricably intertwined; we attach histories to places, and the environmental value we attach to a place comes largely through the memories and historical associations we have with it." Davis (1999) believed that traditional museums (defined in contrast to ecomuseums, which are typically very connected to the memories of the people who live in the area near an ecomuseum) can never capture the elusive qualities of place unless it is connected to collective memory. He asserted, "The essence of place lies beyond the museum, in the environment itself, and is defined by the individuals and the communities who live there" (p. 21).

In reading the signs in the literature, one also finds that museum place is primarily related to the presence of objects. That the object is paramount is reflected in the fact that museum place is largely about to the accommodation of objects. Historically, museums did not come into existence through the process of someone building a structure and then looking for objects to fill it. From the Renaissance onward, the "notion of museums" originated with people who collected objects (Ritchie, 1994, p. 8). Individual collectors brought their objects together in collections, which were sometimes displayed to others – the "cabinets of curiosities" of old. The presence of objects in one location as

a collection or set of collections assembled by and for people is what makes a museum. Although the form and function of museums has changed over time, the basic connection to objects has not (Coleman, 1950; Dana, 1999; Goode, 1896; Smith, 1917). By definition, museums make a "unique contribution to the public by collecting, preserving, and interpreting the things of this world" (American Association of Museums, 2000). Every museum, no matter what type, has some kind of "object" on which it centers.

Museum place as an artificial or inauthentic place is another recurring sign. Many authors make this observation, including Hein (2000, pp. 7-8), who asserted, "Museum objects occupy a fictional space that is controlled by the museum." She argued that those in power create the space and thus have the ability to mold it into any image they choose. So-called fictional museum place is supposed to be contrived and separated from the real, much like the "imagineered" places of Walt Disney and others (Francaviglia, 1995). Del Real (2004) echoed this conclusion in commenting that museums disconnected from the authentic memory of people whom the museum is designed to serve perpetuates the existence of a type of place that does not accurately reflect the memories of the people who inhabit it. In his discussion of a study of the preferences of visitors regarding the desire to learn about a historic location through a museum or historic place, Walsh (1992, p. 161) indicated that museums are disconnected from real place and that the study revealed "the desire to actually be in a place, and experience it first hand, as well as an obvious dissatisfaction with the potential of most contemporary museums to facilitate a sense of place."[4]

[4] Walsh based this conclusion on Nick J. Merriman's 1988 study from his unpublished doctoral dissertation (University of Cambridge), *The role of the past in contemporary society, with special reference to archaeology and museums*.

Museum place, as a created environment in contrast to a supposedly more authentic place like a geographical location, often fails to impart the sense of place, based in part on its perception as a spatial *tabula rasa.* Maleuvre (1999, p. 75) claimed in his discussion of art museums, "The museum represents the absence of a place and thus best suits the historical caesura of the work of art." Based on the concepts of the concrete expressions of place and space outlined above, the absence of place he described is not possible. Equally impractical is Lee's (2002) definition of museum place as a center of objective place and subjective (interpreted) space, a distinction which allows for certain spaces within the museum to remain untouched by interpretation but is impossible when one considers that the whole of museum place is always orchestrated and thus "interpreted" on some level.

One of the most obvious signs in the museum literature concerns museum place as a built environment. These signs are a reflection of the tangible meanings of place that most people readily identify and understand as place. Although easily confused with the function of museum buildings, identifying museum place as a built environment within the code means recognizing that different types of built place were created during different periods in history. From ancient times museums were thought to be the "realm of the Muses" (Wittlin, 1949; Anderson, 2004), which is a familiar phrase and concept in museum studies literature. However, with few exceptions, the focus was usually on the Muses themselves rather than on the idea of a *realm* – a "place" to meet the Muses – yet the connection to place is there. Over time, museums changed from contemplative study areas to storehouses of monetary and cultural wealth. Dana (1917/2004) drew a sharp distinction between a storehouse and a true museum environment (a place of education

and connection to the past), arguing that the history of museums as storehouses of wealth is what created the problems affecting the museum field in the 1910s. For Dana, the spatial difference between the two was not so much one of function as one of expectation behind the use of place. Wittlin, who wrote about museums in the post-World War Two era, described museum place as the sum of the galleries, closets, cabinets, and repositories contained in the museum building, but a subtle shift in the character of museum place is also evident in her writing, making museums seem less about the material storage of objects and more about the ability of people to encounter objects. This is the contemporary purpose of most museums, as indicated by the American Association of Museums' Code of Ethics (2007).

The built environment of museums also reflects a unique union with objects. Radley (1991, p. 69) creates an interesting mental image with his description of the interconnected nature of museum place and object: "The building and its contents are of the same form; the artefacts are not so much in the building as *of* it; the building is not so much a container as the connective tissue of the displays." In some ways, the object itself "owns" or controls the place in which it is displayed, as Maleuvre (1999, p. 56) contended, "To some degree, the space in which art is experienced belongs to the work of art." The relationship between museum content (objects) and container (building) is further illuminated by Ritchie (1994, p. 8), who suggested a reciprocal influence between place and object, observing, "The nature of the collections subsequently conditioned the physical and spatial qualities of the buildings in which to house them." Museum place provides a location to bring people together with objects; it has been suggested that museum place serves as a temple, a shopping or browsing environment, or a forum

(Anderson, 2004; Cameron, 2004; Lee, 2002; Radley, 1991; Schoken, 2006). Others assert that the museum built environment has become an object or artifact in its own right, converting concepts of the spatial into something comparable to the material (Lee, 2002; Merkel, 2002).

Other museum place signs characterize museum place as a function of the intangible. It is a site of encounter with objects, people, and memory that often transcends the physical. Museum place has the potential to shape person and place reciprocally, as Lord (2005, p. 23) expressed, "It [museum space] is a kinesthetic experience, during which our mere movement seems to change the space, and the place somehow changes us." The ability of museum place to adopt the functions of other kinds of place is explored by Archibald (2004). He envisioned museum place becoming a central, common place in local communities – "the new town square" – offering people tangible reminders of the communal past and a gathering place. Kirschenblatt-Gimblett (1998, p. 132) suggested that museum place is a travel "surrogate," allowing people to use museum place as a virtual portal for otherwise impossible journeys.

These signs of museum place gleaned from the literature of museums may not be exhaustive, but they provide a close reading of museum place. Assembling the signs together will facilitate the process of looking for a supercode to explain the genesis of the museum place code. However, finding signs of museum place accomplishes only half the goal set at the beginning of this thesis; an analysis of historic place remains. If descriptions of museum place are difficult to make, what about historic place? Since historic place is truly "place" in the geographical sense, does that make it easier to define? In some respects, it is. Information about historic place exists in the literature of

many different disciplines, including public history, cultural resource management, historic preservation, cultural geography, architectural history, archeology, and anthropology. Therefore, identifying the signs of historic place will require examining a broad section of literature.

The Code of Historic Place

Human memory is essential to the process of describing historic place. As with museum place, and place in general, memory plays a central role in defining place and place recognition. Historic place functions as a canvas of memory containing images of symbolism and meaning. Mires (1999) observed that meanings evolve over time through connection with memory. As described in Chapter One, people look to the landscape for connections to the past, connections that may only be made through memory. Lowenthal (1985, p. 8) suggested, "People flock to historic sites to share recall of the familiar, communal recollection enhancing personal reminiscence." Being in the specific place where events occurred can have effects upon memory, with complex results. As Halbwachs (1925/1992) asserted, memories of place and our experience in places tend to be invented compositions of various recollections. Over time and distance, the accuracy of memory can become suspect. For instance, the memory of one's childhood home and neighborhood often seem to be vividly imprinted upon the mind. Sometimes in physically returning to the place, one finds that things do not appear as remembered or that certain details are skewed in the memory. In returning, place can act as a "corrective" for memory, reconciling the true spatial and physical realities with the constructed memory. The connection of memory and place are strong and relate to the issues of tangibility and accessibility previously described. Historic place offers the same

type of corrective for memory, even if one is separated from these place memories by distance or time. Experienced together with memory, historic place provides a means to know the past, as Lowenthal (p. 249) advised, "Memory, history, and relics offer routes to the past best traversed in combination."

Obviously, historic place is genuine (i.e. real, tangible) physical place. That historic place is genuine place is not generally disputed. For most of the writers who discuss historic place, this is an underlying assumption. Many use terms such as "sense of place" and "place connection" to describe what they mean by a connection to genuine place. If defined as genuine place, any physical location is technically "historic place" by virtue of its connection with human history and memory, even if that history is not known (Basso, 1996).

It is knowledge of the history connected with places, that is, memory, that gives places significance in the minds of human beings. The signs of historic place indicate that it is created by designation. Designation defines the area of place considered historic and marks it as something separate from non-historic place. Places only become significant because people believe they are significant. Significant sites are the product of social interactions that eventually produce either consensus or resignation to an outcome, similar to the factors that affect the creation of collective memory. Halbwachs (1925/1992, p. 40) argued that the collective frameworks "reconstruct an image of the past, which agrees with the predominant thoughts of the society." However, predominant thought is not universal thought, and place designation is as political and contested as memory. Deciding the significance of a place may create tensions between dominant and minority members of a society, causing disagreement about what places should be

considered significant and why. Additionally, historic places can be refashioned, interpreted, rebuilt, and re-imagined over time.

The value of historic places, including structures and landscapes, is coupled with a sense of genuineness and significance not found in places that are merely reconstructions (Fitch, 1990; Milligan, 2007). Historic resources have an "essence" that people attempt to replicate through artificial means, in a search for the past (Francaviglia, 1995). The desire to recreate genuine place reflects the need of humans to feel connected to their place landscapes, as described above, particularly those that provide continuity with the past. Lowenthal (1985, p. 248) asserted, "Artifacts are at once past and present," allowing their pedigree of age to speak for their authenticity. This authenticity grants historic place a power of the genuine that other places do not have, a power similar to the "aura" of enchantment that Huyssen (1995, p. 33) identified in authentic artifacts associated with their relationship to history and status as repositories of memory. Moore (1997) championed the need for authentic place in the heritage experience, suggesting that if three factors are present – real objects, interacted with in their real context, and in the presence of real people – this offers the highest degree of authenticity or connection to people and their memories. Genuine place appears to fulfill much of this need to connect with "the real."

The process of designating a place as authentic and significant depends largely on what group forces are driving the designation. A designation process may be formal or informal. Formal designation involves official processes through government agencies, from the local to the international level. Examples include World Heritage Sites, the National Register of Historic Places (United States), National Historic Landmarks, and

state and local historic registers (Weible, 1984; Milligan 2007). Other types of designation result through grassroots efforts, involving local citizen groups or individuals who transform a place into historic place by virtue of their belief in its historic significance. These often appear as neighborhood designations (Hayden, 1984) or spontaneous memorials (Everett, 2002; Kroslowitz, in press). Being designated by any process sets historic place apart from other places, but the question of who gets to make choices is always present; outcomes are often more positive for one group than for others (Del Real, 2004; Shackel, 2001; Walkowitz & Knauer, 2004).

Another significant set of signs in the literature indicates that historic place is a tangible connection to the intangible past. As physical place, historic place creates a link to the past in which people can emplace themselves. In the 1950s, Tilden (1957/1977, p. 3) called the American landscape "a vast preservation of shrines and treasures in which may be seen and enjoyed the story of our natural and man-made heritage." People recognize that the past is permanently recorded on the landscape and tend to look for it there (Datel, 1985; Glassberg, 1996). Trachtenberg's (1965) study of the Brooklyn Bridge showed how objects and places (the bridge functions as both) serve alternately as symbolic monuments to the past and something to be experienced as part of contemporary life, demonstrating that tangible connections between past and present occupy our everyday landscapes. Following a 1994 survey, Rosenzweig and Thelen (1998, p. 105) reported that people who responded to the survey said they "trusted history museums and historic sites because they transported visitors straight back to the times when people had used the artifacts on display or occupied the places where 'history' had

been made."[5] Historic place is a physical environment in which visitors can situate themselves and experience the spatial settings that people in the past experienced (Donnelly, 2002). This feeling of connection to the past through experience of the physical, such as historic place, has been described as a "transcendental experience" (Cameron & Gatewood, 2000, p. 110), which relates to Huyssen's enchantment discussed above. The nature of place as environmental constants and the unavoidable emplacement of human beings in it makes searching for the past in place a natural human pursuit. Objects may disintegrate over time and cultures change, but place is our most ready and ever-present connection to that which came before.

A final set of signs reveals the notion that historic place may be experienced as an "object." Although physical places are significantly different from objects in many ways, some scholars have opened the door to thinking about place in an objective sense. This makes it possible for historic place to function at times as an artifact and at others as a physical location, an argument also advanced by Schlereth (1980). Lee (2002, p. iv) developed the concept of "museum-as-object" in her study of museums. She argued,

> A museum is a human-made object that carries material, physical, objective characteristics of a *place*; it is a location that is 'stable' and 'just being there.' Therefore, the museum as an object, the physical aspects of a museum, is a *place* – or a set of *places.* (pp. 43-44)

Applying this logic, a place may reasonably be considered an object because of the characteristics it shares with objects. Lawrence and Low (1990) made the important point that people express socio-cultural factors in built forms. They suggested that built objects embody beliefs about race, class, gender, and cultural relations, which may be

[5] Rosenzweig and Thelen based this conclusion on a 1994 survey of 1,500 people in the United States. The authors found that the majority of respondents were involved in some way in learning history and that they believed this experience to be a personally useful pursuit.

"read" through material culture methods. Relating this concept to historic sites, these ideas imply that the historic environment contains latent information about the past, embodied in the very fabric and spatial design of buildings, and by extension, the locations they occupy. It is possible then for place to be examined physically, much as an object would be, to reveal this latent information. Because of its unique characteristics of tangibility and intangibility, historic place should probably not be considered an object all the time, but objectification may be considered a valid means to explore, study, and understand historic place.

From the literature examined above, a rudimentary group of signs was created that together establish a framework of code for museum place and historic place. Figure 2 provides a comparison of the main elements of the codes.

Museum Place	**Historic Place**
Strong connection to memory	Strong connection to memory
Created by collection of objects	Created by designation of place
Artificial or inauthentic place	Authentic, physical place
A built environment	Place that may be experienced as "object"
A function of the intangible	A tangible connection to the intangible

Figure 2. A comparison of the two place codes

These codes reveal much about the different characteristics of museum place and historic place. Primarily, they reveal the interdependent nature of memory, people, and objects in both types of place. The codes emphasize the ways in which objects and places are dependent upon the memory systems of human beings for meaning. However,

this elucidation of the codes still does not provide any sense of how or why these codes came to be what they are. They include no unifying construct to articulate what the fact that these signs appear in the literature means. Ultimately, they are mere descriptors, which provide nothing to explain why museum place and historic place exist as they do.

The primary purpose of this project, as stated at the outset, is first to describe museum place and historic place as places and second to compare their identities as two distinct types of place. Clearly, the codes extracted from the literature cannot do this alone. In order to begin pulling together all this information from the codes and to create descriptions of museum place and historic place, it is necessary to find a construct within which to discuss these subjects. Lefebvre (1974/1991) modeled using theory as something through which to examine the rise, role, and the demise of codes. As part of this project, I have developed an emerging theoretical construct of context from which to consider the multiple relationships among people, memory, objects, and places. The following chapter outlines this construct, which will be used as a tool to explore how and why museum place and historic place are distinct place types.

CHAPTER THREE

A THEORY FOR UNCOVERING THE SUPERCODE

> If indeed spatial codes have existed, each characterizing a particular spatial/social practice, and if these codifications have been *produced* along with the space corresponding to them, then the job of theory is to elucidate their rise, their role, and their demise. (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 17, emphasis in original)

Within space, human beings designate and define places, and these individual pieces of the world become saturated with the meaning that people create. Place and meaning together generate *context.* In searching for common threads in the literatures described in the last chapter, one of the central common points that museum place and historic place share is their relationship to place- and object-related contexts. This shared underlying theme makes it possible to examine the codes of museum place and historic place from the single construct of context, to make comparisons based on this commonality, and to identify possible geneses of these two kinds of place.

The construct of context is commonly used to describe the physical setting that objects occupy and in which people experience them. It makes sense to think of context as geographic, such as a historic site or a museum gallery. Things are either native to these places or not, making it possible to use this method of classification as a way of discerning whether objects are "in" or "out" of context. Thus, art historians can characterize the works of American artists as out of context when they are exhibited, say in Europe (Fattal & Salus, 2004). Historic preservationists have described moving buildings out of their original geographic contexts as an undesirable but sometimes necessary means of saving them (Fitch, 1990). In many ways, context is synonymous with physical, geographic place.

This application of context is well established in the fields of museum studies and cultural resource management, but is geographic place the limit to the concept of context in thinking about objects and historic resources? Certainly, as described above, context can be geographic place. However, the settings in which meaning is made by human beings can extend far beyond the geographic. In her discussion of museums and anthropological terms, Cruikshank (1992, p. 7) acknowledged, "The notion of context continues to be troublesome in anthropology. It is no longer sufficient to be sensitive to the setting and situation in which an object is collected or a story is heard. We have also to understand its continuing life." Similarly, Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) suggested,

> By context, I mean the setting–physical, geographic, temporal, historical, cultural, aesthetic–within which the action takes place. Context becomes the framework, the reference point, the map, the ecological sphere; it is used to place people and action in time and space and as a resource for understanding what they say and do. (p. 41)

Here, the definition of context becomes much more flexible, moving beyond the physical into the realm of the intangible. The setting for "action" may refer to something in the past, such as geographic origin, or something in the present, including personal interaction of a museum visitor with an object. As the idea of context develops into a more complex notion, it becomes apparent that context can exist in various forms and on multiple planes.

Understanding context is central to discovering the geneses of the museum place and historic place codes. Chandra and Daniel (2000) described the importance of context knowledge in understanding works of art, especially the critical element of seeing beyond the physical. They proposed a process of "ReCognizing," which is "the act of

cognitively restructuring one's thinking, getting to know a previously known thing in new ways or an unknown thing, like a work of art, in multiple ways," including "go[ing] beyond the physical knowing or comprehending to gain a contextual knowing that is constructed by time and place" (p. 8). In his discussion of material culture methods, Prown (2000, p. 12) asserted, "Artifacts, like other historical events, do not just happen; they are the results of causes. There are reasons why an object comes into existence in a particular configuration." Similarly, places "do not just happen"; the things, people, and events that shape them create multiple contexts in which places exist and from which they may be considered.

Below, the concept of context is employed to describe "Four Contextual Domains" of physical and virtual place where interactions between people and objects/sites occur (see Figure 1). The domains suggest ways in which people perceive the physical settings and intangible realms that objects and sites occupy, creating the *origin domain, creation domain, display domain,* and the *experiencer-object domain.* Based on theory and methods from a variety of disciplines, including cultural geography, material culture, art history, museum studies, and phenomenology, the four contextual domains offer a construct from which to consider the codes of museum place and historic place. The domains also illuminate known points of comparison between museum place and historic place and suggest new ideas about their identities as embodiments of the physical and intangible.

The four contextual domains discussed here are presented as an emerging theoretical construct. In their role as theory, the domains provide a system through which to explain the rise of the codes, as described by Lefebvre. As such, the four domains are

capable of crossing disciplines and are applicable to more than just the analysis of museum place and historic place. The flexible nature of the four domains allows them to be useful in elucidating codes for institutions of other types, perhaps libraries, for example. It may be possible to apply the domains to any physical setting where people engage with objects. Further, it is feasible to substitute "place" for "object" in any of the domains and retain the sense of the domains. Potential exists for this construct to be revised or added to when further research is conducted.

The Origin Domain

On the most fundamental level, as described above, context is about geography, since contexts are places. As Casey (1997, p. 76) asserted, "Places punctuate a world and serve to specify it [a world]." We ascribe meaning to places, just as we ascribe meaning to everything else that surrounds us. Further, the need to connect person, object, and place is deep-seated. The questions people ask about the objects they encounter are usually first, "What is it?" and second, "Where did it come from?" In the broadest sense, knowing what surrounded the object or place at its creation is determinative, shaping how people approach and understand the thing in question. The connection, often latent, between physical things and the environments that gave rise to them, is fundamental to the concept of context.

The *origin domain* is defined as the geographic or cultural environment in which an object was created, built, or in the case of places, designated as having a particular meaning, through either formal or informal means. This is the most common application of the idea of context; for example, an artifact that came from Erie, Pennsylvania originated in that context. The division of objects into categories of origin domain is

typical in the museum and cultural resource management fields. If an object is described as being viewed anywhere outside its place of origin, it is outside its context. This is evident in many of the publicity materials published by art museums to describe programs and exhibits. The Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas at Austin opened a new permanent exhibit in 2006 called *America/Americas*, which attempted to illustrate how Latin American and American works reflect "European ideas of abstraction" and to show "the first attempts to apply these to a specifically American context" (Blanton Museum of Art, 2006). Similarly, the practice of listing geographic origin in museum accession records and on interpretative labels is almost universal in Western museum practice.

The origin domain can create socio-cultural connections in geographic place to the legacies of the peoples of that place and of what surrounded the object at the time of its making. Essentially, the origin domain exposes the framework of cultural experience in which an object was created, including the whole collection of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and memories of the culture or society that created it. In many ways, categorizing things according to their origin domain sets the stage for experiencing the geographic and cultural meanings of objects. The origin domain aids in understanding the object's significance. Knowing about the origin domain of an art object facilitates understanding its meaning. In his discussion of Navajo art, Zolbrod (1987) argued that it is difficult if not impossible to know art objects without knowing the culture behind them. Although a person may be able to appreciate and know an object to a certain extent by experiencing it only aesthetically or by making inferences from the object's

composition, informed viewers can frame their object interaction with knowledge of the geographic or cultural context of a work.

Further, knowledge of the origin domain forces people to broaden their thinking outside their own experience. Though Prown (1988, p. 26) correctly concluded, "Because of cultural perspective, it is impossible to respond to and interpret the object in exactly the same way as did the fabricating society, or any other society that may have been exposed to and reacted to the object during its history and peregrinations," knowledge of the origin domain makes it necessary for the individual at least to consider a broader context. Because many objects that people encounter come from somewhere outside their own "worlds" – geographic, chronological, social – the origin domain forces people to consider objects as something outside and separate from their own selfhood experiences. The object is foreign and creates an inside/outside dichotomy that affects the way people view their relationships to the objects around them, relationships that are important to personal interpretation and understanding.

The importance of the origin domain to the understanding of objects has been continually debated. Two enduring arguments on this topic come from Georg W. F. Hegel and Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy, who differed sharply in their assessment of the origin domain's importance (Maleuvre, 1999). Although they refer chiefly to art objects in their respective discussions of context, Hegel and Quatremère's conclusions are applicable to other types of objects/places. Quatremère concluded that an object separated from its origin domain is "as good as dead" (Maleuvre, p. 26). For him, experiencing the object in its origin domain was critical to understanding it, and this understanding was difficult or impossible outside of the object's place of origin. In

contrast, Hegel considered the origin domain as "merely incidental," a "product of the mind" that was created around the object and does not affect the object as it exists in the present (Maleuvre, pp. 26-27). Hegel characterized the relation of art object to its origin as a "*reflexive* connection, rather than a *natural* one," demonstrated by the inability of people to do more than look back to the setting from which the object came, instead of directly experiencing it in the present (Maleuvre, p. 27, emphasis in original).

No matter what side one takes in this debate, the origin domain remains an essential part of the history of the object/place. Hegel discounted the importance of this history in the present, yet the fact that people know that history exists demands that it be considered in relation to the object. Quatremère de Quincy's position that an object cannot be understood outside its origin domain is as thought provoking an argument as Hegel's. Certainly, understanding created within the origin domain is different from that created outside it, but this fact just underscores the need to differentiate between the types of knowledge created in both places. It seems that a middle-of-the-road approach, which acknowledges both the limitations of people to encounter the past in places and supports the definite need to attempt to do so, helps to define the role of the origin domain in experiencing objects and places.

The Creation Domain

During the creative process, the creator (defined as the maker, artist, or builder) intimately engages with the object being created. In doing so, she or he creates an intimate context that surrounds the object, which may be envisioned as a virtual "place" or "world" fashioned by the very act of creation: the *creation domain.* Existing solely

between the maker and object, the creation domain consists not only of physical place and intimate contact but also of the ideas and experiences manifested in the object (Figure 3). In this domain, the object's existence flows from the creator and the object answers the act of creation with a physicality that reflects the creator's intentions. As the process of creation continues, the object begins to be capable of a type of "response," a capacity born of its own existence independent of the maker. While the maker of an object is actively creating, the creation domain is generated between person and object, creating a unique atmosphere of context formed by the movement of ideas from the maker to the object.

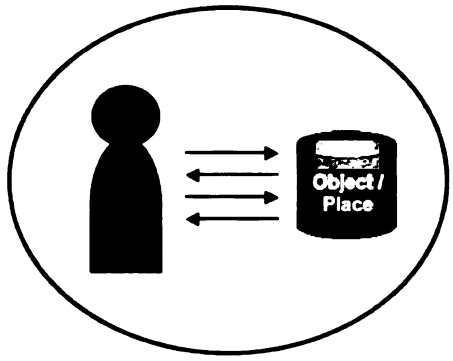

Figure 3. The intimate atmosphere of the creation domain

During the process of creation, the creator makes an object that is a unique expression of his or her *intent.* Intent is often described as the design or purpose behind the performance of an act, such as the creation of an object. The purposes of the creator are made known within the creation domain. In Hamblen's (1984, p. 20) discussion of perceiving art, she suggested that intent is a collection of "learned behaviors, values, and attitudes that shape artistic perceptions," which in turn "constitute expectations that define what is chosen for articulation by artists." The ideas, beliefs, and desires of the

creator cause the object to be shaped in a certain manner. The creation domain provides a physical and mental location for the expression of this intent.

How much control, however, does the maker have over intent? On some levels, the creator may directly purpose intent in their works. For example, Lovell (2005) described portraits of wealthy American colonials painted in the 1770s-80s. Painters like Benjamin West, Charles Willson Peale, and John Singleton Copley created private portraits of individuals of which the primary intent for production was clear: to celebrate an inheritance, marriage, or other significant life event. These portraits reflect additional aspects of the artists' intent also, those as lofty as creating a masterful work or as mundane as making money. What is revealed later as intent may have been unknown to the maker during the creation process. Can creators fully know what their intent is when making objects? Nemerov (2006) considered N. C. Wyeth's intent in his painting *The Wreck of the "Covenant."* He suggested that the issues driving Wyeth in the production of this work and thus shaping his intent "remained largely invisible to him even as they determined the appearance of his picture" (p. 7). Nemerov believed that much of artists' intent is often subconscious and therefore unknown to makers. It is also possible that intent context "evolves, multiplies, or changes over time," as Odegaard suggested (1995, p. 189). Removed from the process of creation, one can only speculate about the intent context of objects through the process of art historical research, material culture methods, or direct personal experience with objects.

Whether or not the creator is aware of intent during the making of an object, intent nevertheless remains permanently "in" the object, because when the creation process is complete, the object retains evidence of its former location in the creation

domain. That objects are capable of reflecting this experience is expressed by Prown (1988) in his discussion of material culture methods. He asserted,

> The underlying premise is that objects made or modified by man reflect, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, *the beliefs of the individuals who made*, commissioned, purchased, or used them and, by extension, the beliefs of the larger society to which they belonged [italics added]. (p. 18)

In Prown's assessment, there is trace evidence in the object of the maker's intent. Recalling Brown's (2003) notion that ideas are embodied in things, it follows that something of the maker's ideas during the creative process survives in the object and that it may be discerned from studying the object. The ideas and beliefs of the creator imbued in the creation domain form an atmosphere that surrounds and informs the object and remains as an integral part of it. The creator's ideas become a set of "contextual cues" that forges a link to these ideas, and through them, the memory of the creation domain (Middleton & Brown, 2005, p. 140).

The object, present during the process of creation with the maker, bears upon it some traces, not only of intent, but also of the biographical or psychological background of the maker. The creation domain also allows for expression of the creator's sense of self, which may be evident in the object. By "listening" to the object "tell" what it knows about its creator (Prown, 1988, 2000; Schlereth, 1980), it may be possible to shed light upon the person of the creator. When the creator is known, biographical information about the maker may provide knowledge about the reasons an object was fashioned the way it was. Conclusions reached through such methods can be revealing. The very closed and completed nature of the creation domain makes examination of the object for information about the maker an exciting prospect, for in many cases (such as objects from antiquity), the object is the only remaining participant from the creation domain.

One historic resource, a log cabin from Grand Island, Michigan in Lake Superior, most likely built by fur traders in the early nineteenth century, illustrates this relationship.[1] Though the rough-hewn logs, as a physical material, may not be conceived of as "American," the spatial boundaries created by the joining of these logs by the maker in that time and place provided a place that was to be used in a particularly American way. Fur traders designed the building to meet their unique needs as they engaged in their daily work in the northern environment. Although the building was used for different purposes later, the original spatial memories created by the maker remain in the structure and is perceptible to those who enter the cabin, by placing their bodies within that space and experiencing the context physically.

The creation domain also provides the beginning of a "biography" for the object, a concept that Kopytoff (1986) explored. He suggested that objects have personal histories attached to their beings as much as do people. Kopytoff concluded, "It seems to me that we can profitably ask the same range and kinds of cultural questions [about types of biographies and what successful biographies are] to arrive at biographies of things" (p. 66). Silverstone (1994) elaborated upon this concept, illustrating the process.

> Objects have biographies. They move through a world of public and private arenas, and in and out of the world of goods and commodities. Born in a factory, an artist's studio or a craftsman's workshop, they may end up on a scrap-heap, on a mantelpiece, or in the glass case of a museum: now on display, now hidden in the bowels of our and others' domesticity. (p. 163)

Assessing the object may reveal something about it and its creator. As Kopytoff further asserted, "Biographies of things can make salient what might otherwise remain obscure" (p. 67). The creation domain activates this process.

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[1] This cabin is part of the collection of the Michigan State University Museum in East Lansing, Michigan. The cabin was disassembled, transported, and reassembled in the museum in the late 1960s.

Once the process of creation is complete and the object leaves the maker's hands, the creation domain, as a place, may only be connected to the present through memories. The newly separated object and the creator become free to be emplaced in other contexts; they are no longer part of the creative atmosphere. Still, much of the artist's intent remains with the object, and it surrounds the object and gives it meaning. It becomes as much a part of the work as – and as inseparable from – the canvas, wood, or stone used in fabrication. Even though the creation domain is a virtual and ephemeral place, observing the object provides a window into the time and location where both the object and the maker existed together. People experiencing the object may connect to the traces of this domain and in essence "visit" this virtual place though interpretation, personal reflection, and material culture or art historical methods.

The Display Domain

The *display domain* is the physical setting in which an object exists. Any place an object occupies is technically a display domain, for example, a tin can on the side of the road is "displayed" in its setting. This domain defines the relationship of objects to the physical world that surrounds them. Display domains range from the intimate (a home where family photographs sit atop a piano) to the public (museums, monuments and other structures, or boundaries that set apart a specific spatial area). Because it is impossible for human beings to separate objects from the physical settings in which they appear, the display domain is central to the construction of place. In the museum studies and cultural resource management fields, the display domain most often refers to settings specifically designed to facilitate the presentation of objects, such as a museum exhibit or historic site. In this discussion, the display domain will refer to the "place" created by the formal,

deliberate display of objects in a specific setting and the people who become part of the this context through association with the objects. It is important to stress that issues surrounding the mechanics or design of displays will not be addressed here but rather just ideas about the characteristics of the display domain.

The display domain fashions realities for the object, and such realities may become layers or strata of reality that change over time for an object (Oberhardt, 2001; Schlereth, 1980). Schlereth explained that artifacts contain layers of symbolism and meaning that reflect the history of the built environment. Schlereth emphasized that the historic home has two histories of equal importance: historic existence as a residence and contemporary existence as a museum. Similarly, biographies of objects include the history of display domains in which an object has been a part. Display domains become part of the history of the object and continue to be a part of it as long as the object exists.

These realities are not limited to the characteristics of physical display, such as the design or appearance of a museum exhibit. When an object is exhibited within the confines of the display domain, a relationship is established between the object and space that transcends the tangible in many ways. Since both the object and the display domain are physical "things" located together in a particular time and place, they should both have the power to act on each other in a reciprocal creation of realities. Two enduring questions enter here: What specifically is created by the existence of a display domain? What about the issues of authenticity and inauthenticity of display domains?

Many would argue that the display domain creates an artificial environment, because the display domain, by its very definition, involves people constructing an

environment for the presentation of objects. Hein (2000, p. 8) characterized the museum display place as "a fictional space" and further surmised,

> In the museum, these objects acquire an artificial value and effectively lose some of their original attributes. Detached from their place in the physical world, they inevitably undergo supraphysical alterations. They are enclosed in a framework of new meanings, associated with other museum objects, whose relation to the natural world, like their own, has become contingent and conjectural. (p. 25)

This process is similar to Davis' (1999, p. 16) description Van Mensch's definition of *musealization*, which means "the process of conserving, documenting and interpreting objects or specimens" and "the selection and removal of an object from its original context and its transfer to a museum [that] involves a change in meaning (or actual identity) for that object." This relates directly to the inevitable privileging of objects and places involved in the creation of display domains and the power of display held by those who control display, which affects meaning (Pekarik, 2002).

This change of meaning is not necessarily limited to objects in a museum display domain. Even objects displayed in their own origin domains, such as in historic places, are subject to the same identity and meaning changes to which Hein and Davis referred. Davis (1999) argued that musealization can occur within any display space, including *in situ* resources such as buildings and sites. One reason for this is the change in people's perceptions of objects that occurs over time, to which Hegel's argument above about the origin domain refers. Maleuvre (1999) contended,

> To be historical, an object must have seceded from time: it cannot be one with its temporal becoming. The historical object is therefore one that belongs neither to its original setting–from which it has been singled out–nor to the present–in which it resists assimilation. (pp. 58-59)

> The idea that art in the museum is no longer authentic implies that art outside the museum enjoyed a truer, more immanent connection with history and culture. This view ratifies an idealist notion of history whereby history is thought to be a

> substratum existing prior to the work of art, or a predetermined sphere wherein the work of art is placed at birth. Thus a given work of art is said to 'fit' in its historical context as in a natural essence. For both sorts of museum detractors, this notion confirms the thesis that artworks must be reintegrated into a setting akin to their 'original' circumstances. (p. 3)

Applying these ideas of inevitable changes in objects and the changes in social realities and the memories of people that result from historical change, *any* display domain, including the origin domain, can be considered inauthentic or fictitious.

The nature of the display domain, albeit fictitious, greatly affects people's experience with the objects presented within it. With such ability to affect the perception of objects within its confines, the display domain becomes what Karp (1991, p. 14) called an "apparatus of power" that "can serve masters other than the aesthetic and cultural interests of the producers and appreciators of art." Both museums and historic resources, as producers of display domains, exercise this power. Pekarik (2002) addressed the question of power in museums by asking who decides which objects get emphasized in museums, essentially asking, "What becomes iconic and why?" Historically, historic resources have also exercised power over display domains, involving both of objects and place, often linked to "belief in the emotional and didactic power of historic sites" to teach and influence belief (Ricketts, 1996, p. 25). Although changes have been occurring in recent decades to balance the power relationships in places of memory, such as museums and historic resources (Archibald, 2004; Bunch, 2007; Hindmarsh, 2007), the clear distinction between "dominate memories (or a mainstream collective consciousness)" and "alternative (usually subordinate) memories" (Kammen, 1991, p. 9) is often most clearly evident in the display domain. What is displayed and how indicates the possession and exercise of power. Although it is not the purpose here to delineate

how and why powers are exercised in museums and historic resources, it is sufficient to note that power creates the display domain.

By extension, people interacting within and experiencing the display domain are subject to that power to a certain degree. Viewers of objects, as part of the display domain, actively create a segment of the reality in which the objects exist. People contribute to the display context by their presence, actions, memories, and thoughts within place. Yet, the ability of people to control this domain often overwhelms the presence of objects and the ability of people to experience different domains through it. This is especially evident in the ways in which Western people have been culturally instructed to behave in the display domain. People often experience what Alpers (1991) called the "museum effect," which is a way of viewing and interacting with objects in a museum context. This involves numerous factors, including the particular things within the display domain that viewers are conditioned to notice, social behavior within galleries, and "appropriate" relationships to objects. This power of the display domain often overwhelms the physical presence of objects and the other domains that surround it.

Because of this power, the display domain becomes a *broker of context*, that is, a connection maker or mediator between the creator, object, displayer, and the people who ultimately see the object in the display domain. In such a position, this domain connects these participants together, by providing a physical place for interactions in the display domain that makes learning about the other contexts more accessible to the viewer, for example, the origin and creation domains. Although the creator is most likely absent when the viewers interact with an object in a display domain, there is still something of the creator in the traces of creation domain that remain with the object. Similarly, the

origin domain also has an influence on the object and how it appears as part of the display domain. In many ways, the display domain becomes a true "collaboration," as Vogel (1991, p. 191) characterized art exhibitions.

The Experiencer-Object Domain

Every object is part of different contexts throughout its existence: the origin domain, the creation domain, and some type of display domain. In their interactions with objects, people perceive objects mentally and physically, in situations ranging from the individual to the social. Individual interaction with an object, with a person relating to the object one-on-one, creates an interface particular to a single viewer and a single object in a specific time and place. I have termed this place of interaction the *experiencer-object domain.* As long as this interaction continues, this virtual place – the experiencer-object domain – is sustained between the two. The intimacy of this space is key; it exists only for the individual and the object involved in the relationship (see Figure 3). Other objects, people, and even the physical setting surrounding the viewer and object are still part of the physical context of the scene (that is, the display domain), but they may become less important to the understanding of the object for the time a person is engaged in the experiencer-object domain. Group or social encounters with objects are made up of multiple single engagements with the objects. People first experience a thing individually and then compare their experiences of mind and body with that of others.

The relationship between person and object in the experiencer-object domain is first a physical one, based upon sensory perception. Walter (1988, p. 2) depicted the modern disconnect from sensing the environment, including the objects in it, as "a balanced

experience of intellect, common sense, feeling, and imagination." He argued that ancient peoples were (and modern *children* are) more adept at allowing the experiences of body (i.e., what is seen, smelled, tasted, touched, heard) to connect with the experiences of the mind and creating an "integrity of experience" than modern adults, who often feel reluctant to consider seriously what is felt by the body (p. 3). The fact that this is occurring is sometimes unknown to the person engaged with an object, as King (2003, p. 93, emphasis in original) described engagement with places: "Places are *felt* in ways we don't entirely understand, and some of them may actually have unusual power to affect our nervous systems." Learning how to participate more fully in object exploration with the senses is central to many art and museum education programs (Sirlin & Margolis, 1985; Visual Understanding in Education, 2001).

Philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty emphasized the importance of the body in the relationship of person to object. He suggested that people experience the object world through their bodies and that experience and objective thought are both based on physical interactions with objects. In his treatise on phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) discussed the primacy of the body in encountering objects. Envisioning the body as the critical connection point between people and things, he asserted, "I become involved with things with my body, they co-exist with me as an incarnate subject" (p. 185). He further reasoned that whatever is experienced by the mind is first experienced by the body, observing, "It is through my body that I go to the world, and tactile experience occurs 'ahead' of me, and is not centered in me. It is not I who touch, it is my body" (p. 316). The body acts as an advance agent of the mind, the first part of the person that interacts with an object. He contended, "The thing is constituted in the hold

which my body takes upon it" (p. 320). Thus, according to Merleau-Ponty, all that we perceive objects to be comes through our senses, and much of the object's constitution depends upon this perception.

What one perceives through the senses then becomes input to the mind. Once the mind translates what the body perceives into thought, the process of interpretation begins: The object makes meaning for the viewer, and the viewer invests meaning in the object (Brown, 2003). At this point begins a process of give-and-take between person and object. It is reciprocal, with the person learning from the object and the object in turn offering new information (often from the other three domains) to be perceived through the body and interpreted by the mind. The individual's interpretation of the object's meaning, though it can be informed and shaped by outside interpretation and education, should always be considered valid.

Together, physical and mental sensing both contribute to the building of the experiencer-object domain, or environment, which exists as its own "place" and includes all the things in that environment. Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) visualized a "horizon" that surrounds objects, which fades into the background the closer one looks at a particular object within an environment. He reasoned, "I direct my gaze upon a sector of the landscape, which comes to life and is disclosed, while the other objects recede into the periphery and become dormant, while, however, not ceasing to be there" (p. 68). Thus, one may envision the experiencer-object domain as an intimate place, consisting of this landscape and horizon and created by the object and person, for the purpose of exchanging ideas. For as long as someone remains engaged with an object, the experiencer-object domain continues to exist for that person and that object alone, in a

place similar to the atmosphere of the creation domain (see Figure 3).

Although it may metaphorically be considered a place, the experiencer-object domain is also an action: the act of participation of person and object in a process of engagement with each other. The experiencer-object domain is an environment of active involvement. Neither experiencer nor art is passive in this connection. Each has the power to "act" on the other. When someone encounters an object, that object immediately becomes part of the reality and sphere of space around the experiencer. People both interact with and act upon the objects with which they come into contact. They can touch objects, physically change or move them, and fashion the display domain in which the objects exist. People's prior experience and the interaction they have with objects/places affect the shape that this experiencer-object reality takes.

Objects also appear to have some form of power to act upon people. Although they do not have the ability to act with purpose and decision as living things do, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981, p. 16) astutely observed, "The material objects we use are not just tools we can pick up and discard at our convenience; they constitute the framework of experience that gives order to our otherwise shapeless selves." The notion that objects create an environmental framework or context around people gives objects a certain type of agency. In this capacity, the object becomes a "possessor" of value and meaning reflected in the environment created by display, a characterization Greenblatt (1991, p. 52) made of museum objects. For example, a painting is invested with various meanings and values, including aesthetic beauty, its representative nature of a certain style of art, or the insurance value ascribed to the work. With their power to become part of the environmental framework around people, objects

have certain powers to shape the experience that humans have in an environment, and in effect, "contain" them within it. With the experiencer and the object each possessing degrees of power, the process of interaction becomes a reciprocal relationship between two empowered parties: the experiencer and the object.

The intimate individual encounter in the experiencer-object domain extends in some ways to the collective experience of groups engaging with the same object. Although the personal place-world of this domain cannot be shared directly with others, the memory of it may. Constructed as memories, the experiences that occur in this context have the potential to work constantly in and through our social relationships, as Halbwachs (1925/1992) suggested, creating shared memories that draw individuals and groups into a collective framework that supports a reciprocal process in which individuals receive memory cues from others. This process in turn reinforces personal remembrance. Aspects of sharing individual experiences with objects in group settings, including museums and historic resources, have been explored by Davis (1999), Falk and Dierking (1992, 2000), Gurian (2004), and Lee (2002).

The contextual domains discussed above provide four categories of place that outline types of place in the human environment and the relationships to objects within them. As specific physical and virtual places, these domains seem to hold keys to why museum place and historic place exist and function as they do. In the next chapter, the four contextual domains will be used as a unifying theoretical construct to explain the geneses of the codes of museum place and historic place in the literature and to arrive at basic descriptions of these two place types.

CHAPTER FOUR

DESCRIBING TWO DISTINCT TYPES OF PLACE

> I shall attempt to trace the coming-into-being and disappearance of codings/ decodings. My aim will be to highlight *contents* – i.e. the social (spatial) practices inherent to the forms under consideration. (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 18, emphasis in original)

The four contextual domains provide a construct for examining the relationships between people, places, objects, and human memory. Place may also be considered an "object," in the sense that place, in its physicality, may be experienced through the senses and material culture methods. As such, place possesses the unique double quality of being both place and object. Museum place and historic place exist as real places in real time, even though they consist of both tangible and intangible elements. The four contextual domains provide descriptions of physical and virtual places that result when people encounter objects and places. As such, they create a useful construct to organize the elements of the museum place and historic place codes. The contextual domains' distinct qualities, evident in the environments of museum place and historic place, help to account for the geneses of the individual elements of the codes as outlined above.

Several factors validate the use of the contextual domain construct to explain why the codes of museum place and historic place arose as they did. One is the unifying power of the domains. Since places and objects may belong to each of the four domains at different points in time and to more than one simultaneously, the domains construct allows elements of the codes to be considered from multiple vantage points. Second, the strong connection to memory expressed in the codes of museum place and historic place

further supports using a theory that allows the examination of concepts of place, object, and memory together. The domains demonstrate how connections to memory are made in museum place and historic place. Finally, this construct contains a shared vocabulary useful for comparing these two types of place. Examining the codes within the four contextual domains will contribute to explaining how most people have understood museum place and historic place historically and will suggest how important it is to understand the distinctions between the two types of place.

Distinctions Related to the Origin Domain

The codes of museum place and historic place have their geneses in the type of connections they have to the origin domain. One of the primary functions of physical place is as the origin domain, the geographic or cultural environment in which an object was created, built, or in the case of places, designated as having particular meaning through either formal or informal means. The code reveals that historic place is genuine, physical place; thus, historic place can unquestionably act as an origin domain. The presence of objects produced elsewhere creates much of what is museum place, although it is partially about a built environment. Accordingly, museum place does not usually function as a site or origin domain.[1]

One reason for this is that museum place is not established only by the designation of place within the landscape of space, as happens with physical places. One part of the code indicates that museum place is primarily related to the presence of objects. However, I suggest that museum place is related more to the *memory* embodied

[1] In some cases, museum place can be an origin domain. For example, installation art or art created within museum place counts museum place as its origin.

in those objects than the objects themselves. Thus, museum place is a specially created and bounded niche within space and time that, when demarcated, becomes what is defined as museum place. Objects united with human memory in this fashion establish what Hein (2000, p. viii) called a "collections of collections – momentary worlds comprising the matter of prior worlds." The memory embodied in these transported objects is the memory of places other than museum place. The "place-world" of museum place does not exist outside of this matrix of people, objects, and memory. People and objects create this place and charge it with energy through their articulation of memory.

In its intangibility, museum place shares characteristics with other types of place, including the connection to memory, human meaning making, and fluid boundaries between the concepts of place and object. It shares many qualities with physical place, but its partially intangible nature causes it to embody a different "sense of place" than what a geographic place does. Although the creation of museum place is wholly and genuinely the creation of a type of place, it is not origin place. For example, where does object-based museum place begin and end? What happens to museum place when the objects within it are removed? These types of questions illustrate some of the critical differences between physical place and museum place as origin domains.

The code also indicates that museum place is perceived to be artificial or inauthentic place. This perception is related to the fact that museum place is not an origin domain. As described above, museum place consists largely of objects removed from their origin domains. The people and objects involved in the creation of museum place are all temporal, thus, museum place also has an air of temporality. Geographic places never cease to exist; places will always be the same places they have been geographically

speaking, because they are specific points in physical space. Museum place, in contrast, is mostly temporal – constantly constructed and deconstructed by the movement of people and objects within it. If the relationship between the objects, people, and memory is dissolved, then much of museum place ceases to exist, because it occurs only within the boundaries of what exists as "the museum." The temporal, non-physical place aspects of museum place account for this perception of inauthenticity or artificiality.

Further, certain genuine elements of physical place that can exist in an origin domain cannot exist in museum place. Again, since museum place is created by the union of people, objects, and memory in a place, the features of the environment that is fashioned does not include many of the tangible features of an origin place. Although it is in part a built environment, museum place does not have people whose culture is rooted "inside" this place, such as a city like Chicago. Neither is museum place an origin place for people: No one is ever "from" XYZ Museum. Thus, museum place remains a reflection of the cultures and peoples outside that created the objects within the museum. Hence, museum place is missing many of the aspects of dimensionality that impart authenticity and tangibility to physical origin places.

Historic place, in contrast, consisting partially of tangible historic resources and the intangibles of place, stands in a different relationship to the origin domain. As physical place, historic place may serve as the origin domain for objects. Because many times these objects remain in historic place instead of being transported like museum objects, the memory in the objects of historic place is that of the origin domain, not somewhere else. Maleuvre (1999) argued that an object being located in the origin domain makes no difference in its relationship to the ability of people to recall memories

because the origin domain is always a reflection of contemporary experience. However, memory of the origin place, no matter how distorted by time, still exists within this domain. As Petrov (1999) observed, there is always something in present culture that can connect us to the past, and being physically located in the origin domain gives people the opportunity to articulate memories that might not otherwise be articulated. The *place* of historic place, if considered as an "object" to be experienced through the physical senses and material culture methods, is also self-located in the origin domain of historic place. It can never be extracted from its origin domain; doing this is impossible.

Because historic place is created by designation on the spatial landscape, historic place is perceived to have the authenticity of the origin domain. The signs in the code indicate that there appears to be something more genuine about places constructed by the consent of people who live in the landscape than places constructed in a set-apart place like museum place. Although many scholars have commented on the need to connect museums with the memories of the local people whom the museums serve, this is many times not the purpose of museums. What is inside – the *museum place* of the museum – may have no immediate connection to the memories of the people who visit. In addition, museum place can go anywhere and establish itself as place. For example, the whole collection of a museum and the people who connect with it through memory could be transported to another city and be reassembled, without the complete loss of museum place. This is not the case with physical place. (Consider the loss of origin context and "sense of place" destroyed when historic buildings are removed to new locations, e.g. Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan or Skansen in Stockholm, Sweden.)

Despite historic place's identity as an origin domain, historic place is as constantly constructed and deconstructed as museum place. The memory that it embodies is not static. Many groups contribute to the meaning of place, but historic place is not always connected with the memory of all the people who surround a historic resource. The memory of a dominant culture often covers over the memory of others in place (Del Real, 2004; Lord, 2005, Miller, 2006). The "layers" to which Schlereth (1980) referred may be obscured by the imposition of hegemonic memory over time. Although origin domains, as physical place, will never cease being sites of memory stratification, perhaps Archibald's (2004, p. 70) recommendation for museums that they facilitate the creation of "a new story, a single story that acknowledges the contributions of us all" is equally applicable as a possible means to preserve access to information that will help people to articulate memory in origin domains.

The relationships that museum place and historic place have to the origin domain are a primary factor that accounts for the distinctions between these two types of place evident in the codes (Figure 4). The clear differences in museum place and historic

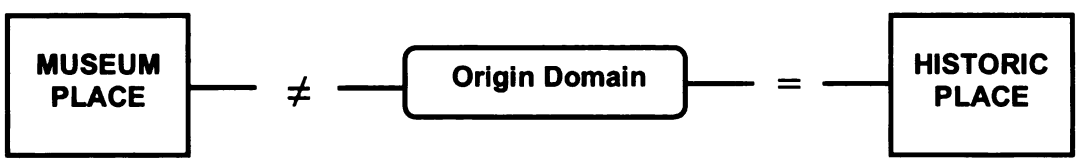

Figure 4. Museum place and historic place related to the origin domain

place, as they relate to this domain, uncover place-specific memory factors that should be addressed in professional practice. Experiencing the origin domain through *memory only* (as happens in museum place) and experiencing it *first-hand* though immediate physical

and mental contact (as occurs in historic place) generates two separate types of memory events for visitors. Perceiving something of the origin domain sets up contexts within which to approach, experience, and make decisions about place. In either type of place, visitors create ways to connect what they find in the origin domain with what they find in themselves and their own memories; however, the connections appear to have different facets in the different environments. Although determining what these facets are is not part of this project, examining museum place and historic place in the light of the origin domain not only explains much of the codes of place but also simultaneously demonstrates the distinctiveness of these two place types.

Distinctions Related to the Creation Domain

The codes of museum place and historic place relate less to the creation domain simply because of this domain's nature (Figure 5). No physical place can ever become a creation domain. It is a virtual place that exists only between the object/place and the creator and only for as long as the process of creation continues. However, the codes reveal links between the existence of museum place and historic place and the ability to cultivate knowledge of the creation domain as manifested in the memory of objects and people.

Figure 5. Museum place and historic place related to the creation domain

The presence of objects in museums, as indicated in the code of museum place, makes the creation domain a constant presence. An object's ability to reveal information about the creator and the creative process remains permanently in the object, and the centrality of objects in museum place the makes the residual intent and creator biography in the object more accessible. Further, the continuing biography of the object found within it serves as a tool, making it possible to move human memory toward the creation domain through experiencing the presence of the object – one of the cornerstones of material culture study (Prown, 2000).

The museum place and historic place codes, however, reveal confusion between the separate categories of the physical origin domain and the virtual creation domain, which affected the codes' geneses. Where may this confusion have originated? First, authenticity is a primary element in both the codes of museum place and historic place. Museum visitors are often geographically or culturally distanced from both the origin and creation domains. A large part of revealing anything of the creation domain relates to inferring information directly from the object and the creator, a process often alleged to be more difficult by the presence of the object in a place other than the origin domain. Thus, the removal of an object from the origin domain can contribute to museum place's perceived inauthenticity, supposedly interfering with the process of discovering the creator's intent behind the objects within a museum.

However, the creation domain is an entirely separate thing from the origin domain. The authenticity or inauthenticity of a place cannot affect the memory that was exchanged during the process of creation. This is forever fixed in the object and in the mind of the maker. Understanding the creator's intent and exchange of ideas that

occurred between maker and object is not entirely dependent on knowledge of the origin domain. For example, consider a Nuer immigrant from East Africa creating a traditional object in Minneapolis, Minnesota. How does the origin domain (Minneapolis) affect what occurs in the creation domain? At times, it may be more important to recognize the creator's relationship to the origin domain than information about the domain itself.

If *experiencing* the memory of the creation domain is conceived of as a function of physical nearness to the object/place (as in the investigatory practices of many material culture methods), then this may explain the reasoning behind concepts of authenticity and tangibility in the development of the codes. If close proximity to authentic objects helps to facilitate access to the creation domain, then museum place's essential connection to objects makes this possible. Historic place's identity as a tangible connection to the intangible also aids this connection. Nevertheless, is there a difference between the nearness to objects one may achieve in museum place and historic place?

In most of museum place, objects are present but largely inaccessible to perception by the senses other than sight. During the creation process of historic place, the creator fashions a physical object that "contains" place (such as a building or monument) or designates a spatial area as particular: an enclosure within infinite space. This action creates a physical place meant to be experienced and understood in a certain way. Unlike most museum place, historic place may often, but not always, provide a more intimate association with the creation domain. Connections between elements of authenticity, tangibility, and physical perception and the creation domain reveal the importance of memory to this context. When the presence of the origin and creation domains intersect, the memories connected with them may generate two planes of

memory connection in a single object or place. It is entirely possible that an object or place will have entirely dissimilar authenticities in the origin and creation domains, making it necessary to exercise caution in educational interpretation.

Distinctions Related to the Display Domain

The codes of museum place and historic place are deeply connected to the display domain. Characteristics of each place show that they embody the elements of this domain differently. These differences related to the display domain help to define the distinct natures of museum place and historic place. In identifying these relationships to the display domain, possible geneses of the two codes are also identified.

Within the museum, objects serve as the substance or raw material for the display domain. As discussed earlier, this domain creates realities for the objects that define museum place, but they also create realities for the people who view the objects. Without objects, there can be no fashioning of environments for the presentation of objects that exist within museum place. The process of bringing objects together to make museum place invariably creates the display domain. Objects separated from the origin domain must exist anew in the display domain, as Hein (2000, p. 25) described them, "enclosed in a framework of new meanings, associated with other museum objects." Without these frameworks or environments, there can be no engagement, no education, no understanding. Thus, when professionals discuss the importance of the presence of objects in the museum, it is not only that museum place cannot exist without them, but also that everything else that happens in the museum hinges upon them.

Describing a world created chiefly by the grouping of objects together with memory, the code leads to a characterization of museum place as inauthentic. Why is

this true? If museum place is inauthentic, is the display domain that results from its creation also inauthentic by extension? The separation of objects from their origin domains and their new identities in the display domain often helps to give museum place an artificial, orchestrated feel. The whole of museum place is a designed place, planned to be a certain way by certain people, and the nature of the museum display domain makes it seem like less of a "real" environment. In some ways, the inauthenticity of the display domain as manifested in museum place is, as Hein suggested, a building of a new, authentic reality for the objects in that time and place. However, the display domain is certainly a tangible element of museum place, which creates a reality that may be sensed physically. This reality then, no matter how allegedly inauthentic, must be genuine place. Therefore, to state without qualification that museum place is inauthentic is incorrect. This lack of clarity in the museum code results from the lack of articulation of the precise shades of meaning that the vocabulary of place studies provides.

However, if one defines authenticity as hinging upon power relationships and hegemony that relay display information, the display domain may be judged inauthentic. Because objects are trapped into a cycle of having to "be" what the display domain makes them seem to be within the confines of the museum, the same factors that affected the origin domain, including the designation of memories and objects as significant, surface again here. The fact that objects chosen to be part of the display domain in museums must be chosen by someone, possessing a particular set of individual memories and making decisions on behalf of a group possessing a collective memory, the display domain may not authentically *represent* the collective memories of the publics whose encounter with museum place makes them a critical part of this place-world. Since

human memory is a key building block of place, museum place cannot be formed without memory. Whose memory that may be is a pressing question, one addressed better elsewhere, but it is enough to recognize that connection to the memory articulation process contributes to perceptions of inauthenticity in the display domain.

The code also emphasizes the character of museum place as a built environment, and nowhere is this more evident than in the display domain. The built environment creates the physical aspect of museum place and simultaneously generates the display domain; therefore, the form of the museum building greatly affects the characteristics of the display domain. Museum buildings do function as containers or surrounders of objects, recalling the ideas of Plato and Aristotle presented earlier concerning place as receptacle or something that demarcated within infinite space that does not move. Perhaps a better idea would be to think of place moving and enveloping objects, as Casey (1997) explained Husserl's ideas about the orientation of the body to what surrounds it. He summarized, "[The body] is the stable center of the entire perceptual field, which pivots around it" (p. 218). Considering the museum building's *action* in creating place, rather than just its identity *as* place shifts the function of the built environment from noun to verb – museum "building" in the sense that museum place is constructed by the presence of the built environment, much like historic place exists because of a constructed environment. This idea illuminates Radley's (1991, p. 69) notion that the museum building functions as "the connective tissue of the displays," which is suggestive of an organic process, ongoing and continuing as long as museum place exists.

Within this organic process, the display domain within museum place is a function of the intangible as the code indicates, bringing objects and the memories

contained within this domain into contact with people's memories. If museum place, including the built environment, is a continuing action, then museum place is constantly evolving. This invites the inclusion of new objects, memories, and people into the display domain. Are these new things then subject to the effects of museualization in this domain as Davis (1999) described? Yes, since they are removed from the origin domain and emplaced in the display domain, objects are experienced as they relate to their existence as part of museum place. However, the "change in meaning (or actual identity)" that happens, as Davis asserted (p. 16), is mediated by an understanding of the object in each of the four contextual domains, since objects belong to more than one domain simultaneously. Because the display domain as it exists in museum place arises only as objects and human memory work in concert to form a place where meaning and connection can be made, connection to memory is very strong in the display domain. This dependency cements the importance of the memories present in objects and the personal individual and collective memories that objects help people to articulate through contact in museum place.

Historic place has a similar but not identical relationship to the display domain. The genuine, physical place aspect of historic place seems to function as the main variable between museum place and historic place. As discussed earlier, museum place is genuine place, although in many ways, it is not physical place. The tangible and intangible aspects of place together become an object-place, able to be experienced by people through facets of the display domain. Does historic place's existence as tangible place alone account for the elements found in the code of historic place and their relation to memory?

For historic resources, place not only creates the environment for the display domain, place itself is the raw material of the domain. As defined above, the display domain refers to the "place" created by the formal, deliberate display of objects in a specific setting and the displayers of objects who become part of the context through association with the object. By virtue of being physical place, historic resources (including historic sites, landscapes, battlefields, and memorial sites) are themselves display domains, that is, they are the physical settings in which objects exist. Historic place acts as its own display domain, just as it functions as its own origin domain. Historic place is not "made" by "someone"; instead, it is carved out of existing space, borrowed from the finite spatial boundaries of our world. In essence, the creation of historic place, and thus its display domain, is accomplished through processes that often seem removed from human acts of fabrication. No matter how it is defined or designated, historic place will always be physical place. In contrast, what is museum place today may not be museum place tomorrow.

Historic place, because of this enduring relation to its display domain, often appears to be more authentic than museum place. However, the physical nature of historic place does not mean there is no deliberate fashioning of the display domain there. Acts of designation, as described above, involve collective memory and creative reconstruction and power relationships between groups. Further, places, through the very act of designation within space, become invested with meaning through connections to human memory. Davis (1999, pp. 16-17) argued that even "*in situ* preservation is musealization," in other words, as soon as a site is designated and preserved, it takes on new meaning and identity through designation and the resulting relationships with things

in and around the site. As with museum place in the display domain, there is a difference between the authenticity of place and the authenticity of what is exhibited, interpreted, or occurring *in* place. In many ways, historic place is as inauthentic as museum place is often thought to be. Whether the people who experience historic place recognize this distinction is something that may certainly affect interpretation and education efforts.

The code reveals that historic place is a tangible connection to the intangible. Much of this element of the code relates to the ability of the display domain to be involved in the processes of memory articulation. With or without objects in the display domain, historic resources allow people to connect to memories (individual and collective) fused to physical places that have spatial qualities often perceived as existing perpetually. Much of what people feel in places – the "sense" or "power" of place – is this connection to place-grounded memory. Place memory bestows a unique continuity of physical existence in place, an intimate bond to others who have occupied the exact same place at another time. The Lincoln Home National Historic Site, the house that belonged to Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois, is one such connection point. It seems impossible to imagine disengaging the collective memory of Lincoln's person from this physical location. Only here can one stand in Lincoln's parlor and approximate experiencing the space as he may have. Historic place offers intangible place experiences in the display domain.

Conversely, the inability to connect to memory in the display domain of historic place may be what has been described as a "rootlessness" caused by "the weakening of distinct and diverse experiences and identities of places" (Relph, 1976), a phenomenon also called placelessness. As modern people have become less grounded to their places

in general, they have also become separated from their historic and memorial landscapes, and thus, the memories contained in these places (Archibald, 2004; Huyssen, 1995). The display domain offers a channel to activities of memory, yet many people are not equipped to recognize this opportunity through experience with connecting to place. They feel what Relph calls "outsideness," even in their own places. Relph observed, "To be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is this identity with place" (p. 49). Problems with rootlessness may also be caused by the degree of "insideness" that people feel in a particular place. For example, members of a minority ethnic group may believe that their memories are not part of the display domain of a historic resource and may feel no connection to that place. Historic place as display domain mediates the connections to memory, yet connection is dependent upon the relationship to intangible elements of this domain.

Thus, it appears that the codes of museum place and historic place arose in part because of characteristics related to the display domain. Both function as display domains (Figure 6) but in different ways and with different characteristics. Much of the construction of the codes depends on this identity, especially since the physicality of the two place environments is what is normally most readily accessible to the people who experience museum place and historic place.

Figure 6. Museum place and historic place related to the display domain

Distinctions Related to the Experiencer-Object Domain

The experiencer-object domain is a virtual place where all the intangibles of place come together, making it the nucleus and possibly the ultimate purpose for encountering museums and historic resources. Elements of both the museum place and historic place codes reinforce the centrality of intimate engagement with objects, without which the meanings of the other domains would be largely lost. The experiencer-object domain by its very definition depends upon the presence of the object or place and the memories embodied within and surrounding it. This process is linked to the one-on-one engagement of an individual with individual objects or places within the experiencer-object domain. The codes of museum place and historic place required this dependence on intimacy to develop as they did. Without interactions with objects and places, it is impossible for human beings to create mental order of the physical settings that surround them.

The codes both stress connection to memory though objects, and the experiencer-object domain creates a unique atmosphere for linking to existing memories and creating new memories. Because this process is highly individual, the means through which people experience memory is varied. However, there are some commonalities. Sensory perception, as Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) described, affords opportunities for people to enter a place where person and object truly become co-actors in the making of meaning and the creation of personal understanding. In this domain, feelings of connection, appreciation, or even aversion related to the object may arise as the object is admitted into the memory. No matter what a person eventually decides an object means for him or her, the person engaged with the object responds to the level of authenticity and meaning

perceived by that individual alone. All of these impressions, for better or worse, live on in the memories of individuals.

The museum place environment is partially a built environment, as the code indicates. Objects are contained within the boundaries of the museum building. Museum place came to be thought of as strongly related to its identity as a built environment because this factor, above all, makes it possible for objects to come together – in a place. The existence of the built museum makes it possible to house objects, which in turn makes the generation of museum place possible, and on this, the experiencer-object domain is dependent. Still, because of its dependency on the object, the focus in museum place is naturally on the object, not place.

But the physical separation of people from objects in museum place, as discussed in the section about the display domain, is also a concern here, because museum place serves to facilitate the experiencer-object domain. Separation from objects, which limits the ability of visitors to encounter objects physically through their senses, affects the function of museum place as a location for the experiencer-object domain. Additionally, if people feel a lack of connection to memory or perceive inauthenticity in museum place, i.e., a mental or physical separation or divide (Davis, 1999; Huyssen, 1995), then this may gravely affect individual engagement with objects in the experiencer-object domain. The engagement of individuals with particular objects within this domain "place" may serve as an impetus for museum practitioners and researchers to put more emphasis on place.

Historic place is similar to museum place in that it functions as a facilitator of the experiencer-object domain. In contrast, however, the code of historic place emphasizes

historic place as a tangible connection to the intangible. This seems to be related to the "object-ness" of historic place itself, as opposed to the object-based place of museum place. The object-place becomes an artifact that is enterable, allowing visitors not only to experience the place though intangible memory connections but also through the emplacement of their bodies completely within the place, in essence enveloping themselves with the object-place. Although people may come close to objects in museum place, it is much more likely that greater physical closeness to objects is felt in historic place. Immersion within the object-place allows people to experience it, literally, from the inside out.[2] This degree of intimacy with the object makes historic place distinct in relation to the experiencer-object domain. That historic place allows this type of intimacy is a key point in explaining the rise of the code.

However, physical closeness does not guarantee emotional closeness or memory connection to an object, as discussed above in the section on the creation domain. The code's emphasis on the creation of historic place by designation relies on elements of power. Historic place may often be perceived as more authentic than museum place because evidence of power is less visible or obvious in historic place. In the genuine physical place of historic place, visitors may enter the experiencer-object domain accompanied by assumptions created by their own reactions to the power dynamics of memories present in the historic location. In another scenario, visitors may be discouraged from entering the experiencer-object domain for greater lengths of time

[2] Haptic sensing or perception in place may enhance this immersion. O'Neill (2001, pp. 3-4) defined haptic sensing as "a holistic way of understanding three-dimensional space" which is "used to describe the various sensibilities of the body to its position in the physical environment and to its own condition....It involves the integration of many senses, such as touch, positional awareness, balance, sound, movement, and the memory of previous experiences." Piaget and Inhelder (1963), Gibson (1966), and Bloomer and Moore (1977) discuss haptic sensing.

because they feel alienated by statements of power inherent in the historic place.

Museum place and historic place both serve as facilitators of the experiencer-object domain, yet the code developed in different ways in response (Figure 7). The

Figure 7. Museum place and historic place related to the experiencer-object domain

elements of authenticity, object and object-place characteristics, and object sensing change depending on the environment in which they are experienced, whether in museum place or historic place. The codes depend on the identity of place as the experiencer-object domain, and their development reflects this.

The codes of museum place and historic place make it clear that these two places are distinct. In working through the codes to identify their possible geneses, it seems that the relationships of museum place and historic place to the four contextual domains explains many of these differences. When the ways in which these two types of place relate to the contextual domains are viewed together, it is obvious that the main difference between these places is that historic place functions as origin place while museum place does not (Figure 8). Although this is the primary distinction between the two places, the reasons for this are more complicated than it initially appears. Degrees of "nearness" to the memory of the creation domain and personal connection to the object/place in the experiencer-object domain are all linked to elements of the codes and help to explain why the codes arose as they did. Beliefs about authenticity and the ability to sense the object are also factors.

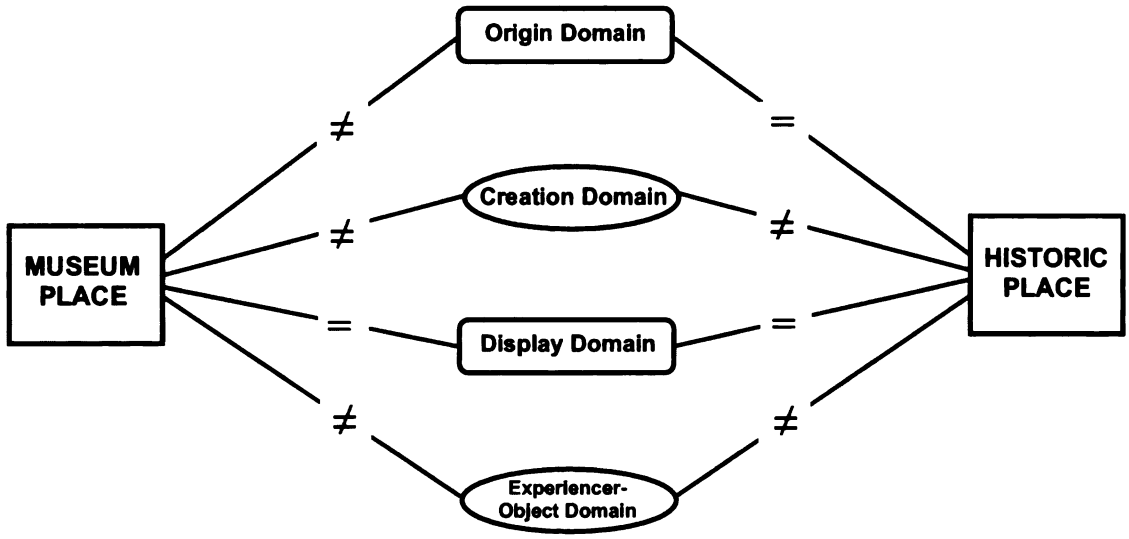

Figure 8. Summary of how museum place and historic place relate to the four domains

This examination of signs and the compilation of codes and supercodes from recent and contemporary museum studies and cultural resource management literature indicate that determining the differences between museum place and historic place is fundamental to improving understanding of how museums and historic resources are managed and shared with the public. Place and its relationships to human memory and objects in the domains are central to human life and existence in our spatial environment. That these codes of place arose because of intimate connections to human spatial realties in the physical and virtual domains seems plausible. Promoting a deep connection to place and meaningful encounters of people with place in museums and historic resources seems necessary as a result.

CONCLUSION

Simply put, the formative presence of museums and historic resources in the United States makes a better understanding of these places imperative. The initial discussion of place and memory shows how fundamentally important these concepts are to human beings. The tangible and intangible natures of museum place and historic place create multi-dimensional place-worlds that millions of visitors encounter every day.[1] It is clear that visitors do not inhabit a static museum or historic resource context consisting of the physical environment alone. Instead, they live in a complex, layered atmosphere made up of physical and virtual places. All visitors to museums or historic resources bring with them their sensitivities to place-based needs, concerns, and experiences, whether or not anyone realizes it. The sensory feedback from the environment one experiences in place, along with the physical and emotional experiences of memory construction and reconstruction, shapes learning, connection with objects, and ultimately, the sense of pastness that is achieved in museum place and historic place. For people working in the fields of museums and cultural resource management, the potential for improving or changing practice based on these factors is too great to be ignored.

The main argument of this thesis was that museums and historic resources exist as two distinct manifestations of place that embody fundamental concepts of memory and place in substantially different ways. Through Lefebvre's method of discerning codes of place by examining the collection of elements extracted from the literature, rudimentary

[1] Lake, Snell & Perry's 1999 study found that 2.3 million visits are made to museums in the United States every day (American Association of Museums, 2007).

codes for museum place and historic place were established. They revealed the interdependent nature of memory, people, and objects in the processes of meaning making. The "Four Contextual Domains" suggested ways people perceive the physical and virtual places they experience. Considered together with the domains, the codes revealed relationships, consistencies and inconsistencies, and unique characteristics that offered explanations about why the codes arose as they did in the literature, and through influence, how they affect professional practice. Strong relations to memory, creation by collection of objects or designation of place, issues surrounding authenticity, degrees of "object-ness," and connections to tangibility are all evident in the codes. Distinctions related to each domain illuminated known points of comparison and revealed new areas where contrast could be seen. This demonstrated that the main difference between the two types of place is the relationship to origin place: Historic place functions as origin place while museum place does not. Other important differences, though often not as apparent, cement the idea that these two types of places are distinct.

However, the lines between museum place and historic place may not be as sharp as they appear in this analysis. The descriptions established here are the beginning of a line of thinking about the characteristics of these two types of place. There are opportunities for considering ideas such as museum place within historic place (Figure 9), historic place within museum place (Figure 10), and intersections between the two (Figure 11). For instance, how does one explain the "place" of certain locations, such as Colonial Williamsburg, where historic place and museum place are layered together? The distinctions related to the four contextual domains as outlined above contain the potential for fruitful future analysis and debate.

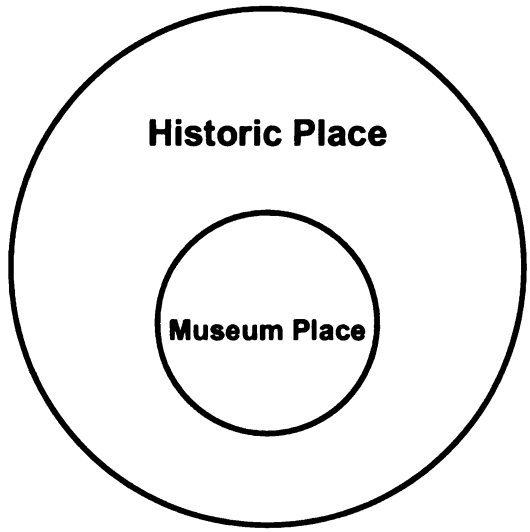

Figure 9. Museum place may occur within historic place

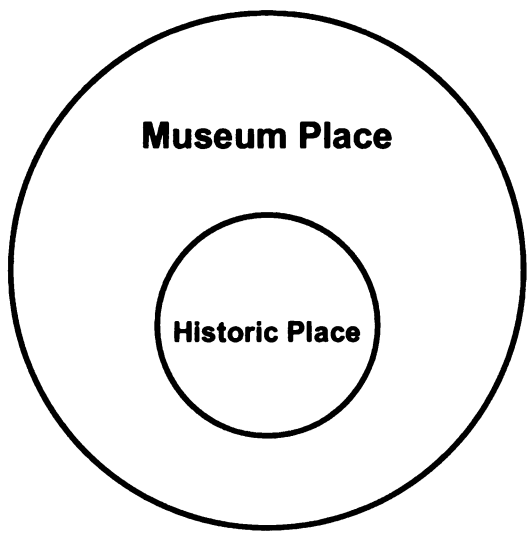

Figure 10. Historic place may occur within museum place

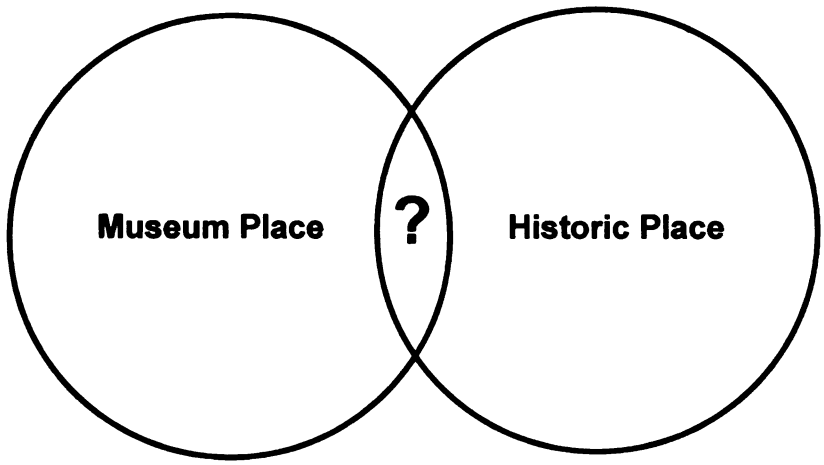

Figure 11. Intersections between museum place and historic place may exist

Making distinctions between museum place and historic place has potential for changing the way researchers and practitioners approach various areas in the field. For example, a one-size-fits-all pedagogy may not suit learners in both a museum and a historic resource when concerns about learning in place and connection to place are considered. Further, new literatures may have to be developed, specifically addressing place, such as the practical needs of educators at historic resources. Museum exhibit teams may need to move beyond the idea that "place" means the physical dimensions of the gallery. Executive directors at historic homes may find it necessary to supplement traditional tours with opportunities for visitors to engage with place one-on-one within the experiencer-object domain, by encouraging time for quiet reflection in place and allowing visitors to touch the surfaces of building materials, as permitted within curatorial limits.

This analysis answered many questions about the nature of museums and historic resources as places and filled some of the gaps in the literature. The comparison of museum place and historic place codes illustrated that these two types of place are

distinct and have their own specific characteristics worthy of study and consideration. Yet, this close reading of place made possible through examining the literature is certainly not the final word on the descriptions of museums and historic resources as place types. The history of the debates surrounding place and memory briefly described in Chapter One served to establish the fact that there are no final answers about place. What the descriptions of museum place and historic place provided above helps to show is that human conceptions of place and memory are constantly evolving and that they exist in many different forms. Thus, as there is no one unchallengeable definition of place or memory, the descriptions of museums and historic places are also subject to change. As physical places dedicated to connecting people with memories of the past, museums and historic resources are constantly evolving and with them, ideas about how people construct memories and experience places.

Possibilities for investigating the differences identified between physical and virtual place more deeply opens up new opportunities for applying this research to digital places created by technology, such as online and virtual 3-D environments. It may be that characteristics of museum place and historic place manifest themselves in some way within digital space, perhaps paralleling what happens in physical space. The idea that museum place and historic place may somehow be "mobile" to some degree is intriguing as well; how do the factors of place in the origin, creation, display, and experiencer-object domains relate to this possibility within "cyber-place"? Living as we do in an information age, concerns about the authenticity of place will likely continue to come under repeated scrutiny as people struggle to translate the realities of physical place into digital place.

In conclusion, the relevance of place and memory to museums and historic resources is indisputable, since it is largely through place and memory that we make sense of the world. Fostering deep connections to place through museum place and historic place will create continuity with what already happens naturally as people experience other types of place in their worlds. Connection and continuity invites the inclusion of new people, objects, and memories into places of memory, creating new and exciting possibilities for making the most of our human spatial "givens."

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