

**Culturally Responsive Built Environments**  
**Dr. Ram Sateesh Pasupuleti**  
**Department of Architecture and Planning**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee**

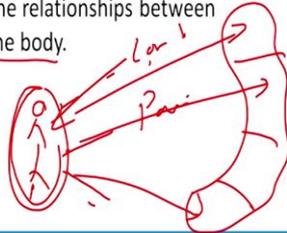
**Lecture – 02**  
**Place and Identity**

Welcome to the course: lecture 2. And we are continuing on the debate of place from the lecture 1, and this lecture 2 covers on Place and Identity. So, as just discussed in the lecture 1, we just stopped at this slide of which we talked about how the debate on the place and space.

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PLACE AND IDENTITY

Place is such a useful concept for Built Environment Studies, as it provides an alternative position that separates the mind from the body, and instead enables a discussion of the relationships between the mind and the external world through the body.

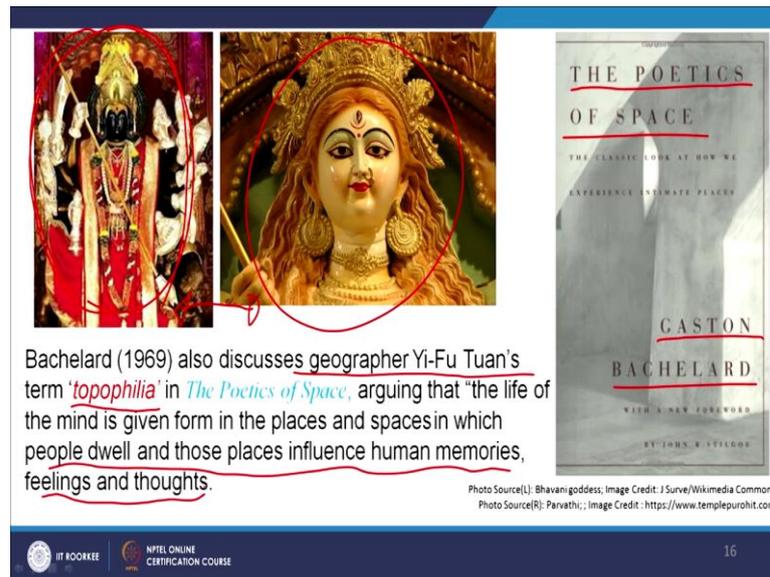


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And understanding the place is a very useful concept for the Built Environment Studies, because it provides an alternative position that separates the mind from the body, and instead enables a discussion of the relationships between the mind and the external world through the body.

So, how as I said to you earlier, how a man it is a body, who travels to London to Paris. So, his travelling all over the world or different places but, then it is just the body, which is travelling, but his mind, which is actually interacting with the external world. So, it could be a body is of kind of vehicle, which is taking you to a different places but, whereas it is your mind, which is interpreted in different cultures.

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Bachelard (1969) also discusses geographer Yi-Fu Tuan's term 'topophilia' in *The Poetics of Space*, arguing that "the life of the mind is given form in the places and spaces in which people dwell and those places influence human memories, feelings and thoughts."

Photo Source(L): Bhavani goddess; Image Credit : J Surve/Wikimedia Commons  
Photo Source(R): Parvathi; Image Credit : <https://www.templepurohit.com>

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Now, I will tell you a few examples for a simple understanding. So, what you see here is two goddesses. I will tell you a story of my own mother; I was working in Bhopal for 5 years in School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal. And my mother, and my father have visited me in Bhopal, which is in the central part of India; and my ethnic origin, I come from south India, which is from Andhra Pradesh.

So, all her life for about 55 years, she have worshiped Durga goddess. And she have a practice of waking up in the morning 5.30-6 and going to a temple in the evening 7 o'clock, 6 o'clock, she go to the Durga goddess temple, and she spent all her time, and in praying a goddess.

So now, when she was invited to stay with me, she was feeling little discomfort. I have asked my mother: "mother why are you feeling so discomfort?". She said, you know "I use to visit a temple every day, but now here I am not finding a temple". So now, I have found a nearby temple from the nearby locality. And I have introduced to another Durga temple, somewhere in the locality.

Now, I thought she will be happy, but then she is still not happy. Of course, I tried to soothe her feelings, but the thing is she is not completely happy. Then I asked one day, "why are you not so happy?". She said, "here, in many of the Durga temples I have visited, here both the goddess Durga, and the god Krishna, both of them are made with marble, and they both will be smiling.

But, whereas in the south, we have the Durga is found to be furious, she is more furious and different kind of attires, which we decorate, and it is more mostly we it is reflected in a furious way. So, she have imagined that Durga everywhere. And now, she expected that the same south Indian goddess of Bhawani, or Mahalaxmi, in Kanaka Durga, in the place of the north Indian temple.

So, this is where the people are attached with what they see, and what they are habituated, and what they developed a belief system in it. You know, so even a colour of a goddess, even the fabric used, even the setting of the goddess has made a deeper impact in ones lives. So, one has to understand that these practices are actually gets enmeshed, within ourselves. What we do, this affect kind of habitualities. Now, being a south Indian, I normally eat a food with hand, whereas in some other cultures, they eat with forks, and then the other cultures, they eat with spoon or fork right. So, different kinds of ways of eating, different kinds of practices each of us have.

Now, I would like to refer to one of the famous contribution, which is by 'The poetics of space' written by Gaston Bachelard. So, here he refers with the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan's, which is a term topophilia. Yi-Fu Tuan coins a term called topophilia in 'The Poetics of Space', that the life of the mind is given form in the places and spaces in which people dwell, and those places influence human memories, feelings and thoughts. So, we are coming from how a place is taking back from the a sense of the human memories, feelings, and thoughts.

So, my mother she her association with a worship with a deity, which has supposed to be furious, even that particular regular practice of going to temple, becomes her habitual practice, and for her it has become a memory, for her it has a practice. And then, she developed a feeling towards, she developed a believe system toward, so that is how, people they continue their practices.

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**PLACE AND IDENTITY**

Image Source: [http://www.greatbuildings.com/cgi-bin/gbi.cgi/Masai\\_Houses.html/cid\\_1261349055\\_Natron\\_Masai\\_boma.html](http://www.greatbuildings.com/cgi-bin/gbi.cgi/Masai_Houses.html/cid_1261349055_Natron_Masai_boma.html)

Topophilia is an affective response to place, but it is also "a practice that can actively produce places for people" (Duncan and Duncan 2001:41).



**MASAI COMPOUND, KENYA, AFRICA**

Duncan, J. and N. Duncan (2001) 'Sense of Place as a Positional Good: Locating Bedford in Place and Time', in P. Adams, S. Hoelscher and K. Till (eds) *Textures of Place: Exploring Humanist Geographies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 41-54.

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Now, when we talk about the topophilia, topophilia is it is an effective response to a place, but it is also a practice that can actively produce places for people a practice that can actively produce places for people.

For instance, I will give you a few examples from the African continent. Now, what you see on the right hand side is a Masai compound, Masai's tribes in near Kenya, Africa. So here, they are mostly on a kind of very indigenous tribes. So, what you see is a partitions here, and a part of it is mentioned for sheep, part of it is mentioned for cows, part of is mentioned for a cattle.

And here in the African cultures, they have these tribal settlements, they are both monogamous, and the polygamous. In the next slide, we will be discussing about how the settlements do vary, and how their organization of places do vary. Now, here in the polygamous culture, obviously they have a head person, they have basically a two entrances, to their habitats.

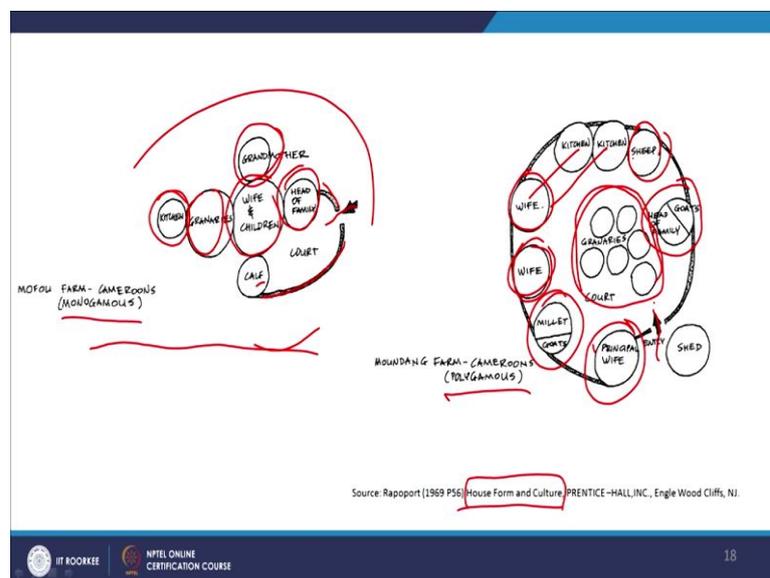
And then for instance, they have a head, family, and then he have some wives; who have probably one or two wives. So, probably they have these wives, and then they have their goats, cattle, so these are all interlinked. And at the same time, they have these kind of fences, which so they are all, because being a polygamous tribe, they tend to develop certain practices.

And in the Africa, these kind of practices, a man he does not get a significant house, but he is also have number of wives, and he keeps changing his position, so whichever wife he is staying. So, he keeps changing his position, and he is and the woman is also involved in the domestic works of making a house, making their taking the cattle out and.

So, here in all the these societies, in these tribal societies, the very fundamental difference of today's societies and in those societies, here everyone knows everything. So, it is not only a carpenter knows, how to build a house, it is not a mason know, how to make a brick work or anything. So, whatever the dwelling, they are manifesting.

So, it is they know all the skills as a community, they learn with each other, they learn, they have set up a practice. And with these living practices, which because of their indigenous, polygamous cultures, it has given up certain practices of living, how husbands keep transferring his position. And at the same time, how they are this herding of cattle, and how they have dedicated certain space right, and how their living it has defined their living practices.

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Similarly, Amos Rapoport is one of the important person, who actually developed an important contribution, house, farm, and culture. So, it is around 1969, this is one of the significant contribution, which is very much useful by the architects, and the built

environment professional. He actually talks about, because until that point, these domestic buildings, and the rural architecture, they are all completely ignored.

So, only this was a time Rapoport brought a new dimension of understanding culture, before understanding their built environments. So, he emphasizes on, we need to understand their culture, and their roots, and before understanding any of their built environments.

So, he differentiates with a Cameroons layout, the organisation structures of a monogamous, and a polygamous. So, here, if you see there is a wife and children, there is the head of the family, here is a entry, and he have the calf, he have the storage, and he has a dedicated a place for grandmother, and a dedicated place for a kitchen, so obviously, as a fencing towards it. So, this is a kind of very simple structure of monogamous structure.

Whereas, in the polygamous structure, where you have the entry here, as a little shed and their position, the kind of granaries on the court in the centre, and here the head of the family with his goats and his principal wife probably the main wife, or the then his wives, the second wife, third wife, and then their kitchens right, and then the goats, place for goats, and the sheep.

So, in fact, this whole thing becomes a kind of a homogeneous setting, for a polygamous family. So, they work with each other, they live with each other, they live very you know they cooperate with each other in everything. And each member of the family have acquired all kind of skills, in making the compound walls, in making their the houses with the cow dung, and the wattle and daub constructions, they know how to do, setup with their granaries; so, they know how to go for heading. So, each one of them are cooperating with each other and that is how the societies are.

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PLACE AND IDENTITY



The Dogon are an African tribe located mainly in the Bandiagara and Douentza districts of Mali, West Africa. The tribes population (about 300,000) being most heavily concentrated along a 200 kilometre stretch of escarpment called the Cliffs of Bandiagara.

DOGAN VILLAGE MALI, AFRICA

Source: <http://thebiggestsecretsoftheworld.blogspot.in/2011/02/dogon-tribe-and-alien-gods-from-sirius.html>

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Now, when we go we taken to another tribe what you see here, is the picture it is called the Dogan, Dogan tribe. In the Dogan tribe, which is about few kilometres from Mali, in the western Africa, in Nigeria and here this is in this is located in the Bandiagara and Douentza districts of Mali. And mostly about 300,000 and they all stretch a long about 200 kilometres stretch of escarpment called the Cliffs of Bandiagara. So, there is a cliffs, and then on the they just downside the cliffs on the topographic side, to all this kind of tribal hamlets are there.

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PLACE AND IDENTITY



Among the Dogon and Bambara of Mali every object and social event has a symbolic as well as a utilitarian function. The farm plots and whole landscape of the Dogon reflect this cosmic order. Their villages are built in pairs to represent heaven and earth, and fields are cleared in spirals because the world has been created spirally.

DOGAN TRIBE'S SYMBOLIC SEALS

Source: <http://thebiggestsecretsoftheworld.blogspot.in/2011/02/dogon-tribe-and-alien-gods-from-sirius.html>  
Image Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksQ3lm8B\\_pU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksQ3lm8B_pU)

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Now, among the Dogan and Bambara of Mali, every object and a social event has a symbolic as well as utilitarian function. So, for instance you see here, the kind of house, the dwelling types the kind of they are all domestically produced and domestically consumed.

And here, I want to tell you a story of this particular tribe. They use to be two anthropologists, from the western anthropologist, they lived with this tribe, for about 15 years. And after living for 15 years with the close observation in these tribal activities, and how they are performing the rituals, how they are performing their daily activities. Finally, the head of these tribes have brought them into the confidence. And they shared some of their indigenous understanding of their spiritual understanding of the universe, and their cosmic behaviours.

So, in fact, they also referred with some certain stars, which is now referred a kind of the in a they are referred with certain stars, which are few light years, they were existing and they are also calculating, and they are also talking about existence of other stars, and their movements and their patterns.

So, at that point of time, it appeared to be a little superstitious or maybe not believable. But later on, when they published this whole information of their understanding of this cosmic understanding and later on, some of the astrophysics people, they also have looked into these, the indigenous understandings, and they verified, whether it is true or not.

And later few years later, the scientist too clarified that the Dogan what the Dogan tribe have talked about, the shining milky way, and all the stars, Cyrus, everything, they were accepted by the scientific community. So which means, there is a law, which indicates, look there is a lot of indigenous knowledge inbuilt within the community. So, it is it is beyond our thinking beyond our, so for us we as an educated people, look at the tribe as an uneducated, but look at the way, they are having a knowledge about the planets, and the stars, and the patterns.

So, similarly, there is a some of the seals, which you can see they also follow certain pattern of which have a dualistic nature. And the farm plots, and the whole landscape of Dogan, reflect this cosmic order. So, they follow a kind of their villages, or built in pairs

to represent heaven, and earth, and the fields are cleared in spirals, because the world has been created spirally.

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PLACE AND IDENTITY



The villages are laid out in the way parts of the body lie with respect to each other, while the house of the Dogon, or paramount chief, is a model of the universe at a smaller scale. Multistoried houses are the prerogative of the highest religious and political leaders and are symbols of power, representations of them being used for many purposes; for example, as masks to frighten away the souls of the dead.

DOGAN VILLAGE MALI, AFRICA

Source: <http://thebiggestsecretsoftheworld.blogspot.in/2011/02/dogon-tribe-and-alien-gods-from-sirius.html>

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So, they have their understanding taking the inspiration of those cosmic forms, and into their habitats. And not only that you can see here; these villages are laid out in the way, parts of the body lie with respect to each other while the house of Dogon, or the chief, is a model of the universe at a smaller scale.

So, sometimes the multistoried houses are the prerogative of the highest, religious, and political leaders under the symbols of power. Obviously, there is a multistoried houses, which is slightly dominant by scale, by its character, and it is symbolises the power, and representation of them being used for many purposes.

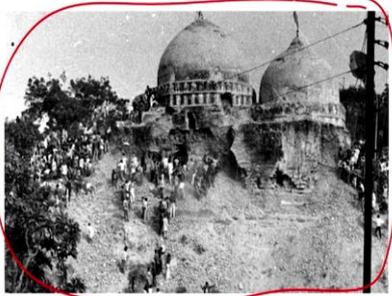
For example, a mask to frighten away the souls of the dead what you see here, is a kind of masks, which a person wears. And the belief system is that they tried to frighten you know, the frighten away, the souls of the dead, or in sometimes it also, because this lions the South African lions, and also the wild animals. So, in other way, this has been become a kind of though, it is a representative future, but it is also have a purpose, it has a meaning into it and the kind of colours, which are indigenously developed.

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"A sense of place is seen as a result of the meanings people actively give to their lives ... a sense of place can be seen as part of our cultural interpretation of the world around us" (Rose, 1995:99).

"A sense of place is part of the politics of identity" (Rose, 1995:103). This includes the idea of defining oneself in opposition to an 'other' (Rose, 1995:104).

Source: Rose, G. (1995) "Place and identity: a sense of place", in D. Massey and P. Jess (eds) *A Place in the World?: Places, Cultures and Globalization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 87-132.



Babri Masjid on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1992

Image Source: <https://thewire.in/196553/babri-masjid-demolition/>

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Now, coming to the sense of place, which we are talking about producing the meanings, how people produce actively engage, and how produce meanings to their lives. Now, it is also a part of our cultural interpretation of the world around us, this is what rose talks about. But, rose also mentions apart from her three concepts, she also mentions about the politics of identity in defining oneself in opposition to another.

So, one of the classic example, in Indian continent, you can see about the Babri Masjid. So, now, when we are talking about, who built this, whether (Refer Time: 19:02) Rama was born or not. So, this has created the question of identity, whether it is an Islamic, whether it is a place for the mythological, or birthplace of Rama, or so this has become a debate.

So, whereas a Hindus, they follow the kind of solar calendar, and the Islamic follows the kind of lunar processes. So, we are trying to oppose with each other, in order to create a kind of in order to define our self. So, and then not only this, we in this whole process of how we how we are defining our self by creating by opposing the another particular element, or a particular society, or their belief system. So, this is how, a sense of belonging is also created.

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Now, when we say, now I showed you a small impression of a Babri Masjid as a monumental skill, but it is also happens much more in a city level. You heard about the cities in conflict, there is about eight cities of conflict, Nicosia, Barooth, Balen, Belfast, Jerusalem, and all these, which are in the conflict situation. Now, I will myself having been part of Rehab Med project in south part of Cyprus, and having lived in north part of Cyprus, which we today, we call it as Turkish republic of north Cyprus.

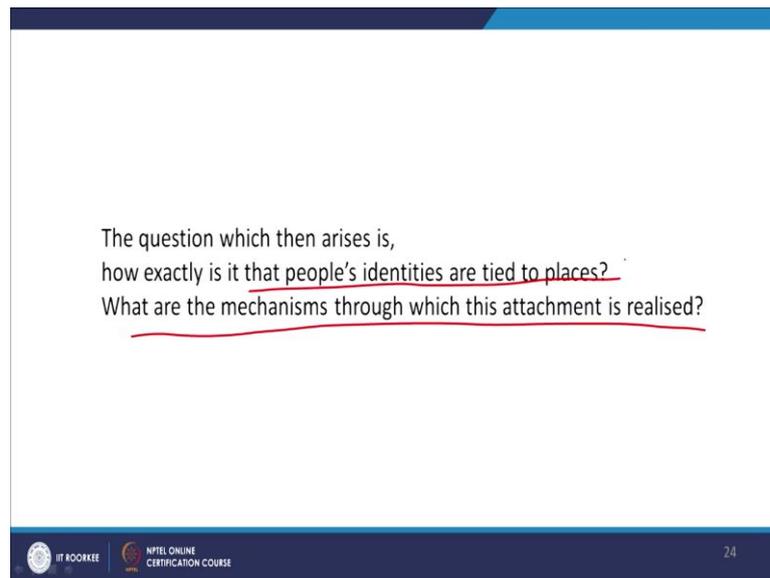
And you can see this was a walled city, you can see the walls here, and this is all the wall city. But, now this is originally of a Greek civilization, which has spread over from, because they are all the Greek part of these cities. But from following the Ottoman period, now the Ottomans have already ruled this part of certain periods.

And then gradually the Turkish customs and systems have occupied these places. And then in around 1980s, there is a huge war between the Turkey and Greece, and dispute still unresolved. And that is how they made a border of a kind of a border of dividing the city in between. So, this border, it is the city of conflict.

But, now in the present situation, this is a kind of belongs to kind of European union, but this is not recognised so far in a fully official way. But, still the turkey supports its funding and all the welfare is taken out by the Turkey.

Now, what here one of the important thing, this particular central part is actually taken by the united nations the buffer zone, which we today you see a little buffer zone of the walled city. And why is this barriers created, because the history, there is the history, which is talking about bringing these differences, and the practices, and their belief systems, and the power notions of the power notion, so these all creating the barriers.

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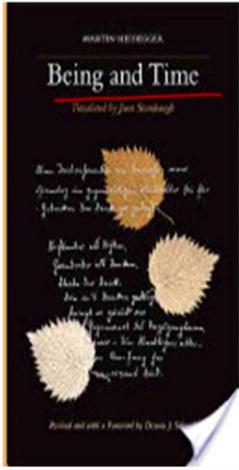
So, now the question which then arises is, how exactly is that peoples identities are tied to places? What are the mechanisms through which this attachment is realised? So, this is one of the fundamental questions of when we call about the we talked about politics of identity, we talked about the belief systems, we talked about the livelihood practices, we talked about the family structures. But, then how exactly one how, one can understand.

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Heidegger recognized that who we are (our mind, our ego) is influenced by our relationship, through our bodies, to the outside world.

As Casey notes, "the vehicle of being-in-place is the body" (2001:413). The body "goes out to meet the place-world" and it "bears the traces of the places it has known" (2001:414).

Heidegger, M. (1973) *Being and Time*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Macquarrie).



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So, this is where, I want to bring the Martin Heidegger, one of his contribution of 'Being in Time'. He talks about who we are, what is our mind, our ego is influenced by our relationship through our bodies, to the outside world. When the Mughals came in, they have come along the way from the almost from the Afghanistan, the Babur. And then, they brought certain intentions, there are they brought certain of their impressions, what they had earlier, to the Indian subcontinent. And in time, things have changed Indian too.

Similarly, when the colonials from starting from Portuguese, the Dutch, and the Danish, and the British, when they travel to India, obviously their impressions were carried, their notions of as a kind of a how the places should be, how a society should be. So, they carried all these along with them, and they started and machined within that place.

So, this is the Casey talks about, the vehicle of being-in-place is the body. The body goes out to meet the place world as I said, and it bears the traces of the places, it has known. Yes, when I went to London, for my education, for me after all spending 22 years of my life in south India. I expected a little south Indian food, I expected a little south Indian god, I expected a little community.

So, when I went to London, I was little surprised, especially on the east London, where you find the Shanmukh temple, where I went to Birmingham where I went to the Balaji temple. So, I could find my place there, I could find my essence of place there. So, who

made this, the people who went before me, who went all the generations, they formed a community, they found they given certain meanings, even in those place.

And similarly, as I discussed with the colonial part, when they came to India, obviously they have carried out that what kind of traces. So, you can still find your traces, where you belong to, and that is what he calls you know, being in time.

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Martin Heidegger's work in *Being and Time* provides a crucial clue in the search to explain "what ties place and self together" (2001:409). "The basis of the density of engagement between self and place in this world [of the workshop] is the set of habitalities by which its rich fabric is woven".

Heidegger's point is that places "are constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations".

The workshop is simply an analogy for what Heidegger calls 'dwelling'.

Dwelling is the capacity to achieve a spiritual unity between humans and things" (Harvey, 1996:300-301).

Harvey, D. (1996) *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, pp. 210-247.

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And Martin Heidegger's work in 'Being in Time', what he talks is, he basically talks about the density of engagement between self and place in this world. He calls this as a workshop. It is a kind of set of workshop, because you are it is a field, which you are getting, and your body you are entering into that, and you are setting up your habitualities.

And this is actually woven up with a rich fabric you know, the kind of habitual like for instance, when I was in India, I was always I have certain practices. But, then when I went to England, after living for 6-7 years, then it has given me certain practices. Certain practices were modified; certain practices were adjusted, in order to accommodate the climate, in order to accommodate the local cultural needs, and certain norms.

Similarly, when I went to Sweden, even those practices have been adjusted further. So, what we are, it is just a workshop, a place where we are it is he considers that is a workshop. But, then how we are enmeshed, a self is enmeshed within it, and with our

habituallities. And he says that places are constructed in memories, and affections through repeated encounters, and complex associations.

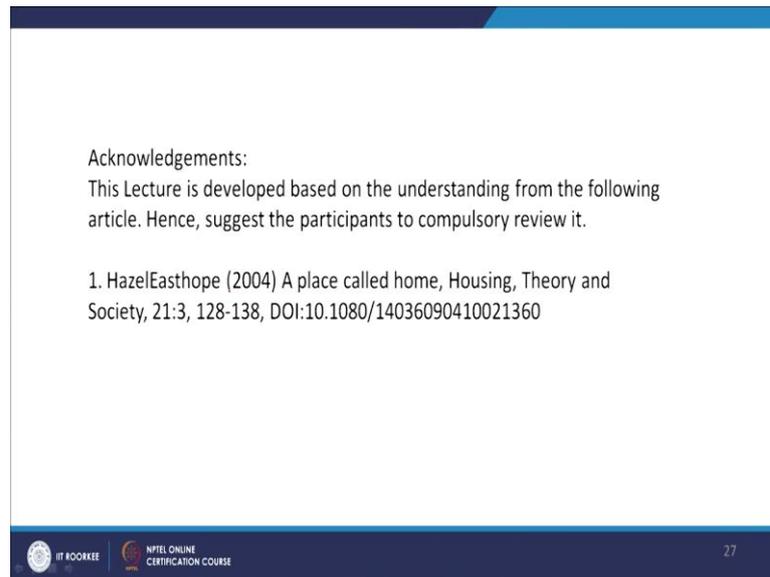
So, this is what, because in this workshop here what Heidegger talks is, it is a field, and people come here, and people play, and start defining it, and started portraying, it is a big canvas cloth. And then, you are going there, and you are painting your impression. And then someone else is coming for you, and then you know, this the whole canvas cloth is coming with colours, you know as a big, it is not a static thing, it is changing every time.

If the same colour I have to keep 10 years before about my place, it will be very different what I see is today right. So, and that is what he says being in time, and it is also the ego of the mind, how it brings the egoistic at in into a form. Like now, the scale of a building the monumental scales of the building, the forms of the building, the signs and symbols, which are portrayed are basically carrying on your impression. And this is what, he says the workshop is simply an analogy of what Heidegger calls dwelling.

So, now, where we have reached, it is we started with a discussion of place, we started understanding the relay the tension between a space and place, as a modernist, and the postmodernist tension. And that is where we are bringing the culture, and that is where we started talking about the sense of place,. And when we are talking about the sense of place, we actually brought the place and identity.

And here, we are talking about how in a much more deeper understanding, how the time can also bring certain understanding you know, the time can also bring a different emotions of a place, so that is what I end this lecture with the saying of what is a dwelling. Dwelling is the capacity to achieve the spiritual unity between humans and the things. This is what Michael Harvey, have talked about and. So, in the next class, we discuss more about on these fields and Bourdieu, and the dwelling aspects. Thank you very much.

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Acknowledgements:  
This Lecture is developed based on the understanding from the following article. Hence, suggest the participants to compulsory review it.

1. HazelEasthope (2004) A place called home, Housing, Theory and Society, 21:3, 128-138, DOI:10.1080/14036090410021360

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And this lecture is based on this following following article, Hazel Easthope, ‘A place called home’. And I will sincerely suggest to all those participants to follow this particular article, which is available in the internet.

Thank you.