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Theological Trends

A sense of place

Douglas Burton-Christie

‘TO BE ROOTED’, SIMONE WEIL ONCE REMARKED, ‘is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul.’¹ To feel oneself at home in the world. To have a sense of place. Can the soul deepen and grow without such basic security? This question presses itself upon us with ever greater urgency in our own time. ‘Isn’t the twentieth century’, Elie Wiesel asks, ‘the age of the expatriate, the refugee, the stateless – and the wanderer?’² Enforced movement, driven by chaotic social, political or economic forces is increasingly common; persons, indeed whole communities, are turned, sometimes overnight, into chronic wanderers. The destruction and disappearance of natural places also contributes to this sense of homelessness; as business and technology reach ever further into the wilderness, marshalling its ‘resources’ for our use, it becomes more and more difficult to imagine the living world as home. Nor do the basic patterns of so-called ‘modern’ life help us to cultivate a sense of place. We spend increasing amounts of our time, the anthropologist Marc Augé suggests, in ‘non-places’ – in supermarkets, airports and hotels, on highways or in front of TVs, computers and cash machines.³ Gradually, we are losing the sense of what it means to dwell within a particular place and community, to become intimate with the landscape, to enter into and be shaped by the stories and the culture of the place. We are losing the sense of place.

It is not easy to calculate the costs of such loss, its effects on our sense of well-being, on our sense of involvement in and commitment to the places we call home, even on our sense of the sacred. But, as an ever-growing body of evidence suggests, the costs are immense. This is an issue calling out for attention from theology and spirituality. Gradually, one is beginning to see the emergence of a sustained inquiry on the part of theologians and historians of spirituality into the issue of place and its influence upon the spiritual life of persons and communities. This inquiry is taking place as part of a broad interdisciplinary conversation about the meaning of place currently unfolding within and between a wide range of fields. If we

hope to arrive at a better understanding of how place shapes our lives, both personally and communally, if we are to articulate for ourselves the way in which place influences our sense of the sacred, and if we are to discover a more adequate ethic of place so that we will learn to cherish and preserve the places we inhabit, we will do well to enter into this conversation.

This means situating the work of theologians and scholars of spirituality within the wider ambit of work currently under way among writers and poets, cultural historians, architects, philosophers, literary critics, anthropologists and geographers, as they inquire into the meaning of place in human experience. An adequate theology and spirituality of place, I am convinced, will only emerge if we learn to attend to this conversation and incorporate its findings into our ongoing sense of self, God and world. In what follows, I want to sketch briefly some of the emerging trends in writing and thinking about place and suggest their significance for spirituality and theology.⁴

Memoirs of place

I begin with what I call 'memoirs of place', books of autobiographical reflection in which landscape forms a crucial part of the story. Such works seem to me to be particularly significant to the contemporary work of recovering a sense of place. In part this is because of their personal, local character. Rooted in particular landscapes, filled with vivid description and drawing upon local stories, such accounts have the suggestiveness of synecdoche – the particular that opens out on to the universal. They also have the power of testimony, arising as they do out of one person's sense of a place. Three recent works, each set within the North American landscape, are worthy of particular mention: Deborah Tall's *From where we stand: recovering a sense of place*, Scott Russell Sanders' *Staying put: making a home in a restless world*, and Kathleen Norris's *Dakota: a spiritual geography*.⁵ Each is a collection of essays, and each is set in a particular physical landscape (Tall's in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York, Sanders' in the limestone country of Indiana and Norris's in the empty spaces of the Great Plains). Each asks, in its own way, whether it is possible, at this particular moment, to cultivate a sense of place.

For Tall, the hunger for a place to call home is driven, negatively at least, by two related factors – having grown up in faceless

American suburbs lacking any clear sense of identity, and having subsequently become a wanderer, never staying long in any one place. The freedom and opportunity she has experienced through her wandering keep her from being sentimental about her quest for a home. Yet, her experience of rootlessness has also made her aware of the emptiness that can arise from having no place in the world to call one's own. Her very personal questions about place and identity lead her to settle into and begin exploring her new home in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York. Yet the personal questions quickly open out on to a wider horizon as Tall confronts the often contentious history, the immensely varied topography, the decaying economic fabric, the rich cultural legacy and the troubled political climate of this region. No romantic quest this, but rather an attempt to ask, honestly and deeply: what is the *genius loci* of this place? What is the life of this place, its particular 'spirit'? How can I enter into this place, let its life and spirit enter into me? And how might I learn to participate in the healing of this place?

Similar questions occupy Scott Russell Sanders' book, *Staying put*. As the title suggests, Sanders makes no attempt to hide his own fundamental question: he wants to know whether it is still possible to discover the cultural and spiritual resources that would enable us to commit ourselves to a place, a region, a community. Loss stands at the heart of his narrative, as it does in Tall's. In Sanders' case, it is the experience of returning to his childhood home in Indiana and finding the whole place submerged under water – obliterated by the construction of a dam – that hardens his resolve to make a place for himself in the world. The book is written, in a sense, as a response to such casual and careless destruction of places, as a protest at the increasing homogenization of place, a question that recurs in his writings.⁶ His response takes the form of his own deepening commitment to the place. He relates the process of buying and renovating an old house for himself and his young family and his increasing familiarization with the flora and fauna and stories of the place. When Sanders asks whether we can cultivate a sense of the spirit of place, whether we can find it within ourselves to become responsible to and for the places we inhabit, he signals the profoundly moral concerns at the heart of his book – concerns which are at once cultural (can we create viable sustainable communities without a commitment to place?), ecological (how might a sense of commitment to place alter our identification with and responsibility for the wider bioregion?) and spiritual (will our sense of the holy

remain forever impoverished if it does not become more deeply rooted in the living world?). Implicit in such questions is a critique of long-standing western cultural assumptions regarding our right to act upon the natural world as we like and then simply move on without regard for consequences.

Spiritual geography

Kathleen Norris's *Dakota* employs, to a greater degree than the other two works described here, explicitly religious language and imagery to articulate the sense of place. Norris's use of the term 'spiritual geography' is suggestive of the kind of questions she is asking of herself and the landscape of the Great Plains. 'More than any other place I lived as a child or young adult . . .' she says, 'this is my spiritual geography, the place where I've wrestled my story out of the circumstances of landscape and inheritance.'⁷ Her wrestling includes learning to attune her senses to the sparse beauty of the landscape, coming to terms with its harsh climate, and entering into the often baffling, sometimes stifling but usually rewarding patterns of small-town life. She also wrestles with an ancient spiritual tradition – that of the desert monks of early Christianity – which arose out of a similar landscape and which she finds speaks to her in the vast spaces of the Dakotas. She does not engage this tradition only from a distance: as an oblate, or associate, of a community of Benedictine monks, she participates in their life as a fellow seeker. Nor is it only her own 'spiritual geography' that concerns her. She enters honestly and deeply into a more wide-ranging conversation, about the struggles of others trying to live in this place – a conversation that has real poignancy during an era when economic downsizing and farm repossessions have become bitter facts of life. All this and a poet's attention to detail bring the place to life, rendering a spiritual geography in which the drama of the soul corresponds deeply to the shape and texture of the landscape.

In what way do such works contribute to the study of spirituality and place? First, the personal character of such works helps to *locate* the inquiry irreducibly within the particular – a particular geography and a particular person's experience – serving as a reminder that a spirituality of place cannot be conceived of in generic terms but must proceed from the description and narration of particular places. Second, the *inductive, open-ended and unfinished character* of these works, here expressive of the writer's quest to

know and inhabit a place, helps create a climate in which the spiritual significance of a place is understood to unfold only through an ongoing process of searching, noticing, questioning. Third, such a process leads inevitably to an *interdisciplinary approach* and confirms the necessity of such an approach in the study of spirituality. As the question of how to understand the spirit of place deepens, one will find it necessary, as Tall, Sanders and Norris have done to varying degrees, to draw upon the perspectives of history, biology, mythology, ecology, geology, theology, literature and poetry, or whatever presents itself as necessary for excavating the spirit of that particular place.

Poetry and literature of place

Poetry and literature are crucial to the task of re-imagining our relationship with place. We are witnessing at this moment a remarkable flowering of literature and poetry of place in North America that evokes powerfully and memorably, in Wendell Berry's words, the 'spirit' of particular places. These works share many of the qualities of the memoirs of place just noted: they are rooted in particular places, describe the texture and evoke the stories of those places with care and attention, and raise larger moral and spiritual questions about the meaning of our relationship to place. Often at least partially autobiographical in character, such works draw upon a broad range of literary genres – including poetry, essays, novels, short stories, natural histories – and perspectives to give voice to the author's particular landscape.

Here is language rooted in what writer Barry Lopez calls a 'more particularized understanding' of place, so deeply grounded in the shape and texture of a given landscape, so expressive of the distinct cultural patterns, narratives and myths arising from that landscape, that it becomes possible to imagine once again how to cultivate a relationship of genuine and enduring intimacy with the living world. It is just such a 'particularized understanding' of place that one finds in Richard Nelson's intimate portraits of the Alaskan wilderness, in Denise Levertov's growing body of poetry created under the shadow of Mt Rainier in the Pacific Northwest, in Terry Tempest Williams' searching essays on the Great Basin region of Utah, and in the work of many other well-known North American writers.⁸

This poetry and literature of place draws upon and moves between such varied fields as natural history, philosophy, ecology,

literature, natural science, anthropology and spirituality to create a rich, organic vision of the living world.⁹ It inhabits and searches out those charged borderlands, those places of encounter where longing gives way to relationship, communion, intimacy. Here, in this liminal space, it becomes possible to imagine the apparently impermeable boundaries that separate one place from another, spirit from matter, ourselves from other living species, ourselves from God, as permeable. It becomes possible to imagine ourselves as no longer standing aloof and distant from the world, but as caught up into, transformed by the intimate presence of the living world within and around us, or as one poet has put it, coming to notice 'all this life going on about my life, or living a life about all this life/going on'.¹⁰ Such simple, radical relationality – everything understood and experienced as being in relationship with everything else – lies at the heart of the poetic-spiritual vision of place to which this literature gives expression.

Cultural geography and anthropology

Alongside this literary-poetic work of description and evocation of place, there has also been a growing scholarly attention to the idea of place, especially within the fields of cultural geography and anthropology, but also in related fields such as ethnography, social theory and cultural studies. Although proceeding from distinct premises and employing diverse methodologies, this work has in common a sense of the defining importance of place and the loss of place in human experience. Here one finds basic fieldwork providing insight into how place shapes human consciousness, how human beings understand themselves in relationship to place, how individuals and communities respond to changing conditions in a place or to the experience of exile. One finds also attention to the cultural, philosophical and religious roots of our current understanding and experience of place, and astute theoretical analysis of the meaning of place. One can see in this research the outlines of a rich, interdisciplinary understanding of place gradually coming into view.

Cultural geographers and anthropologists have made particularly significant contributions in recent years toward a clearer understanding of the idea of place.¹¹ Some of the most important work by cultural geographers, such as that of J. Nicholas Entriken, John B. Jackson and Yi Fu Tuan, is pointedly humanistic in character, emerging from a long line of enquiry into place and lived experiences,

especially experiences of rootedness or uprootedness.¹² In addition, scholars such as E. V. Walter, who developed the sociological notion of 'placeways', have helped to demonstrate the contributions social theory can make to our understanding of place.¹³ Other more critical and deconstructive analyses of place arising from this tradition have found application in fields such as environmental design, urban planning and architecture.¹⁴ And one sees also the increasingly prominent role of neo-Marxist cultural critique and global postmodern theory in the analysis of the idea of place.¹⁵ Much of this work is focused on geographies of struggle and resistance, with particular attention to the issues of representation, gender and political action.¹⁶

Recent work on the idea of place among cultural anthropologists and sociologists has focused attention on theorizing social identities, that is, articulating the social well-being arising from a sense of rootedness in place.¹⁷ But considerable work has also been done on the idea of contested spaces and the way place is construed when set within a context of local and global power relations.¹⁸ Commenting on this trend, Steven Feld and Keith Basso have noted:

Whatever else may be involved, this development surely reflects the now acute world conditions of exile, displacement, diasporas, and inflamed borders, to say nothing of the increasingly tumultuous struggles by indigenous peoples and cultural minorities for ancestral homelands, land rights, and retention of sacred places.¹⁹

For this reason, anthropologists are increasingly framing their discussions of place less in broad philosophical or humanistic terms and more in dynamic, cultural and political terms that take seriously the notion of places as contested sites.²⁰ And they are articulating with new clarity the senses of place among historically displaced peoples.²¹

One of the most significant aspects of these developments is the way in which diverse perspectives and fields that have often been seen as only tangentially related to one another – geography, anthropology, ethnography, cultural studies, social theory – are increasingly understood to form part of an integral whole. The idea of place seems to demand such interdisciplinary work; its insistent, irreducible complexity requires that we bring multiple perspectives to bear upon our understanding of who we are as placed or displaced people. Such work also reminds us that while place has unde-

nably personal significance, one's sense of place always touches upon and is shaped by larger social, cultural and political forces.

Philosophy and spirituality

Much current analysis of place by geographers and anthropologists has been influenced by recent philosophical reflection on place, in particular by the work of Martin Heidegger.²² Still, one should not conclude from this that the theme of place has had any real prominence in contemporary philosophical thought. On the contrary. But thanks to the work of Edward Casey among others, the role of place within philosophical discourse is gradually being re-established.²³ Tracing the history of western philosophical thinking about place from its mythical and religious beginnings to its most recent post-modern articulations, Casey inquires into the variety of ways place has been construed philosophically, asks how and why the idea of place became eclipsed in philosophical thought and probes the possibilities for a new philosophical articulation of place.

Nor is he the only one to have taken up the task of rethinking place philosophically. Two philosophers working in the phenomenological tradition of Edmund Husserl have in recent years turned their attention to the question of place, seeking to situate it not only within the tradition of western philosophical discourse but also within a wider ecological, cosmological setting. In *The embers and the stars*, Erazim Kohák embarks on a philosophical inquiry into the possibility of recovering a sense of human identity and meaning as rooted in the natural, living world. The phenomenological method – beginning with, paying attention to, learning to trust in the reality of what is given – is central to this process. For Kohák this means above all learning to trust in the moral coherence of the living world. A sense of place and meaning in human life, he argues, can only emerge from a sense of the meaningfulness of the entire *kosmos*.²⁴

In a similar vein, David Abram, in his recent book *The spell of the sensuous*, draws upon the phenomenological tradition to articulate the basis for a greater sense of reciprocity between ourselves and other living species. Learning to be 'at home' in the world means, for Abram, coming to see the world as animate, articulate, calling out to us and calling forth from us a response. Abram draws not only upon the phenomenological philosophical tradition but also on the patterns of speech and thought found within traditional oral

cultures to argue for the possibility of a more fluid, reciprocal relationality in our orientation to the living world. Cultivating a sense of place in this context means learning to recover the capacity to listen and respond to the world's own voice.²⁵

Within a religious context, one might say it means learning to listen to the voice of God whispering through the world. Gradually, as historians of spirituality, theologians, biblical scholars and others attend to the question of place, this voice is beginning to be heard. The role of place in shaping religious experience, whether through pilgrimage, religious architecture or sacred sites, has long been recognized by scholars of religion. Recent work in this area is bringing greater focus and clarity to the question of precisely how geography shapes the human experience of the sacred. Among geographers, for example, one finds evidence of a more nuanced and less reductionistic analysis of the relationship between geography and religion, in part due to a greater openness within the field of geography to the work of theologians and other scholars of religion.²⁶ So too, scholars of religion appear to be taking geography more seriously.

Among recent works in biblical scholarship perhaps none has been more important in re-establishing the significance of place within the biblical world than Theodore Hiebert's *The Yahwist's landscape: nature and religion in early Israel*.²⁷ Hiebert argues against two long-standing assumptions about nature and place in the Bible – that nature is set against history and that biblical religion is indifferent or even hostile to place and the natural world – and suggests that a close examination of the world-view of the early Hebrew writer known as the Yahwist reveals an altogether different picture. This early biblical writer does not view human beings as possessing the authority to assert control over the natural world; rather the Yahwist holds that the appropriate human attitude in the face of the living cosmos is humility. Hiebert is certainly not the first biblical scholar to have focused on the subject of place.²⁸ But his work is perhaps the most complete and thorough examination of this question to date: sophisticated and theologically nuanced in terms of understanding how such a revision of early biblical ideas of nature and place can help us in our current struggle to articulate an adequate ethic and spirituality of place.

History of religion, history of spirituality

Such renewed attention to the idea of place has also been apparent among historians of religion and spirituality. Jonathan Z. Smith's ground-breaking work in the area of ritual studies has helped to reassert the issue of place squarely in the middle of the scholarly study of religion.²⁹ Sacred place is also showing itself to be an immensely fruitful area of study within the context of comparative religion.³⁰ Among historians of western spirituality, place has also begun to emerge as a central concern. In Belden Lane's work on place and geography in American spirituality, place is revealed to be fundamental in giving shape and texture to spiritual experience within a wide range of landscapes.³¹ Place has a double valence here: geography can literally ground such experience, the physical patterns of a place influencing how one understands and experiences the holy; but place, and physical reality as a whole, can also provide rich metaphors, influencing how we speak and think about interior experience. In his most recent work, Lane pushes this question further, exploring the central role of desert and mountain landscapes – both as concrete physical loci and as root metaphors – within the Christian spiritual tradition.³²

The prospects for further work in this area are promising. There are already indications that historians and systematic theologians are becoming more attentive to the need for further exploration of the idea of place.³³ And there are suggestions that avenues for dialogue are beginning to open up between poets of place sensitive to the idea of the sacred and theologians attentive to the rhythms of the natural world.³⁴ Theology and spirituality will need to become increasingly attentive to such avenues for dialogue with other fields, for much of the most promising and important 'ground work' in this area continues to arise there. Anyone interested in articulating the meaning of sacred place will need to pay attention to developments in such fields as cultural history,³⁵ literary criticism,³⁶ architecture,³⁷ landscape design³⁸ and folklore.³⁹ A spirituality or theology capable of responding to the human family's deepest questions about the meaning of place will need to listen and respond to these diverse voices.

Conclusion: taking the incarnation seriously

The weight and significance of place for the human community at the present moment arises in part from the conditions of our world:

political and economic instability have made exile and homelessness a fact of life for increasing numbers of human beings; expansion of technology and ecological degradation have diminished our capacity to sense the world as a living breathing place, as home. However, the significance of place also arises from other unresolved questions. Do places and physical realities have the same standing in our imagination as time and history? Can we know and experience Spirit, not as a disembodied idea, but as a real presence pulsing through the living world? Within the Christian tradition, the question of place will necessarily involve reflecting upon our understanding of the incarnation: do we take seriously the notion that God is immanent within the living world, is known through the texture, character and narratives of particular places? Do we live as if this were true?

The issue of place affects all of us. Nor is its significance likely to diminish in the years ahead. If we hope to arrive at a satisfying answer to these questions, we will need to face and take responsibility for our own forgetfulness, our own part in the legacy of neglect, and pay attention to the needs of the displaced in our midst. But above all, we will need to re-examine the sources of our felt sense of place. If Linda Hogan is correct, we carry within us the seeds of our own awakening – in our feeling for the world, in our memory of particular places. Even, perhaps, in our feeling for places yet to be discovered.

Well, there is time left –
fields everywhere invite you into them.

And who will care, who will chide you if you wander away
from wherever you are, to look for your soul?

Quickly, then, get up, put on your coat, leave your desk!⁴⁰

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NOTES

- 1 Simone Weil, *The need for roots: prelude to a declaration of duties toward mankind*, trans Arthur Wils (New York: Harper, 1952), p 43.
- 2 Elie Wiesel, 'Longing for home' in Leroy S. Rouner (ed), *The longing for home* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), p 19.
- 3 Mark Augé, *Non-places: introduction to the anthropology of supermodernity*, trans John Howe (London/New York: Verso, 1995).
- 4 This sketch is necessarily limited by my own location and by the scope of my recent reading and research. My main focus here is on the sense of place as it arises within North American literary, ecological and social scientific discourse. However, the global concern over the question of place has become increasingly apparent to me and I attempt to give some attention to it in this essay.
- 5 Deborah Tall, *From where we stand: recovering a sense of place* (New York: Knopf, 1993; reprinted, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Scott Russell Sanders, *Staying put: making a home in a restless world* (Boston: Beacon, 1993); Kathleen Norris, *Dakota: a spiritual geography* (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1993).
- 6 See Scott Russell Sanders, 'Beneath the smooth skin of America' in *Writing from the center* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp 9–21.
- 7 Norris, *Dakota*, p 2.
- 8 Richard Nelson, *The island within* (New York: Vintage, 1991); Denise Levertov, *Evening train* (New York: New Directions, 1992); Terry Tempest Williams, *Refuge: an unnatural history of family and place* (New York: Pantheon, 1991). See also Scott Russell Sanders, *Staying put: making a home in a restless world* (Boston: Beacon, 1993); Linda Hogan, *Dwellings: a spiritual history of the living world* (New York: Norton, 1995), a seamless rendering of the spirit of the Rocky Mountains; Wendell Berry, *Collected poems: 1957–1982* (San Francisco: North Point, 1995), his essays, poems and stories being set in the tobacco fields of Kentucky; Gary Snyder, *The practice of the wild* (San Francisco: North Point, 1990), from a lifetime of poems and essays rooted in the Yuba watershed on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains; Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (New York: Harper, 1974), luminous meditations on the Appalachian Mountains; Mary Oliver, *New and selected poems* (Boston: Beacon, 1992), intricate renderings of embodied spirit near Provincetown, Massachusetts; Norman Maclean, *A river runs through it* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1976), an evocation of the rugged landscape around the Big Blackfoot River in Montana.
- 9 On the fundamentally interdisciplinary character of this literature, see Lawrence Buell, *The environmental imagination: Thoreau, nature writing and the formation of American culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), see especially ch 8: 'Place'; Robert Finch, 'Being at two with nature', *Georgia Review* XLV, number 1 (Spring, 1991), pp 97–104.
- 10 Robert Hass, 'Iowa City: early April' in *Sun under wood* (New York: Ecco, 1996), p 35.
- 11 For a helpful overview of recent trends in this area, see Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (eds), *Senses of place* (Santa Fe NM: School of American Research Press, 1996); some of the discussion that follows draws upon the introductory essay by Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, pp 3–11.
- 12 J. Nicholas Entriken, *The betweenness of place: towards a geography of modernity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); John B. Jackson, *A sense of place, a sense of time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Yi Fu Tuan, *Cosmos and hearth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), and *Space and place: the perspective of experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).
- 13 E. V. Walter, *Placeways: a theory of the human environment* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).
- 14 Robert Mugerauer, *Interpretations of behalf of place: environmental displacements and alternative responses* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); David Seamon, *Dwelling, seeing and building: toward a phenomenological ecology* (Albany: State University

- of New York Press, 1992); Dolores Hayden, *The power of place: urban landscapes as public history* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1995).
- 15 Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern geographies: the reassertion of space in critical social theory* (London/New York: Verso, 1989); Peter Jackson, *Maps of meaning* (London: Routledge, 1989).
- 16 James Duncan and David Ley (eds), *Place, culture and representation* (London: Routledge, 1993); Doreen Massay, *Space, place and gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).
- 17 See Miles Richardson (ed), *Place: experience and symbol, Geoscience and Man* vol 24 (Baton Rouge: Department of Geography and Anthropology, Louisiana State University, 1984).
- 18 See Stephen Richard Higley, *Privilege, power and place: the geography of the American upper class* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995); Barbara Ching and Gerald W. Creed (eds), *Knowing your place: rural identity and cultural hierarchy* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
- 19 Feld and Basso (eds), *Senses of place*, p 4.
- 20 See Eric Hirsh and Michael O'Hanlon (eds), *The anthropology of landscape: perspectives on place and space* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). For a work dealing with similar questions but rooted more in the fields of literary and culture studies see Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg (eds), *Displacement, diaspora, and geographies of identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994).
- 21 Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom sits in places: landscape and language among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).
- 22 Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, language, thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971); 'Building, thinking, dwelling' in D. Krell (ed), *Martin Heidegger: basic writings* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), pp 319-339.
- 23 Edward S. Casey, *The fate of place: a philosophical history* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); see also his earlier work, *Getting back into place: toward a renewed understanding of the place world* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).
- 24 Erazim Kohák, *The embers and the stars: a philosophical inquiry into the moral sense of nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).
- 25 David Abram, *The spell of the sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world* (New York: Pantheon, 1996).
- 26 See Chris C. Park, *Sacred worlds: an introduction to geography and religion* (London: Routledge, 1994). Park explicitly avoids the term 'geography of religion', with its connotation of quantitative, reductive analysis of religion's geographical dimension and chooses to speak instead of the relationship between geography and religion, as a way of including in his analysis aspects of the question not precisely quantifiable.
- 27 Theodore Hiebert, *The Yahwist's landscape: nature and religion in early Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- 28 See, for example, Robert L. Cohn, *The shape of sacred space: four biblical studies* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981); Walter Brueggemann, *The land* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); James M. Houston, 'The concepts of "place" and "land" in the Judeo-Christian tradition' in David Ley and Marwyn S.amuels (eds), *Humanistic geography: prospects and problems* (Chicago: Maarouth Press, 1978).
- 29 Jonathan Z. Smith, *To take place: toward theory in ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
- 30 Jamie Scott and Paul Simpson-Housley (eds), *Sacred places and profane spaces: essays in the geographics of Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991); Jean Holm (ed), *Sacred place* (London: Pinter, 1994).
- 31 Belden C. Lane, *Landscapes of the sacred: geography and narrative in American spirituality* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 1988).

- 32 Belden C. Lane, *The solace of fierce landscapes: a journey into desert and mountain spirituality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); for another treatment of a related question, see Andrew Louth, *The wilderness of God* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997).
- 33 Philip Sheldrake, *Living between two worlds: place and journey in Celtic spirituality* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1995); 'The sacredness of place' in *Studies in Spirituality* 6/1996, pp 258-275; Sallie McFague, *Super, natural Christians: how we should love nature* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1997).
- 34 W. Scott Olsen and Scott Cairns (eds), *The sacred place: witnessing the holy in the physical world* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1996).
- 35 Simon Schama, *Landscape and memory* (New York: Knopf, 1995); Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: the shadow of civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
- 36 J. Hillis Miller, *Topographies* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1995); Frederick Turner, *Spirit of place: the making of an American literary landscape* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1989); H. Daniel Peck, *Thoreau's morning work: memory and perception in A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, The Journal, and Walden* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).
- 37 Thomas Barrie, *Spiritual path, sacred place: myth, ritual, and meaning in architecture* (Boston: Shambala, 1996); Norman Crowe, *Nature and the idea of a man-made world: an investigation into the evolutionary roots of form and order in the built environment* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1995); Donlyn Lyndon and Charles W. Moore, *Chambers for a memory palace* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1994).
- 38 Charles W. Moore, William J. Mitchell and William Turnbull Jr, *The poetics of gardens* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1988).
- 39 Kent C. Ryden, *Mapping the invisible landscape: folklore, writing, and the sense of place* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993).
- 40 Mary Oliver, 'Have you ever tried to enter the long black branches?', *West wind* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), p 61.