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Chapter 32 Place-in-Process in Colm Toíbín's *The Blackwater Lightship*: Emotion, Self-Identity, and the Environment

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The increasingly practical orientation of universities today creates, understandably, considerable anxiety among humanists, whose several disciplines are no longer seen by many as central to the mission of higher education. That mission has gradually shifted towards equipping students for jobs rather than teaching them to think. Realistically, both of these are viable objectives, and each is better served if viewed in symbiotic relation to the other. In this light, honest soul-searching on the part of humanists about the relevance of our fields to contemporary life is likely to result in both articulate defense of traditional programs as well as innovative interdisciplinary courses of study. Indeed, this challenge urgently suggests that humanists once and for all seek out valid consideration of the sciences in the service of intellectually and ethically committed programs. Cognitive approaches to literature, which have grown in variety, depth, and extent for the last quarter century, serve a central role in the renewal of literary studies, since they depart from the perceived isolationism of liberal humanism on the one hand and the irrationalism of poststructuralism on the other.

The focus of the present anthology is texts and affects, a topic of central relevance to psychological approaches to literature taking an embodiment perspective. My goal here is to further augment the already notable diversity of cognitive literary studies by demonstrating the inextricability of thought and feeling in the relation of people to the environment through the little-explored area of *place studies*. "Place," understood as an ongoing process, has an array of

components, including emotion, intellection, memory, self-definition, sociality, culture, and physical location. Like other aspects of cognition and emotion, the dynamic construction of place is largely unconscious. One of the ethical functions of all cognitive literary studies is to bring subconscious processes to awareness, and because the affective-conceptual construction of place (more accurately, place-in-process) is a quite complex phenomenon, applying place studies to literary interpretation promises to extend the range of cognitive approaches to literature, which have not sufficiently attended to the importance of the physical world in cognitive-affective processes. Moreover, one great benefit of much narrative literature is that place-in-process is often vividly dramatized through the actions and perspectives of represented persons--narrators and/or characters--in concrete situations unfolding in time. Textual representations that highlight the person-to-place dynamic therefore render an unconscious phenomenon available for analysis. Focusing on Colm Tóibín's 1999 *The Blackwater Lightship*,[1] a novel which foregrounds the relationship of humans to the physical environment, I adopt the perspective of *place studies* to interpret changing feelings for material spaces as an integral component of evolving self-identity and human relationships.

Affective Theory, Affective Neuroscience, and *Place Studies*

Attending to the complex of factors that both inform human feelings about the environment and result in dynamic processes of affective-conceptual redefinition of self and physical locale, *place studies* is central to cognitive ecocriticism, which holds that humans, like other animals, have a species-typical, self-interested orientation toward the environment.[2] Furthermore, place studies are convergent with affective neuroscience, embodiment psychology, evolutionary theory, and a host of other fields across the social and natural sciences. They align

with "affective science" rather than "affect theory" (or "affective poststructuralism"), to draw on Patrick Colm Hogan's useful distinctions.[3] The two areas of study differentiated by Hogan are not, to my mind, generally intellectually compatible directions in humanistic interdisciplinary investigations, for reasons that I explain briefly here.

In contrast to affective neuroscience, affect theory (affective poststructuralism), arose about twenty years ago as a reorientation of cultural studies, ostensibly through an embrace of science. However, the primary influences on affect theory are philosophers, not scientists, including Baruch Spinoza, Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze, and Gilbert Simondon. As a result of this orientation toward modern and postmodern philosophy, many theoretical assumptions of affect theory conflict not only with the science on which it draws but with the use of scientific research programs in cognitive literary and cultural studies, including those devoted to emotion and feeling.

Constantina Papoulias and Felicity Callard identify the emergence of affect theory in the mid-1990s with Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank's introduction to the writings of the psychologist Silvan Tomkins. According to Papoulias and Callard, this turn in cultural studies "[remaps] the conceptual terrain of theory . . . [via] the turn to affect and to an embracing of a particular kind of biology."[4] In this revision, biology becomes "a fluid and dynamic spatiality" and "essentially . . . a creative space, a field of potentiality that crucially, *precedes* the overwriting of the body through subjectivity and personal history."[5] This conceptualization of biology as "a fluid and dynamic spatiality" diverges from theory and practice in the sciences. Indeed, biology has been long governed by the theory of evolution by natural selection, because it yields results and has not been disproven, and in consequence is concerned with very specific, though diverse and variable, interactions. Evolution by natural selection posits that chance

mutations contribute to individual fitness and species survival under certain environmental conditions, since genetic traits can only be advantageous or deleterious under particular conditions. In contrast, the redefinition of "biology" in affect studies is strangely abstract.

The definition of "affect" in affect studies is likewise abstract. In his seminal 1995 article "The Autonomy of Affect," the prominent theorist Brian Massumi insists that "an asignifying philosophy of affect" critically forestalls engagement with "received psychological categories," which have been, in his view, successfully destabilized by poststructuralism. In keeping with the purpose of resisting social interpellation via conventional psychological categories, Massumi claims that "[a]ffect is most often loosely used as a synonym for emotion. But one of the clearest lessons of this first story is that emotion and affect—if affect is intensity—follow different logics and different orders."[6] Along the same lines, Massumi asserts, "Affect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is. Formed, qualified, situated perceptions and cognitions fulfilling functions of actual connection or blockage are the *capture* and closure of affect . . . . If there were no escape, no excess or remainder, no fade-out to infinity, the universe would be without potential, pure entropy, death. Actually existing, structured things live in and through that which escapes them. Their autonomy is the autonomy of affect."[7]

On at least three separate points, Massumi's notion of affect diverges from an evolutionary-cognitive perspective. First, the basic definition does not correspond to that of affective science. For scientists, the term is, as Massumi notes, "loosely used as a synonym for emotions,"[8] and, indeed, scientists routinely refer to feelings and emotions as "affects." This is not merely a semantic matter, but one with profound philosophical and practical consequences,

since all perspectives consilient with evolutionary theory agree that emotions (affects) are specifically functional, not vehicles for liberation from actuality.

Second, therefore, in claiming that "structured things live in and through that which escapes them," Massumi contradicts any and every possible account of organism-environment interaction, for no organism simply energized by an ambient and overflowing intensity can survive to procreate. Simply put, organisms and environments are mutually dependent entities, and affects serve ongoing evaluation of the environment, as organisms confront predators and responded to other uncertainties, such as changes in weather. This is why the "situated perceptions and cognitions" that Massumi eschews are such a current topic in the study of embodied mind. For higher organisms like human beings, in fact, environmental attunement depends not only on embodied sensation and emotion but perception, intellection, and awareness.

Third, then, and logically related to the second point, when Massumi claims that "[w]ill and consciousness are *subtractive . . . limitative derived functions* which reduce complexity too rich to be functionally expressed,"[9] he is once more out of step with contemporary science. In fact, the attention necessary for immersion in intensity has been facilitated by the evolution of the human brain for executive function—high levels of awareness (consciousness) are served by symbolic skill, which enables mediation between existing thoughts and new thoughts.[10] If awareness (consciousness) is the organism's long-term governor and guidance system, automaticity (habituation) is the result of hierarchization.[11] Ironically, one of the benefits of such complex cognitive organization is that humans can consciously reflect on behavior that has become automatized—that is, pushed below the level of consciousness.

In sum, from an evolutionary standpoint, signification, meaning, and consciousness are not reductive and limiting functions, although they certainly serve these purposes just as well as expansive ones stimulating original thought and action. But even if the theoretical ground of affect theory is not consistent with evolutionary and affective science, we should nevertheless acknowledge that this turn in cultural studies echoes some of the epistemic and ethical priorities of cognitive literary criticism. The implication that humans are largely unaware of the complexity of their everyday experience basically accords with the evolutionary social sciences and related fields, such as embodiment psychology and philosophy, as well as the environmental humanities, the emergent interdisciplinary field that has evolved out of ecocriticism and the environmental sciences and is currently enjoying remarkable growth within the academy. In addition, scientists themselves remark on the over-simplifications and biases within science. As Andrew Packard and Jonathan Delafield-Butt note, for example, Darwinian complexity sometimes vanishes from neo-Darwinian gene-centered selection theory as well as "social and cognitive interpretations of emergent evolution."[12] The atavistic return to dualistic thinking that Packard and Delafield-Butt pinpoint here is remedied by affective neuroscience, which recognizes not only the homology between all mammalian emotion systems but the inextricability of such systems from cognitive processes.

Today, literary studies will be best served by informed engagement with a wide variety of fields devoted to human cognition, emotion, and interaction. Cognitive literary studies illustrate the usefulness of many research programs in assisting conscious knowledge of reader psychology, textual structures, metaphor, character interaction, and other relevant areas of analysis. Although ecocriticism has paid some attention to place, its affective-conceptual importance in human life has not been thoroughly explored. One of the ethical functions of

cognitive literary studies as a component of the environmental humanities is to enhance conscious understanding of place-in-process, the affective-conceptual construction of physical locations that changes in light of events, experiences, and relationships. Because realistic narrative literature frequently depicts the actions and perspectives of represented persons in concrete situations, it often shows how feelings toward material spaces evolve dynamically along with human relationships. Everyday life is full of "surging affects," as the cultural anthropologist Kathleen Stewart insists.[13] However, far from being "subtractive," as Massumi asserts, psychosocial analysis of these intensities serves human ethics and freedom by submitting largely unconscious processes to higher awareness. Because place studies are highly diverse and extremely cautious in their reductions, they can illuminate, without "subtractive" incisions, the intensities and dynamic shifts of place-in-process in literary representations.

What Is Place Studies?

Place studies emerged out of human geography in the 1970s, and although geography on the whole has been reconfigured into other ascendant disciplines, such as environmental ecology and environmental psychology, in the past decade place studies have continued to grow and diversify.[14] As Maria Lewicka reports in her 2011 overview, the field attests to 400 articles published in 120 journals in 40 years, 60% of that total in the ten-year period between 2001 and 2011.[15] The study of place is an excellent example of how an intellectually and methodologically diverse interdisciplinary area avoids the comprehensive ideological bias and harmful reductions that affect theorists and evolutionary biologists alike justifiably warn against. Scholarship in place dynamics is both qualitative and quantitative and "[represents] all branches of social sciences, including environmental psychology, sociology, community psychology, human

geography, cultural anthropology, gerontology, demography, urban studies, leisure science and tourism, ecology, forestry, architecture and planning, and economics."[16]

The definition of "place" offered by Irwin Altman and Setha Low in their influential 1992 collection enjoys broad acceptance: "Place, in our general lexicon, refers to space that has been given meaning through personal, group, or cultural processes. . . . . [P]laces may vary in several ways—scale or size and scope, tangible versus symbolic, known and experience versus not known or not experienced."[17] According to this definition, place is 1) a cognitive construction entailing the human imposition of meaning on a specific physical area (or space); 2) a process based on human processes (e.g., development, aging, life events, and ongoing social interactions); and 3) a major feature of speculative-imaginative thought as well as lived experience. *Place* is, in sum, an integrated concept that includes both subjective and objective components, such as affective, cognitive, and practical attachments; varied actors and a range of social relationships (individuals, groups, and cultures); and linear as well as cyclical temporal dimensions.[18] As Altman and Low explain, although the early decades of place studies focused on individual cognitive functioning, by the 1990s phenomenological approaches had gained increasing importance, and the area has retained this commitment to phenomenology even as it has diversified in methods and disciplinary connections over the past quarter century.[19]

Place is not one dimensional in its meanings and affective tone, and although modernization and mobility alter its scale, often expanding place to the region and the nation versus the local community, its importance does not dissipate.[20] Indeed, Lewicka's survey of research in place studies indicates that the desire for "the particularity of place—for what is truly 'local' or 'regional,'" longing for "identity, character, and nuance," is increased rather than deadened by banal modern planning, disaster, dislocation, and fragmentation.[21]

Why, in the face of increasing mobility, does place retain such persistent emotional force? First of all, a physical and emotional base provides the stabilizing ground for secure human attachments and their relation to identity, independence, adventure, and sympathy. Home is "a major fixed reference point for the structuring of reality."[22] Home is our essential place, a central site in our dialectical need for drudgery and escape.[23] And as many place theorists point out, home is not simply confined to a physical locale and the feelings for it, but feeds dynamically back into individual and social dimensions. As Antonio Cristoforetti et al put it, home, recognized as the quintessential place, "includes and completes a person's self-image and sense of identity."[24] Associated with identity, order, rootedness, attachment, privacy, and security, home provides not only an anchor but also an evolving site in the process of self-definition.

This view accords with neuroscience, developmental psychology, and evolutionary studies.[25] From the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, who identifies the self as a fundamental point of reference, to attachment theorists and human geographers, who insist on the developmental continuity between infant-caregiver attachment and feeling for the total environment (i.e., including other persons and the nonhuman natural world), contemporary science and social science overwhelmingly recognize that identity and functional efficacy are physically and spatially grounded. Conceptions of self, home, and place are developmentally and dynamically interrelated, transforming with experience.[26] The first place of the infant is, then, in positive development, usually the site of initial attachments, and that core place attachment also typically operates in adult life, irrespective of the frequency of the individual's travel. Moreover, affective neuroscientists such as Jaak Panksepp and Keith Oatley posit that mechanisms of place

attachment reside in evolutionarily ancient parts of the brain and provided the ontogenetic basis for emergent social attachment.[27]

Cultural analyses attentive to the shift in human lifeways resulting from the Enlightenment and industrialization support the ongoing significance of *place* and *home* in human experience and are congruent with a cognitive-evolutionary perspective. Over fifty years ago, Alan McKillop traced the term "Heimweh," denoting homesickness-in-exile, to 1596. Significantly, while Enlightenment rationalism disparaged the local attachment to which homesickness attested, castigating the love of native place as folk ignorance, the longer classical tradition connects love of native place with cosmopolitanism. Along the same lines, the love of home place should not be conflated with nostalgia, the idealized love of a place that no longer exists or never existed.[28] Instead, the conceptual and linguistic emergence of homesickness attests to feelings of actual disruption in the face of increased mobility, prompted by urbanization and warfare. Adding this to the perspective of evolutionary social science, a bio-cultural explanation for the enduring primacy of home emerges. As environmental psychologists, biologists, and others point out, humans are strongly predisposed to orient from "a major fixed reference point for the structuring of reality" that "includes and completes a person's self-image and sense of identity," because they evolved as a far-ranging, home-based species. Thus, the still widely held misconception that love of one's local environment militates against broader sympathy and experience couldn't be more wrong: such place connection provides the foundation for geographic exploration and cross-cultural connection.

Place attachment is one in a series of concepts characterizing feelings for distinct environments; it includes a feeling of belonging, or of what Edward Relph calls *insideness*. In recent decades, human geographers have transformed Relph's useful but rudimentary

dichotomy--*insideness* and *outsideness*—into nuanced typologies of place perception—

positive, ambivalent, and negative. Lewicka's recent modification of the accepted typology

retains but refines core concepts.[29] Among these, *traditional attachment* refers to an everyday

feeling of belonging and insideness that usually emerges from long-term association with the

physical location and community. *Active attachment* defines a committed, conscious effort to

engage with a place, as opposed to the long-term or lifetime association implied by traditional

attachment. Such active attachment often has an ideological, social, or political component (as is

the case of attachment among many recent residents of New Orleans, who relocated to help

rebuild the city post-Katrina).

In contrast to both traditional and active attachment, *place alienation* signifies an attitude

of actual dislike, which is distinguished from *place relativity* or ambivalence as well as

placelessness or indifference. All of these modes include, to one degree or another, a feeling of

outsideness, a lack of or uncertain affective connection to the local environment, although place

relativity suggests conflicted feelings and thus perhaps contradictory components of insidenesss

and outsideness. As my analysis of place-in-process in *The Blackwater Lightship* will elaborate,

positive and negative perceptions of place change via feedback between social relationships,

physical locations, self-identity, and other factors, so that categories within this typology often

reflect a phase in a shifting affective-cognitive apprehension rather than a fixed attitude.

Most commonly, the processes typically leading to place attachment, to a strong positive

feeling for the nonhuman natural and the social environment, emerge early in human

development as the infant progressively expands its sense of home. In this process, the young

child extends attention from the secure base of the body of its primary caregiver (usually the

mother) to the adjacent persons and physical environment. Recent research in environmental

psychology concurs with long-held views of the logic of attachment throughout the life span, identifying a secure base and high environmental quality as key features.[30] For the human infant, being held close, fed frequently, kept clean and comfortable, protected from noise and other stimuli signifying potential threats, and loved—an affect strengthened through eye contact, caressing, and rhythmic, repetitive, mutual vocalizations (motherese)—constitute a viable, safe environment, and enduring, warm feelings typically extend, over the child's early years, from the interior spaces of the house to the garden and local community. But not everyone has a positive developmental experience, and many people move far away from their birthplaces, taking up residence in towns and cities and natural environments that differ substantially from what they were accustomed to as children. Thus, the usual attachment emerging in childhood is neither universal nor permanent, and it is likewise subject to many variations as a result of individual experience.[31]

In spite of the growing awareness that conceptualization of and feeling for place is much modified by contemporary patterns of mobility, the importance of a prototypical place, "a major fixed reference point for the structuring of reality" that provides identity, order, rootedness, attachment, privacy, and security, is not disputed in the field. Similarly, the usual cause of strong place attachment remains consistent over time. Researchers over the past several decades conclude that the quality of a person's social connections within the specified area is the central factor in attachment. As David Hummon reported in 1992, "local social involvements— particularly those with friends, but also those involving kin, organizational memberships, and local shopping—prove to be the most consistent and significant source of sentimental ties to local places."[32] This correlation between social bonds and place attachment chimes with evolutionary explanations. In the several million years during which humans species transitioned

from forests to the more exposed environment of the African savanna, simultaneously

evolving large brains and bipedal locomotion, the social group became the most critical feature

of survival.[33]

The personal processes affecting place perception, in turn, feed back into identity and

self-worth, wherein factors such as local landscape, community, and neighborhood

simultaneously serve to define the self and to stand as symbolic extensions of it. Whereas strong

place attachment and a correspondingly secure sense of home, "a major fixed reference point for

the structuring of reality," correlate psychologically with secure identity—the feeling of

insideness (or rootedness) corresponding to self-perception as, for instance, cosmopolitan city-

dweller or a small town inhabitant—the lack or loss of such a fixed reference point often goes

hand-in-hand with problems of identity and self-worth. Thus, in the field's scholarly literature,

placelessness or place alienation, correlated with a feeling of outsideness or uprootedness,

sometimes corresponds to a troubled primary place attachment or home.[34]

Because spaces and persons engage in a definitional-conceptual dynamic of place and

identity, then, positive place-in-process contributes to individual agency. At the same time,

however, the productive affective attachment to physical locales and their sociocultural

dimensions is constrained by the specifics of the environment. In other words, the material

surround, human others, and sociocultural codes act as external regulators of individuals even as

they enable autonomous action. Developmentalist Paul Morgan posits this function for growing

children, a perspective that echoes ecological psychologist Roger Barker's work in the sixties.[35]

Indeed, Barker concludes, based on his field studies of children in Midwest, Kansas, that the

environment is often a better predictor of behavior than the tendencies of individual youngsters.

Thus, while on the one hand attachment to persons and locations encourages the positive self-

image and feeling of security that enable extended interpersonal and spatial relationships, on the other what Barker refers to as the "behavioral setting" (physical environment combined with social codes and expectations) can exert very different degrees and kinds of influence on both identity and behavior.[36]

Place Studies in Cognitive-Evolutionary Perspective

The key findings of place studies overlap with the broader picture provided by evolutionary social science, which, since the latter half of the twentieth century, has extended and refined Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection through research in an array of subfields, including evolutionary, cognitive, developmental, and environmental psychology. Place studies lend further support to the ontogenetic functionality of human bonding, which has been recognized as a crucial aspect of species viability for over half a century. In the earliest phase of human life, nascent emotions compel the neonate to solicit proximity and attention from the caregiver, who is motivated to respond by complementary affective and hormonal mechanisms. Beginning with John Bowlby's seminal research in the 1960s, attachment theory has provided a widely accepted explanation for the evolved purpose of the emotional bond between baby and caregiver: it protects the infant from predators and other threats.[37]

However, given the likelihood that humans— medium size, not particularly swift organisms—evolved under conditions of increasing exposure to predators and competing groups as they gradually took up a savanna lifestyle, a bond between parent and baby would hardly be enough to ensure species survival.[38] Thus, attachments to family, extending to kinship groups of about fifty to a hundred persons, supplied the necessary adhesive for safety in numbers. To operate as a cohesive social unit, individuals had to desire proximity to other group members.

Ironically, then, emotional attachment systems, which have quickly become idealized over the brief course of cultural evolution (approximately 10,000 years), have been a crucial element in the material survival of the human species.

Furthermore, the efficacy of attachment in promoting group cohesion has broader implications, serving as a principle element in a ubiquitous sociality. Human ancestors living between 4.5 and 1.8 million years ago, the Australopithecenes, show signs of bipedalism, increased brain size, and sexual dimorphism. Although researchers debate whether Australopithecenes had home bases, which serve as a locus for childcare and food-sharing, evidence suggests that these pre-hominids were adapted to living in relatively open landscapes by two million years ago and therefore were characterized by the emotional range and larger brain size that accompanies survival in open landscapes and increased social group size.

Humans are, in fact, the most pervasively social of mammalian species. Whereas evolutionists debate the central causes and order of emergence for specific adaptations such as bipedalism, large brains, and language, their functional efficacy in promoting and extending sociality is today increasingly recognized.[39] For instance, biopedalism may have evolved primarily to improve mobility, reduce heat stress, or free the hands, but in any case it facilitates face-to-face interaction and thus enhances social relations. Likewise, increased brain size is a requirement of bipedalism, which necessitates the coordination of many muscle groups, but it is also imperative for resource extraction in shifting habitats and for the maintenance of social relationships in large groups.

Increasingly, evolutionary social science recognizes the interdependence of high intelligence, sociality, cognitive flexibility, and habitat variability in the unique character of human evolution.[40] Whereas most species occupy a distinct ecological niche, selecting habitats

whose specific features match their survival needs, humans evolved as a home-based, wayfinding, knowledge-seeking species who use intelligence instrumentally. Emphasizing the inextricability of affective motivations and intellectual function, the environmental psychologist Stephen Kaplan surmises that early hominids "[carried out] information-based processes [such as] recognition, prediction, evaluation, and action."[41] Guided by feelings of apprehension and excitement in new environments, these ancestors cognitively assessed factors including unfamiliar animals, plants, cloud patterns, terrain, and competing conspecifics to determine the viability of novel environments. For humans, this active engagement in niche construction ultimately led to adaptation to every known natural habitat, but it also depended upon the evolution of conscious awareness (i.e., Donald's executive function) and increased social interaction. Evolutionary philosopher Kim Sterelny "[argues] that humans extract resources from their environment in a unique way: via collaborative application of expertise. Foraging is both cooperative and dependent on expertise and technology."[42] Sterelny notes that cooperative foraging in seasonal habitats prompts a new form of ecological interaction, one that requires adult technological skill and learning. Learning itself is inherently social, reliant on shared attention and intention for the successful use of information that cannot be hard-wired.

Research findings in place studies highlight the perpetuity of the core dynamics of human life that evolved over approximately five million years. Today, home bases serve as "a major fixed reference point for the structuring of reality" and the self because they emerged phylogenetically as sites of nurture, mutual support, and sustenance. Varying categories of emotional connection to physical locations, such as place attachment, relativity, and alienation, are largely reflective of affective and social factors. This accords with the centrality of the social group in evolutionary logic. As a wayfinding, knowledge-seeking species, hominids gathered

information from diverse environments, in the process learning how to extract resources and manipulate shifting habitats. As a knowledge-gathering, meaning-making species, therefore, humans relied on cognitive flexibility rather than hard-wired response. Modern culture today depends on collaboration and cooperation, which themselves involve shared intention and attention. Thus, whereas Massumi asserts that "situated perceptions and cognitions" signal the closure of affect, evolutionary social science and place studies tell us otherwise: identifiable emotional bonds with specific persons and locales establish a reference point (affective, cognitive, and material) for the securely based self, thus enabling intensities and affective-physical extension of that self into disparate physical and social environments.

Affect, Environment, Identity: *The Blackwater Lightship*

Scholars of contemporary Irish fiction have repeatedly noted the integral relationship of place and character psychology in Colm Toíbín's fiction. In the words of José Carregal Romero, "As no individual is disconnected from the physical and imaginary space she or he inhabits, Toíbín's central characters often become entangled in complex attachments to place, past and community. Thus, Toíbín's protagonists cannot escape their personal histories and their Irish cultural inheritance."[43] Going one step beyond Carregal Romero, Liam Harte points to Toíbín's "subtle geographic imagination in which space, place, and landscape are active determinants of identity and experience rather than passive, static entities."[44] In much of Toíbín's fiction, the dynamics of place-in-process are particularly shaped by Irish socio-religious history in both a top-down and bottom-up manner. Because moral policing of both women's sexuality and homosexuality has been a traditional aspect of Irish culture and, moreover, a feature of women's responsibility in that culture as the representatives of the Church in the home, domestic spaces in

Toíbín's fiction often serve a somewhat repressive role as behavioral settings that regulate emotion and the self.[45] In *The Blackwater Lightship*, Toíbín shows how characters' conceptualization of domestic space and surrounding environment as *place* operate as a constraint on emotion, self, social community, and environmental exploration, simultaneously lending disproportionate control to the cultural-ideological aspects of behavioral setting. The intervention of a new social group, a novel family unit of gay men, provides the necessary break with convention required to transform the behavioral setting and, with it, perception of self, place, and nuclear family. This analysis will address the dynamic of affective modes, memory, and social relationships in the construction of domestic spaces as places, focusing primarily on Helen, the novel's main character.

At the heart of Toíbín's novel is a young man, Declan, who is dying of AIDS. However, the story is focalized through Declan's sister Helen, the main character, and its drama centers on the nearly two decades of repressed anger between Helen and their mother, Lily. As the narrative unfolds, Toíbín gradually reveals the sources of the bitterness between the two women. When the children were young (Helen eleven and Declan eight), their father was diagnosed with cancer and died soon after. While he was in the hospital, Lily stayed with him in Dublin, and the children lived with their grandparents in the guest house by the sea at Cush. Feeling abandoned by their mother at that time, Helen has never forgiven her. She is additionally aggrieved that, first, while in college, she was required by her grandmother and mother to work at the Cush guest house when she had planned to go with friends to America for two summers. Second, at the time of graduating from college, the two older women had arranged a teaching job for her in Enniscorthy, although she had already found a job in Dublin and preferred to stay there. Having

walked out the back door of the Shelbourne Hotel where the three of them were taking tea

and discussing her future, Helen has not communicated with them in the eight years since,

excluding them from her wedding and the life of her young family. Declan's illness not only

forces these family members together again but, of great importance in the process of

transformation, introduces them to his community of gay friends.

Although domestic space is the prototypical arena of strong family feeling and core

identity, Helen, like her mother Lily, exhibits place relativity in connection to home.[46] In fact,

she consciously avoids an environment that evokes traditional or active attachment, that is, the

sense of deep insideness or belonging resulting from long-term association with a physical

location and its community; instead, she fashions a somewhat sterile home environment cut off

from the personal and cultural past so that the place—the material space and the meanings

associated with it--functions to repress and control feeling. This "capture or closure of affect" or

intensity is not, however, contra Massumi, the product of situatedness; perception, cognition, and

experience are situated in any case. Rather, Helen gravitates toward a home situation that limits

and controls her emotional engagements, identity, and larger reality.

Toíbín signals Helen's aversion to traditional attachment and her concomitantly

precarious emotional attachments at the outset of the novel. In the initial description of the house

and the reasons for choosing it, Helen's husband Hugh serves as a foil to his wife:

> They were the first to live in this house, and the first in their estate to build an
>
> extension—a large, square, bright room which served as kitchen and dining-room and
>
> playroom. Hugh had wanted the house for the beech tree which, through some miracle,
>
> had been left in their back garden, and the park behind the house. She had liked only the
>
> newness, the idea that no one had ever lived here before. (6)

Unlike Helen, Hugh is attracted to the natural spaces and objects outside the house; thus, his "fixed reference point for the structuring of reality" includes adjacent nonhuman nature as part of domestic sphere. Hugh's conception of home place, then, reaffirms and extends his expansive, secure self-identity. By contrast, Helen's attraction to "the idea that no one had ever lived [in the house] before" reflects her desire to suppress memory and encourages her inclination to a potentially destructive self-containment. Wondering "why [Hugh] needed someone who had none of his virtues," she recognizes her impulse to keep him at a distance, stemming from "the raw areas in her which were unsettled and untrusting" (25). Helen's emotional ambivalence is of a piece with her place relativity, for if the house addition, the great room, is a joint endeavor that embodies for husband and wife their mutual commitment and extension of selfhood outward, Helen's attraction to a locale divorced from the past signifies a countermovement. In Helen's case, a home cut off from the past assists repression and distrust, reaffirming the low self-esteem revealed in her amazement that Hugh loves her.

Just as Helen values her home for what it is not, defining herself in relation to her immediate family and professional life and eliminating extended family and childhood memory from her orbit, her place relativity feeds a more generalized social ambivalence. In the novel's opening chapter, Hugh and Helen host a party to celebrate the first year of the new Irish school where Hugh teaches. All the guests, with the exception of Helen and a few neighbors, speak Irish fluently, and they also participate in traditional singing later in the evening. Anders Olsson notes that, in Toíbín's fiction, those who have mastered the Irish language sufficiently are insiders, and the same might be said of singing in this author's works.[47] That Helen, a highly accomplished school principal, does not speak Irish fluently confirms her place relativity, her ambivalent relationship to her home and with her family, since Hugh teaches at the new Irish school and

speaks only Irish to their young sons as well as his colleagues. Helen effectively self-selects

as a partial outsider within her own home, tentatively participating in the bonding effects of

shared language and song. This home-based identity defines both her most intimate relationships

and her community social engagements, as the party scene demonstrates. The cognitive

archaeologist Steven Mithen suggests that pre-linguistic rhythmic utterances— proto-music--

preceded language in early exchange and ritual, and that music, often called the language of the

emotions, is even today most typically a shared activity whose affiliative rewards are caused by a

release of oxytocin.[48] Recent studies in the affective neuroscience of music also point to its

universality, developmental efficacy, social salience, and emotionally evocative force. Likewise,

while language (an extremely recent evolutionary phenomenon) undoubtedly improves

communication and recursive thought, it may have evolved primarily as a social bonding

mechanism instead of an informational tool, and its origins may be inextricable from those of

music.[49]

Helen has fashioned a highly functional identity in part through control of her home

environment, a space defined by the absence of memory, extended family connections, and the

part of the self constituted by the past. However, although using new spaces to sever connections

to the past may be, in the short term, productive for Helen, in the long term such repression

damages personal and interpersonal development. Therapists have long recognized that self-

perception and place attachment are intimately linked, and Helen's uneasy relationships to these

home places continues to affirm her negative self-image, reflected in her assessment that her

husband Hugh is superior to her and in her guilt about the parts of herself she hides from him.

Re-envisioning a past place of value helps establish self-coherence, suggests the therapist

Michael A. Godkin, who has emphasized the importance of place memories in overcoming negative self-perception and feelings of rootlessness.[50]

Moreover, the vast majority of human lives are characterized by *places*-in-process, because they typically entail an array of physical locations, human communities, and relationships, not a single, discrete space. As she travels south to inform her grandmother and mother of Declan's illness, Helen must of necessity confront the places associated with repressed memories. If Helen's own house embodies and reasserts her place relativity—her simultaneous desire for and reluctance to embrace rootedness, insideness, and belonging based in shared feelings and locations—her initial reaction on her return to her grandmother's house shades over into place alienation, closer to a feeling of actual dislike than ambivalence. Helen notices the torn linoleum, peeling wallpaper, and flaking paint, and the old mattress and inexpensive, worn sheets are uncomfortable to the touch. Because Helen and Declan were cared for by their grandparents during their father's illness, this deeply known but long unacknowledged place embodies and revives Helen's childhood fear of abandonment and death and the attendant anger that she recognizes as the source of her emotional ambivalence.

Although Helen is repelled by the decrepit Cush house, which is inseparable from her reawakened fears, these negative associations ultimately trigger the retrieval of a positive place memory of her childhood home. While lying awake in her grandmother's house, the "the smell of must and damp in the room" prompts her to recollect her return to her family's house alone before her father's funeral. The house was pervaded by her father's presence: "[Putting] her hand on the kitchen door handle, she had realized that her father's hand would have touched it too, his fingerprints or the print of the palm of his hand had probably—no, definitely—been left there. His hand was dead now, lying in his coffin. And this house, every inch of it, had his traces

imprinted on it" (80). For the eleven-year-old Helen, touching the door handles and the dishes was akin to putting her hand in her father's, underscoring the inseparability of her love of her father from the physical building. Helen's construction of home place in childhood and its reconstruction through memory echoes Bowlby and Tuan's claim that the bodies of caregiving family members are not affectively distinct from the physical surround for the infant, a fluid affective relationship among persons and associated spaces that humans retain in adulthood. The emotional affiliation of physical space and human others in establishing a "fixed reference point" coheres with the logic of human evolution, which points to the functional efficacy of human sociality in navigating geographically diverse areas, finding adequate habitats, and defending against aggressors. The adult Helen's memories establish the interlocked nature of these homes—the childhood house her family no longer owns and her grandmother's house--and the necessity of their incorporation into her adult life.

In Godkin's terminology, Helen has begun, through memory, to retrieve a place of value. Nevertheless, Helen is unlikely to resolve the place relativity and alienation that go hand-in-hand with her distrust of intimacy without changes to the sociocultural and behavioral setting that she inhabits—changes that she cannot herself effect. Helen's modern house and restrained emotional and social life, like her mother's, indicates that she has inverted the traditional patterns of Irish culture, which identify women as the representatives of the church in the home, responsible for safeguarding women's sexuality and enforcing heterosexuality. As Edward A. Hagan notes, many of Toíbín's mothers reject the anonymity imposed by the Church and pursue their own goals, with less than completely satisfactory results.[51] But given the perpetuation of a surveillance culture in traditional Irish towns, Helen, Lily and other women characters like them in Toibin's fiction (Nora Webster, Nancy in "The Name of the Game") have no real choice but to

relocate physically into urban areas or to remote locales and to sever ties with their traditional communities, in effect choosing place relativity and exchanging anonymity for an emotionally detached self as necessary components of relative independence.[52]

Not surprisingly, then, when these women are forced by circumstances to engage with traditional small town community, they practice antisocial strategies of deception and avoidance. After the women, Declan, and his gay friends convene at the Cush house to care for Declan, the constraints of the behavioral setting emerge. Assisted by Lily and Helen, the elderly Dora sidetracks her prying neighbors, Madge and Essie Kehoe, who are keen to identify Dora's visitors; later, Dora rushes the family out of church to avoid the questions of the larger community about her guests and family. This collusion between the three women, which hides the identities and sexualities of Dora's guests, perpetuates the culture of shame and secrecy surrounding homosexuality and the repressed identities of the women that govern the behavioral setting. Moreover, that this cooperative act amongst the three women is one of deception reinforces the ambivalence of their own emotional and social-familial bonds.

Considered in light of all the elements of place-in-process, weak social networks and attendantly weak affective bonds amongst their members are apt to result in disproportionate power for other factors, whether this is the nonhuman natural environment or governing ideology, and the introduction of a new element into the dynamic may be a fundamental condition of change.[53] Declan and his friends Paul and Larry bring an alternative community to the traditional family and, with it, a new willingness to communicate. Hagan claims that Toíbín sometimes uses homosexuality "as curative of a misguided female liberation,"[54] but in my view, it is not so much that the concept of liberation is misguided but that environmental factors constrain the success of self-initiated liberation for women.[55] As Kaplan and Kaplan explain, the

purpose of culture is to provide a map for healthy functioning, which entails both helping to define a problem and to shape its solution.[56] For Helen and Lily particularly, since their culture's ideology is conflicted, at the very least, about the contemporary role of women, they cannot employ it fully as a guide or map for functioning, much less for large-scale change. In contrast, Declan and his friends, by virtue of being men on one hand as well as true outsiders on the other have, ironically, while nonetheless ostracized by virtue of their sexual orientation, enjoyed freedom and greater geographic mobility that has fostered a new kind of social circle. In effect, their true community is an alternative to the traditional Irish family, one in which Paul and Larry have cared for Declan during the that time no one in his biological family has known that he has contracted AIDS.[57]

With the arrival of Larry and Paul at Cush, Toíbín's narrative undergoes a pronounced shift toward social interaction, as autobiographical storytelling extends the bonds between the gay men and the women in the family who have avoided communicating honestly (or at all) for years. For many decades, cognitive psychology has recognized narrative as the backbone of human thought and a central feature in rituals that provide social cohesion; in this novel, storytelling creates new emotional bonds, a community of support, and a shift in beliefs that begin to alter national ideology and the behavioral setting it enforces.[58] Instructively, Helen's receptivity to change is signaled by her question to Larry—"Do your folks know you are gay?" (142)—which begins a process of shared narratives. Åke Persson claims that *The Blackwater Lightship* is a novel of education, whose central task is that of oral history, critiquing the dominant historical account.[59] Published in 1999, only six years after the decriminalization of homosexuality in Ireland, *The Blackwater Lightship* is almost certainly intended to serve this function. In this case, that means enlightening the public about gay experience, and in this

respect the novel itself actively participates in re-envisioning place, especially in the dimension of behavioral setting, on a national scale.

However, in welcoming stories about gay experience, the novel does more than enlighten the readers about gay life: it models a new form of behavior premised on open communication and selfless support among friends and family. In effect, the intensive storytelling in the second half of the novel parallels the notion of coming out, in that characters honestly reveal their accepted selves and experiences. Each tells her or his stories: Larry of revealing his sexuality to his parents and of his multiple lovers from the same family; Dora of her subversion of the nun's plan to have Lily fulfill a religious vocation; Paul of his relationship with his husband Francois and their secret marriage by a Belgian priest; Helen of her bitterness toward her mother and grandmother; and finally, Lily of the traumatic experience of losing her young husband so many years before.

In this series of shared and private conversations, Helen's stories precipitate a social and emotional shift for her that ultimately results in the reinvention of place as a shared activity. Speaking privately to Paul, she explains that her mother has never met her husband or her sons because of their attempts to arrange her life for her. Puzzled, he replies, "I don't understand the reason you didn't want them at your wedding . . . . What you've told me isn't reason enough'" (184). Because Paul has honestly shared his experiences and troubles with her, a short time later, she seeks him out and tells him of an experience several years before that made her realize that she "had put away parts of herself that were damaged and rotting . . . ," adding, "And these two women are the parts of myself of myself that I have buried . . . and that is why I still want them away from me" (188). In admitting that the "raw places in her which were unsettled an untrusting" are part of a shared identity with her mother and grandmother, Helen acknowledges

the linked nature of their selves. Perhaps more importantly, in sharing this with Paul, she finally tells another of the grief and distrust she has not even revealed to her husband.

Pointedly, storytelling is attended by reconceptualization of place in the specific home that is the emotional source of past grievances and wounds. Alongside the modifications to self for the women in the family through a shift toward honest self-revelation, Dora consults with Larry, an architect, about renovations to the Cush house. The plans involve knocking down walls to eliminate the dining room and to provide for a downstairs bathroom and bedroom. Thus, this renovation would bring an open floor plan, similar to Helen and Hugh's great room, into an older Irish house. Larry's words, "It would be like a new house. You wouldn't know yourself" (157), mark the transformation of space into a reconceptualized place, one associated with sociality and emotional openness, and thus with altered identity. Whether the space, the physical house, will actually be remodeled is beside the point. As Altman and Low emphasize, "[P]laces may vary in several ways—scale or size and scope, tangible versus symbolic, known and experience versus not known or not experienced."[60] Following this logic, just as place may be either associated with an actual physical space or a wholly imagined one, the imaginative reconceptualization of an unaltered physical space can result in a changed notion of place, which is attended by a shift along the attachment spectrum (perhaps from alienation to place relativity for Helen), matched by adjustment in the self.

Locating these developments in Toíbín's narrative within the cognitive-evolutionary critique of affect theory indicates a far different relationship among affect, interpersonal social relations, place perception, and exploration of physical space than that late poststructuralist model claims. Whereas Massumi asserts that "situated perceptions and cognitions fulfilling functions of actual connection or blockage are the *capture* and closure of affect," the trajectory

of the novel shows that the broader social engagement of characters in the Cush house emerges alongside an expanded sense of place concomitant with more open and extensive emotional expression, as the strand itself increasingly becomes the site of stories and personal epiphanies. Thus, the characters' perceptions and cognitions in their moments of connection facilitate healthy interaction rather than causing blockage; more than this, they provide the basis of social support and self-coherence that goes hand-in-hand with an exploratory approach to physical space and a fluid, expansive conception of place. In short, the pattern of the novel strongly suggests that genuine emotional interactions with places and persons encourage more broad-ranging affectivity, rather than the reverse.

In keeping with this, Helen's existential epiphany on the beach depersonalizes the "raw parts" of herself associated with the Cush house, including them in an encompassing, universal perspective. As Liam Harte observes, in this novel "the same closely observed marine landscape provides the spatial frame within which familial relations are again healed and restored, and tentative new configurations of family forged."[61] Beginning with several places curated, as it were, to control emotions and relationships and to prohibit memory, the novel gradually envisions the dynamic interrelation of these locations as an integral feature of shared identity and suffering. Helen thinks back with renewed understanding to her own withdrawal from the family after her father's death and of her mother's imminent repetition of loss as she explores a neighbor's home destroyed by cliff erosion, "[stopping to look once more] at the shreds of wallpaper and the floorboards and the half-rooms open to the wind and the sea" (217). Mirroring her first reaction to the decaying interior of her grandmother's house, these impressions of the Keating's exposed and ruined house drive home the inextricability of natural and cultural phenomena, pointing especially toward a necessary integration of death and loss and the long

grieving process into the "fixed point of reference," the home. Just before this, Helen remembers a similar moment after her father's death, when she "imagined the sea, angry and inexorable . . . [and] the dead being washed out of their graves, houses crumbling and falling, cars being dragged out into the unruly ocean until there was nothing anymore but this vast chaos" (216). In the present, she still feels its unstoppable existential force but no longer reconstitutes it in the shape of her childhood anger.

The counterpoint movement of stories, persons, and physical location (between the Cush and the strand) in this last part of the novel emphasizes the dynamism of place-in-process, epitomized in the renewal of communication between Lily and Helen that will, in turn, incorporate the past into Helen's home. Just before Helen's moment of existential revelation, Lily shares with her daughter her romantic childhood fantasy of the two lighthouses, Tuskar and Blackwater, the latter of which had been taken down many years before. Explaining that, as an adult, she associated these lighthouses with her husband and herself, Lily says, "You know, I thought your father would live forever. So I learned things very bitterly'" (192). As Lily exposes her neediness in the face of her son's imminent death, Helen finally realizes and tells her mother, that, as a child, she thought Lily had taken their father away from them. This mutual admission of feeling opens up the opportunity for renewed relations between mother and daughter, a change whose broader affective, social, and place dimensions Toíbín signals, albeit tentatively, as mother and daughter sing together on the drive north to Dublin. Tellingly, the last pages of the novel take place in Helen's Dublin house, where Lily and Helen drink tea and wait the return of Hugh and the boys after taking Declan to the hospital. Implicitly, this is the first in a pattern of non-intrusive visits Lily hopes to make to visit her daughter, son-in-law, and grandsons, thus

pointing toward a transformation of Helen's attraction to "the idea that no one had ever lived [in the house] before" (15).

Perhaps Helen and Lily, through the beginnings of a reconciliation effected by a return to the Cush house in the company of a new and supportive mediating family of gay men, can rehabilitate the selves, feelings, relationship, and environments that they have consciously sought to control. Perhaps, for Helen, this will lead to feelings of insideness and aspects of traditional attachment in her home, with which her mother and the past are now associated. People with strong attachments experience overall higher life satisfaction, social capital, and better general adjustment, and interest in family history and self-coherence are positively correlated with strong place attachment.[62] Novels like *The Blackwater Lightship* illuminate the dynamics of place-in-process, showing how feelings for persons and locations are interrelated and in many respects constitutive of human behavior. This essay has sought to demonstrate that "situated perceptions and cognitions fulfilling functions of actual connection" are not, as Massumi claims, the "capture and closure of affect" but, much to the contrary, integral parts of the purpose and perpetuation of feeling. Guiding understanding of the complexity of emotional intensities, place studies, as a tool for literary analysis, enables articulation of the sources, purposes, and changes in those feelings in relation to the environment. As such, like the rich array of cognitive literary approaches available now, it points toward the enduring ethical relevance of literature and criticism.

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[1] Colm Tóibín, *The Blackwater Lightship* (New York: Scribner, 2001), henceforth cited parenthetically in the text. Within place studies, Robert Riley comments on the importance of literary representation as a resource to the field in "Attachment to the Ordinary Landscape," in *Place Attachment*, ed. Irwin Altman and Setha Low, vol. 12 of *Advances in Theory and Research* (New York: Plenum, 1992), 13-35.

[2] See Easterlin, "Cognitive Ecocriticism: Human Wayfinding, Sociality, and Literary Interpretation," in *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies,* ed. Lisa Zunshine (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 257-74.

[3] Patrick Colm Hogan, "Affect Studies and Literary Criticism," in *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*, ed. Paula Rabinowitz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 20016), 1.

[4] Constantina Papoulias and Felicity Callard, "Biology's Gift: Interrogating the Turn to Affect." *Body and Society* 16, no. 1 (2010): 29-56, 29-30 cited.

[5] Ibid., 32, 34.

[6] Brian Massumi, "The Autonomy of Affect," *Cultural Critique* 31 (1995): 83-109, 88 cited.

[7] Ibid., 96-97.

[8] Ibid., 97. See, for instance, Jaak Panksepp, *Affective Neuroscience: The Foundations of Human and Animal Emotions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) as well as Andrew Packard and Jonathan Delafield-Butt, "Feelings as Agents of Selection: Putting Charles Darwin Back into (extended neo) Darwinism, *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society* 112 (2014): 332-353. In his overview of affective science, Hogan notes the term "incudes emotions, moods, attitudes, interpersonal stances, and affect dispositions"; amongst these, "an emotion is the activation of some motivational system, prototypically an activation of relatively brief duration—an 'episode'—with a complex set of specifiable components" ("Affect Studies and Literary Criticism," 7, 8). For an overview of models of emotion, see David Sander, "Models of Emotion: The Affective Neuroscience Approach," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Human Affective Neuroscience*, ed. Jorge Armony and Patrik Vuilleumier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 5-53.

[9] Ibid., 90.

[10] See Merlin Donald, *A Mind So Rare: The Evolution of Human Consciousness* (New York: Norton, 2001).

[11] See Donald. 57.

[12] Packard and Delafield-Butt, 333.

[13] Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 9. Stewart offers a series of meditations on everyday situations that aim at glimpsing unconscious intensities.

[14] For a concise overview of the field's development, see David Seamon and Jacob Sowers, "Place and Placelessness, Edward Relph," in *Key Terms in Human Geography,* ed. P. Hubbard, R. Kitchen, and G. Vallentine (New York: Sage Publications, 2000), 43-51 . For the seminal text in place studies, see Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion Limited, 1976).

[15] Maria Lewicka, "Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years?" *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 31 (2011): 207-230

[16] Ibid., 207.

[17] Irwin Altman and Setha Low, "Place Attachment: A Conceptual Inquiry," in *Place Attachment*, Vol. 12. *Advances in Theory and Research*. New York: Plenum, 1992, 5.

[18] See Anne Buttimer and David Seamon, *The Human Experience of Space and Place* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980; see also Altman and Low, 8.

[19] Some early research in place studies reductively posits correlations between types of environments and strength of attachment. In 1938, Louis Wirth predicted that urban density was deleterious to attachment, but in 1992, David Hummon, citing many social surveys, rebutted correlations between modern settlement patterns and attachment. See Louis Wirth, *Louis Wirth on Cities and Social Life: Selected Papers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956); David

Hummon, "Community Attachment: Local Sentiment in Sense of Place," in *Place Attachment*, 253-278.

[20] Maria Lewicka, "On the Varieties of People's Relationships with Places: Hummon's Typology Revisited." *Environment and Behavior* 43, no. 5 (2011): 679.

[21] Lewicka, "Place Attachment," 208.

[22] Ibid., 211.

[23] Relph, 39-40.

[24] Antonio Cristoforetti, Francesca Gennai, and Giulia Rodeshini, "Home Sweet Home: The Emotional Construction of Place," *Journal of Aging Studies* 25 (2011): 226.

[25] For more detailed discussion, see Nancy Easterlin, *A Biocultural Approach to Literary Theory and Interpretation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 217-225.

[26] For seminal texts in geography and developmental psychology, see, respectively, Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977) and Daniel N. Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant: A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

[27] See Patrick Colm Hogan, *Understanding Nationalism: On Narrative, Cognitive Science, and Identity* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2009), 103.

[28] See McKillop on the conceptual emergence of homesickness as an Enlightenment phenomenon in his "Local Attachment and Cosmopolitanism—The Eighteenth-Century Pattern," in *From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Frederick Pottle*, ed. Frederick W. Hillies and Harold Bloom (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 191-218; for a discussion of nostalgia, see Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

[29] See Hummon, 253-278, for the original typology. It includes these categories (to which Lewicka's are roughly parallel: 1) everyday rootedness; 2) ideological rootedness; 3) displacement; 4) uncommitted placelessness; and 5) place relativity.

[30] See Leila Scannell and Robert Gifford, "Comparing the Theories of Interpersonal and Place Attachment," in *Place Attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods, and Applications*, ed. Lynne C. Manzo and Patrick Devine-Wright (New York: Routledge, 2014), 23-36.

[31] The essays in Manzo and Devine-Wright's recent anthology, *Place Attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods, and Applications* confirm the normative developmental pattern while pointing to a range of other concerns.

[32] Hummon, 257.

[33] Easterlin, *A Biocultural Approach to Literary Theory and Interpretation*, 118-20.

[34] See Michael A. Godkin, "Identity and Place: Clinical Applications Based on Notions of Rootedness and Uprootedness," in *The Human Experience of Space and Place*, 73-85, for a discussion of a place perspective as a therapeutic tool. His case histories of alcoholics with difficult childhoods suggest that restoring a sense of home through memory and imagination has therapeutic benefits.

[35] See Paul Morgan, "Towards a Developmental Theory of Place Attachment." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 30 (2010): 11-22; Roger G. Barker and associates, *Habitats, Environments, and Human Behavior: Studies in Ecological Psychology and Eco-Behavioral Science from the Midwest Field Station, 1947-1972* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1978).

[36] Poststructuralist focus on the control of space is more political than but quite compatible with

Barker's concept of the behavioral setting it provides. Influenced especially by Michel Foucault, the poststructuralist approach has dominated in British geography, in contrast to the place studies perspective ascendant in North America. See, for instance, Doreen Massey et al., *Human Geography Today* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage Publications, 2005); Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). For a critique of unintentional biases of this approach, see Massey, "A Global Sense of Place," in *Reading Human Geography: The Politics and Poetics of Inquiry*, ed. Trevor Barnes and Derek Gregory (London: Arnold, 1997), 315-323. The politicized approach to space highlights a crucial feature of culture's influence on place constructions and it is fully accounted for within place studies; however, collapsing place onto space, it eliminates affect and psychology as relevant components in human-environment relations.

[37] John Bowlby, *Attachment* (New York: Basic Books, 1969).

[38] On savanna vulnerability, see, for instance, Stephen Kaplan and Rachel Kaplan's *Cognition and Environment: Functioning in an Uncertain World* (New York: Praeger, 1982).

[39] See, for instance, Robin Dunbar, *Grooming, Gossip, and the Evolution of Language* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); Steven Mithen, *The Singing Neanderthals: The Origins of Music, Language, Mind and Body* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Kim Sterelny, *The Evolved Apprentice: How Evolution Made Humans Unique* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012).

[40] On the importance of cognitive flexibility (or domain-general intelligence), see Donald; Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind: A Search for the Origins of Art, Religion, and Science* (London: Thomas and Hudson, 1996); Sterelny. Sterelny disputes Mithen's view that the Neanderthals did not have cognitive flexibility, thus arguing for its earlier emergence. John Tooby and Irven DeVore in "The Reconstruction of Hominid Behavioral Evolution through Strategic Modeling," in *Evolution and Human Behavior: Primate Models*, ed. Warren Kinzey (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 183-237, adopt the metaphor of "the cognitive niche," in opposition to "the ecological niche," to emphasize the specific character of human evolution, wherein use of information via flexible higher intelligence led to manipulation of and a degree of independence from the material environment.

[41] Stephen Kaplan, "Environmental Preference in a Knowledge-Seeking, Knowledge Using Organism," in *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture*, ed. Jerome Barkow, Leda Cosmides, and John Tooby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 581-98.

[42] Sterelny, 90.

[43] José Carregal Romero, "Sexuality and the Culture of Silence," *ATLANTIS*: *Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2015): 69-83, 71.

[44] Liam Harte, "'The Endless Mutation of the Shore': Colm Tóibín's Marine Imaginary," *Critique* 51, no. 4 (2010): 337.

[45] Ono the socio-religious regulation of sexuality in Ireland, see, for example, Carrregal Romero; Hagan , "Colm Tóibín's 'As Though' Reality in *Mothers and Sons*, *Brooklyn*, and *The Empty Family*," *New Hibernia Review* 16, no. 1 (2012): 31-74; Tóibín, "Good-bye to Catholic Ireland," in *Love in a Dark Time: And Other Explorations of Gay Lives and Literature* (New York: Scribner, 2001), 249-261.

[46] Helen and Lily are parallel in their relationship to domestic space and, correspondingly, to human attachments.

[47] Anders Olsson, "The Broken Place: Memory, Language, Tradition, and Storytelling in Colm Toíbín's Texts," in *Recovering Memory: Irish Representations of Past and Present*, ed. Hedda Friberg, Irene Gilsenan Nordin, and Lena Yding Pederesen (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 128-48.

[48] For a hypothesis of the joint evolutionary emergence of music and language, see Mithen, *Neanderthals*; for the hypothesis that language emerged to replace grooming and facilitate social bonds, see Dunbar.

[49] See Stefan Koelsch, "Emotion and Music," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Affective Neuroscience*, 286-303.

[50] See Godkin, 73-85. Additionally, research on emotion regulation suggests long-demonstrated links between repressive coping and physical disease. See Lynn B. Myers et al, " Current Issues in Repressive Coping and Health," in *Emotion Regulation: Conceptual and Clinical Issues*, ed. Ad Vingerhoets, Ivan Nyklíćek, and Johan Denollet (New York: Springer Science and Business Media, 2008), 69-86. Affective neuroscience also turns attention to the unique human capacity for emotion regulation, but experimental protocols generally restrict research to isolated responses. See K. Luan Phan and Chandra Sekhar Sripada, "Emotion Regulation," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Affective Neuroscience*, 375-400.

[51] Hagan, 34.

[52] See Colm Toíbín, *Nora Webster* (New York: Scribner, 2015); "The Name of the Game," *Mothers and Sons* (New York: Scribner, 2007).

[53] For a reading of an instance where nonhuman natural conditions have a disproportionate force in a Toíbín storyworld, see my essay "Ecocriticism, Place Studies, and Colm Toíbín's 'A Long Winter': A Biocultural Perspective," in *Handbook of Ecocriticism and Cultural Ecology*, ed. Hubert Zapf (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 226-48. Whereas dysfunctional family and community relations allow the perpetuation of conventional socio-religious attitudes in the home in *The Blackwater Lightship*, in "A Long Winter" the same kinds of dysfunction render deadly otherwise manageable winter weather.

[54] Hagan, 40.

[55] Toíbín often depicts the acceptance of adult sexuality, particularly homosexuality, as a crucial component of mature identity, and he pointedly opposes the secrecy and abuse associated with the Church and other authorities to the embrace and expression of healthy, adult homosexual identity. This is apparent in the collection *Mothers and Sons* (New York: Scribner, 2007) particularly, in the contrast between stories that depict healthy same-sex relations and attraction ("Three Friends," "A Long Winter") and those that relate forbidden sexual desire among the priesthood ("The Use of Reason," "A Priest in the Family").

[56] Kaplan and Kaplan, 136-41.

[57] Indeed, Declan is the ultimate cause of his family's transformations, for whereas Helen would have preferred to avoid the Cush house and its uncomfortable associations, Declan chooses to return to this site of unresolved emotions and childhood loss before his death. As several critics have noted, Declan serves as a Christ figure in the novel, a symbolism that highlights the inextricability of the national and the personal. See Jose M. Yebra, "The Interstitial Status of Irish Gayness in Colm Toíbín's *The Blackwater Lightship* and *The Master*," *Estudios Irlandeses* 9 (2014): 96-106.

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[58] For the view that narrative is the primary mode of human cognition, see, for instance, Jerome Bruner's *Acts of Meaning (*Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), Dan Edward Lloyd's *Simple Minds* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), and Roger C. Schank's *Tell Me a Story: A New Look at Real and Artificial Memory* (New York: Scribner's, 1990). For an overview of the primacy of narrative and its implications, see Easterlin, *A Biocultural Approach to Literary Theory and Interpretation*, 44-54. Bruner reports that, according to language acquisition theorists, the desire to enter into family narratives motivates babies to learn language. Donald's phylogentic account in *Origins of the Modern Mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991) parallels this ontogenetic account, asserting that the group impulse toward narrative mythmaking drove the human species to develop linguistic skill.

[59] Åke Perrson, "'Do Your Folks Know That You're Gay?': Memory and Oral History as Education and Resistance in Colm Toíbín's *The Blackwater Lightship*," in *Recovering Memory*, 149-69.

[60] Altman and Low, 5.

[61] Harte, 345.

[62] See Lewicka, "In Search of Roots."

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