

Place, Place-making, and African-American Archaeology: Considerations for Future Work.

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HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND SLAVERY

The historical archaeological study of plantations in South Carolina has been a challenge for the last few decades. We are continuing to advance our knowledge and understanding of how plantations were organized, what geographic locales were best suited for agricultural production, and how plantations changed as they passed from owner to owner until their eventual demise around the time of the Civil War. Beyond this, we strive to understand how the enslaved laborers dealt with life inside of a centuries old institution, inside of a plantation they had no control over, and inside of a world they created yet had no ownership over. We excavate slave cabins and their yards, whole villages, overseer's houses, kitchens, workshops—all of the possible, physical, tangible elements of a plantation, in order to learn as much as we can about how slaves managed to survive and create new cultural forms everyday of their lives.

This work has leant much to our understanding of past slave lifeways. As long as we continue to recover the material culture left behind by those enslaved, we can learn more about their largely unrecorded past. But, what of the culture that is not material, now or then? What about the thoughts, feelings, and emotions that once existed in these plantations? Are they retrievable? Can archaeology find them? One might argue that the material culture we find at slave cabins and their related structures can be interpreted to touch on the nonphysical elements of past slave life. But, can sherds of Colonoware or mud-walled houses help us understand the emotional impact of slavery on these transplanted Africans? Can these archaeological finds truly tell us of the joys and sorrows that once existed on these plantations?

Landscape may be the most powerful interpretive, theoretical, and tangible unit of analysis in historical archaeology today. It is also largely misunderstood and misused when used in interpretation today. The historical archaeological literature is filled with references to landscapes and how important they are. However, most of the archaeologists that boast of a 'landscape approach' do very little to define what they think a landscape is, either now or in the past. While *Earth Patterns* (Kelso and Most et al. 1990) was the first major look at the historical archaeology of landscapes, none of the contributing authors referenced a source from the field of Geography—a field that was fully immersed in landscape studies before and during the years *Earth Patterns* was being compiled. James Deetz, in *Earth Patterns*, even went so far to say that excavating a landscape would be nearly impossible because “landscapes are big” and “they surround us and stretch to the horizon” (1990:2). He also said that landscape is “a rather general, nonspecific term” and that landscapes do not have the usual qualities of normal archaeological features, like a specific location that can be excavated (Deetz 1990:1-2).

Here, Deetz, like many other historical landscape archaeologists, shows his ignorance of the geographic literature. Rather than be concerned with how to deal with the study of landscape, I feel that we should begin to incorporate the term *place*, and what place means, into our landscape studies, since landscapes exist because of the places that fill them. And, a *place* is something that can be excavated—or at least, the physical parts. Geographers, and some ecologists, were writing about place, landscapes, and how places are distinct parts of landscapes since the 1970s (see

Tuan 1977 and Appleton 1975), and advancing their studies and ideas about place and landscape throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Many archaeologists are using place and place-making in their studies (see the website <http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~janzb/place/landscape.htm> for one of the most extensive lists of multidisciplinary works on place), but most of the work is conducted on Native American sites or other native peoples abroad. Historical archaeologists have been redefining the ways they see landscape, how they define it, what elements they are trying to decipher from them, and how places fit into them (see Yamin and Metheny 1996, Zierden et al. 1997, Miller and Gleason 1994, Leone 1984, Heath and Bennett 2000). However, historical archaeology in South Carolina is still quite silent on the subject of place. We have learned that landscapes are actually definable and workable in terms of ‘doing archaeology within a landscape’. However, no matter how hard we try to excavate a landscape, or study the *physical remnants* of landscape, we are only learning about one half of it. The other half lies in the realm of ideas, emotions, decisions, and feelings, for it was these cognitive elements that made the transformed environment a landscape and supported that landscape through its existence.

This paper is an evaluative attempt to show that the concept of place, whether as a theory or basis for interpretation, can be crucial to furthering our contribution to the historical archaeology and anthropology of past African-American lifeways. Through this paper, I discuss how place can bring the archaeological and written records to life in new and exciting ways—ways that the public rarely know about. I believe that the intense consideration of using place as a way to define and interpret the past will take our archaeology and landscape studies further than we have ever thought before.

PLANTATION LANDSCAPES

The following example makes this process sound easy, but it demonstrates my point well. Let’s say the plantation landscape is like a page in a coloring book. If the untamed environment is a blank white page, the plantation superimposed onto it is the black outline of a picture. That’s the physical half. The ways the colors are selected and the order to which they are applied, the ‘mood’ of the artist, and the purpose behind filling in the white spaces with colors are like the cognitive elements of the landscape. We can say that the planter designed a stencil, printed the page, and then put it in the book of plantation landscapes. Then, the planter, the overseer/driver, and the slaves colored in the stenciled outline of the plantation. Would everyone work together to make sure the colors were applied correctly, i.e., would the whole sky be blue, or more than one color? Would the scene be chaotic or orderly? More importantly, if the stencil is orderly, would ‘order’ influence the ways the colors were applied?

The planters controlled the plantations. They controlled the roads and fields, the houses and their locations, the tasking of labor, the purchasing and selling of goods, and most importantly, the space within the plantation. The plantation was the planter’s private property. The planters owned everything within the plantations, including their slaves. So, if the slaves were property belonging to the planter, and the planter controlled space within the plantation, how did the slaves mediate their existence within this space? How did they have landscape? Did they create place for themselves? What benefits can *place*, as a theoretical or interpretive base, offer to our discipline? How could something as simple and ordinary as place-making be worthy as an interpretive archaeological tool?

TO TALK, OR NOT TO TALK, ABOUT *PLACE*

For years, we have been focusing on the distributions of material culture in space. It is the proverbial backbone of archaeological question asking, methodology, interpretation, and theory building. In the literature, we read about

archaeologists' hunts for "the use of space," how space is organized, and power struggles within the space of the plantation (Orser 1988, Thomas 1998, Shackel 2000). The concept 'space' implies that 'something' is empty; thus, space should be filled with things like objects, people, houses, or ideas. Space is something all people in today's world deal with. For instance, we are being told by the 'do-it-yourself' channels on cable television how to work with space, improve space, and even transform space through the process of buying things and putting them into space, or throwing out things to have empty space again. Space is an extremely important concept and focus of study, and the ways that cultures perceive, understand, and use space can vary greatly. However, if archaeology studies space and all things (physical or cognitive) within it, without making reference to 'place' or places within the space they work and study in, then archaeology is missing the opportunity to bring more agency and life to the past people, cultures, and societies we study.

Spatial geographers Reginald Golledge and Robert Stimson wrote a book entitled *Spatial Behavior*, in which they argue that the word *place* should be substituted for the word *space*. This would "bring one closer to meaning and action, for place is seen as the focus of human intentions" (Golledge and Stimson 1997:387). They continue: "Adopting this point of view readily allows incorporation of affective components into the spatial domain, for attributes such as thinking, feeling, and acting are presumed to be relevant to places in an environment rather than to abstract spatial structure" (Golledge and Stimson 1997:387). A focus on place produces an "action oriented" approach to understanding human processes—past or present. Golledge and Stimson go on to say that places, landscapes, and person-environment-behavior relationships stem from how emotions are used by people to interpret their places and landscapes and adjust accordingly to them.

So, if emotion can be linked to place, but not so much space, shouldn't we be using the term "place" to define our objects of archaeological scrutiny? After all, we *are* trying to figure out what people were doing in the past, but more so, the meaning behind what it was that they did. And, if place carries more meaning than space does, then place should be, and really already is, the object of archaeological study.

In archaeology, the study of landscape is a very common avenue of anthropological inquiry. A landscape can be 'defined' (if a landscape can ever be truly defined) as interwoven sets of shared and individual places. So, by creating places, human beings create landscape for themselves. Technically, we can identify landscapes as sets of places within space. Although sometimes archaeologists make no mention of the word 'place' when talking about 'space,' the locales where they find artifacts are 'old places within space.'

According to Golledge and Stimson, the word *place* "implies a location and an integration of society, culture, and nature. It generates strong psychological and emotional links between people and places...Strong arguments have been put forward that people develop and respond to a sense of place, and it is this sense of place that identifies the felt coherence of features in a setting, as well as the feelings and emotions that the place generates" (Golledge and Stimson 1997:393). They go on to say that a sense of place deals with not just location and pattern, but "feelings of belonging, invasion, mystery, beauty, and fear." Cultural practice, then, helps to dictate the ways people evoke a sense of place. It is these feelings that give place meaning, and allow people to become attached to places. Place can be a very enriching, rewarding, and insightful focus in our archaeological sites, we just have to learn to stop being such calculating scientists for a moment and ask, 'If I were a colonial settler or enslaved laborer, living at this plantation in the wilderness, how would I feel? What would I need to make it? Would the effort to obtain food, natural resources, and other things make my perception of this place change? Would I want to stay here or leave?' I would ask if the land was more beautiful then? Was it a busy place, or a quiet place? Would it be a place of hunger or joyous feasts and festivities? As we tabulate our Colonoware, Chinese porcelain, postholes and pit features, are we, as historical archaeologists, concerned with these kinds of questions? If not, does the thought of using place as a

theoretical base make archaeology seem too personal and emotional, thus taking away from the scientific scrutiny we all strive for in the field and in the lab?

APPLYING PLACE-MAKING TO THE PAST AND PRESENT

One of the greatest tools we archaeologists have at our disposal is how exciting our jobs are to the public. Almost every person that has ever visited an archaeological site, met an archaeologist, or attended a conference or presentation, has had some kind of interest in archaeology or once wanted to be an archaeologist. “If I could do it all over again, I’d be an archaeologist,” is commonly heard from the middle-aged visitors of our sites. Our work is shown on public television, the evening news broadcasts, and on network cable channels. Why, then, does the public know so little about what our research questions, theoretical frameworks, and overall interpretive ideas are all about? Are our concepts so hard to understand? Historical archaeology is a field of bright theories and exciting artifacts and data, which make for new and increasingly important interpretations every year. But, how much of these important studies are getting out to the public? How do we get our studies out to the public and make them strong enough to stand on their own so that they can grab the public’s minds without the clutter of dull statistical analyses, overly descriptive field methods, and sometimes hard to understand theoretical frameworks and ponderings? This issue can be quite frustrating, especially when an archaeologist spends time explaining what they are doing, how they do it, what they found, and what it means, only to have a partially interested mother tell her daughter, “no, they aren’t finding any dinosaur bones here...maybe they are over there,” as she points to another excavation unit and archaeologist.

So, we have a bit of a problem. It appears that the public is being told that they need to be concerned with ‘space’ more so than ‘place’ (i.e., the internet community **myspace.com** allows people to occupy their own “space” online, when they are actually occupying a “place” in the vast expanse of “cyberspace”), and, they usually come away from our sites with the wrong impression (we are finding gold and dinosaur bones). The way to blend these two problems into one solution may lie in the archaeological exploration of place and place-making. Place-making is an important way to interpret the past because every single person on Earth today is deeply involved in place-making. When we clean our living room, plant nice flowers outside the front door, mend the roof, do the dishes, buy a new coffee table and knick-knacks to match, or even when we take a nap in the sun room, we are involved in place-making.

PLACE AS ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Throwing things out, getting new things, digging holes in the yard, and advancing and improving architecture are all actions that contribute to site formation processes. Therefore, the action of making a place, making that place more suitable and comfortable, and the work involved in the upkeep of that place *are* site formation processes. Golledge and Stimson reference place utility, which is the “value that individuals allocate to a place or the levels of satisfaction they would achieve by interacting with the place in some way—ranging from looking at it, to living on it, or exploiting it (1997:414). If ‘looking’, ‘living’, and ‘exploiting’ are elements of place utility, and these activities help people make, use, and maintain their places, then Schiffer’s (1977) transforms that comprise and explain site formation processes are nothing else but place-making and place utility. What makes this concept so exciting is that all people, everywhere today, have the ability to become connected to archaeology when they understand that the past we study is no different from today because our lives are consumed by place-making and place utility, just as people 250 (or 2,500) years ago were. If we convey to people that the things they do in their own environments are parts of place-making, and that the people in the past did the same things, which resulted in

the archaeological sites we excavate, then maybe the public would connect with our archaeology in ways they, or we, never thought of before. Why, then, are we so space-oriented in our studies, media, and entertainment? Does a focus on space keep us orderly, scholarly, and less individual?

If we explain our work as an attempt to gain a 'sense of place' from a site, the public will understand what that approach is because they already know it inherently. Place-making is the development of a sense of place. However, the physical result of throwing the trash out the backdoor of a brick manor house in the 1757 Carolina frontier, and the overall feeling of a cleaner, less foul smelling, neat, and orderly room are two different results—one tactile, one conceptual. The historical archaeologist can find the trash and learn from it clues about the daily lives of the people that once lived in that frontier setting, but those artifacts will not directly tell of how relieved the planter felt and how thankful he/she was for the house servant that disposed of the trash outside. The now clean great room may have then hosted a tea ceremony between new business partners, which later affected the lives of both the planter and his/her slaves. The act of throwing the trash out of the house resulted in the continuing development of the sense of place that the planting family was involved in. How do we recover that sense of place if it was only a feeling that was felt for a short while? Can we see it in the archaeological record?

SENSUOUS GEOGRAPHY AND PLACE-MAKING

Folklorist Kent Ryden explains that "for those who have developed a sense of place," there comes with it "an unseen layer of usage, memory and significance—an invisible landscape...of imaginative landmarks" (1993:40). So, with a sense of place comes elements of those places and landscapes that are cognitive; thus, invisible to the archaeologist. In my thesis (Agha 2004), I interpreted these invisible, imaginative landmarks on the landscape as sensuous perceptions experienced by the makers and utilizers of those places and landscapes in the past. Ryden continues, that "a knowledge of place is grounded in those aspects of the environment which we appreciate through the *senses* and through movement: color, texture, slope, quality of light, the feel of wind, the sounds and scents carried by that wind" (1993:38, emphasis mine). Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan writes that "[place] is a unique blend of sights, sounds, and smells," and that "the feel of a place is registered in one's muscles and bones" (1977:183-184). Paul Rodaway's book *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place*, focuses on how a human's five senses are pivotal in the "structuring of space and defining of place" (1994:4). These concepts and works are important when trying to gain an understanding of landscape and the places that composed them, due mainly to the fact that people throughout all time have used their five senses to make sense of their daily lives, the landscapes they live in, and the world around them. If it tastes bad, don't eat it. If it burns, don't touch it. If it looks pretty, get more of it. If it sounds good, open your ears. If it smells horrible, turn and leave. These sensual actions are both instinctual and learned. They could also be coined as just plain 'common sense.'

These common sense movements and motions are the actions that created place and sense of place on plantations in the eighteenth century. They are also the actions and sensations that may have forced the planter to push the slaves further from his/her home if the smells from the slave village were offensive, or if the sounds were annoying. If they were quiet, they may have been moved closer, where the planter could not only hear better, but see them easier. If we can locate the houses and activity areas based on material culture, but not the "imaginative landmarks" that comprised the conceptual boundaries of places within the plantation landscape, then how do we find these imaginary, invisible markers?

If we apply a sensuous geographic approach to the written record, and artifacts we find on plantation sites, then we may be able to better interpret the ranges and limits of the places that enslaved Africans constructed for themselves

within the plantation landscape. Our five senses help us to remember the qualities of certain places, help us to connect with landscapes local and foreign, and help us to reinforce our sense of groundedness for a place. Fredrick Douglass summarized the slave condition in terms of being grounded to a place:

The people of the North, and free people generally, I think, have less attachment to the places where they are born and brought up than had the slaves. Their freedom to come and go, to be here and there, as they list, prevents any extravagant attachment to any one place. On the other hand, the slave was a fixture, he had no choice, no goal but was pegged down to one single spot, and must take root there or die (1962:97, quoted in Gutman 1976).

How, then, did slaves become grounded? How did they have a sense of home or place if they were living under the institution of slavery—an institution based on war, fear, domination, and power—everyday of their lives? Once taken from everything they knew as ‘local,’ familiar, and common, would a person be able to create a place for themselves in a such a foreign environment?

PLACES WITHIN PLANTATION STRUCTURES

Creating place and working on it was probably the most definitive thing slaves were able to do on the plantation. Considering the voyage in the slave ships against their will, and the possibility of not being able to hold on to the way of life they once knew, one could interpret place-making as the ultimate form of resistance. Leland Ferguson suggests that the production of Colonoware, a low-fired earthenware primarily fashioned in the eighteenth century by enslaved peoples in the Lowcountry of Carolina, was a form of resistance, because when “people create their own culture in the face of slavery’s oppression they resist slavery” (1992:118). I interpret the creation and maintenance of place as culture, so that as slaves began to build houses and grow accustomed to their owner and his/her plantation, they made place, which in turn is cultural and therefore, resistance.

Charles Orser paints a somewhat grim but extremely important view of plantations, saying that “in a purely structural sense, slaves were both producers of labor and consumers of oppression” (1989:35). Although his discussion of utilizing the ‘mode of production’ concept is important when getting at the mechanics of what made the plantation function and generate capital, he alienates both the slaves and the planter from the places they made for themselves on the plantation, as he states: “A plantation, whether antebellum or postbellum, was created and maintained to increase the wealth of its owner...Plantations were economic institutions first and foremost” (Orser 1989:35).

Of course plantations were established to create wealth. Orser argues that to understand social relations on the plantation, the historical archaeologist must consider production (in the Marxian sense) (1989:37). However, according to Marx, human production and nature must be engaged in a “socially mediated mutual relationship” (Burkett 1999:29), where, firstly, people engage in relations with “one another, and only within these social connections and relations does their influence upon nature operate, i.e., does production take place” (Marx 1933:28).

I disagree with Orser. The planter was not only concerned about making money. The planter was also concerned about having a home, a family, a presence in the colony, not just creating wealth. If planters were only concerned with making a profit from their plantations, they would have left Carolina after they made their fortunes to go back to either Europe or the Caribbean. But they did not leave. Instead, they created a social class, a powerful political entity that rebelled against England, but most of all, they created families to carry on their legacy throughout the

decades and centuries. We know they did this because history and archaeology tells us so. We find the buried ruins of elaborate manors, the exquisite porcelains and other personal effects at the sites they once built and occupied. Are these artifacts not the byproduct of use—use, which denotes place utility? And, along with using these items, can we not imagine the fun times and grand entertaining that went along with dinner parties and the common ‘tea time?’ What of the pain felt from losing an entire crop, which may have resulted in leaving the plantation—the place that they worked hard to make that was important to their lives—and the possible demise of their family? The plantation, whether lived in, sold, or abandoned, represented the most important place in the planting family’s lives. That place was their home, and they would have worked just as hard on making a profit as they would have in crafting a sense of place on the plantation.

Jean Howson’s article *Social Relations and Material Culture* (1990) deals with the changing approaches to the material culture retrieved from slave settlements and their implications for new interpretations of slave culture. She argues that historical archaeologists need to explore the idea that artifacts should be in direct context with structures such as power/resistance and cultural separatism (Howson 1990:90). She then argues that artifacts “do not work well either as cultural markers or as status markers,” and, instead, interpretations of slave culture and plantation society should incorporate:

(1) an analysis of whether material change reflects the structure of power relations or social strategies and cultural recontextualization with the structure; (2) an understanding of how material things come to have meaning through specific and historically definable contexts of action; and (3) an exploration of how manipulation of material symbols helps to create and maintain particular interpretations of social reality (Howson 1990:24).

She ends her critique of the archaeology of plantation slavery by saying that archaeologists will be able to approach historical issues with a new perspective if we can obtain a “*more sophisticated* understanding of culture” (Howson 1990:91, emphasis mine).

Is culture not already ‘sophisticated’ enough? Do we actually tell the public that the artifacts we find are inextricably linked to the structures of power and resistance? Would the public understand the three focuses listed above, and then understand how we are using them and what we learn from those lines of inference? Howson’s points and calls to historical archaeology are valid, but once applied and considered, how do we then convey information like this to the public? What kinds of messages would the public interpret from this?

We must continue to pursue abstract theoretical structures so that we can continue to challenge our anthropologies when engaging in a relationship with the literature. I agree that we must question and consider all of Howson’s points, and many others from archaeologists writing along these lines, but we must also learn to take these theories and their applications to the data and literature, and convey them so that the public truly understands what we are doing and why. If we can apply theories like the modes of production or power and resistance to the reasoning behind place-making, then we will be able to convey these sometimes confusing theoretical ideas to the public by relating those processes to how places are made.

APPLYING SENSUOUS GEOGRAPHY TO HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

By utilizing the sensuous geography approach when rereading the historical literature and considering the material culture found at slave settlements, I was able to show that slaves would have used their five senses in place-making.

This allows for a richer interpretation of not only how slaves would have made place for themselves, but slave life in general. In my thesis (Agha 2004), I discuss in detail all five senses and how they would apply to the historic literature and historical archaeology on plantations. For the sake of length, I am only briefly discussing two of the five senses (sight and smell) in this paper. These two, short examples show how the sensual perceptions of the past were linked to the material culture and written record we recover in our studies (for a more thorough description of all five senses, see Agha 2004).

Sight. Vision is probably the most dominant sense we have. Sight allows us to place recognized objects into context with each other in space. Slaves would have had a vantage point over the fields from either their cabins, the causeway road, or other areas of work on the plantation. People on the plantation may have been concerned with what they could and could not see. For instance, the planter may have wanted the cabins to be within eyesight, so that he/she could keep a steady eye on their every move. If the slaves could also see the manor house, how would it have affected their idea of place? Would their place, their home, be filled with uncomfortable feelings, uneasiness, or paranoia? If the slave wanted to do something out of the planter's sight, would they feel empowered? Would the place the action occurred at carry new meaning or importance? How would that hidden act then effect the slaves' lives when they interacted within that place?

Smell. Probably the most powerful senses we have are the taste-smell system. Geographers argue that being able to smell and recognize scents not only orients people spatially, but it also helps people evoke and remember places (Rodaway 1994:68). Slaves had at their disposal numerous foods and herbs/spices (Genovese 1972, Stewart 1996). These foods were a blend of African native spices, root crops, and grains; and, North American mammals, fish and shellfish, and birds, and other grains and root crops that were European in origin. The dishes that were created had the taste of home—a new plantation home and an ancestral, distant home (Agha 2004:67).

Food is not cooked for 24 hours, so once the pot was pulled off the fire and served, the scents drift and fade, only to be experienced again later that day or the next. These scents can help people create memories about a particular event or place. The smells of the wood fire would have also helped people to connect with the village spatially, especially if the planter's house had no outdoor fire burning on a regular basis. That wood fire smell would have been associated with the slaves. Eating would probably have been a communal event, with slaves sharing and gathering "around the pot" to enjoy in each other's company (Joyner 1999:74). Archaeological examples of early to mid-eighteenth century house-yards show that internal fireplaces were a rarity, with most of the fire-related activities taking place around a main fire in the yard (Ferguson 1992, Adams 2001, Armstrong 1999).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NARRATIVE BRIDGING THE GAP

As we find artifacts from slave villages, we find evidence of place-making and place utility. The evidence of mud-walled or pier-raised houses, Colonoware bowl and jar fragments, pit features that contain personal items, fence lines from the edge of the yard, raccoon and pig bones, bottle glass, and everything else helps us to understand how slaves not only made sense of their daily world—the world of slavery—but how they were able to make a place for themselves in a foreign land that was owned by foreign people. Robert Ascher and Charles Fairbanks, in their pioneering study of slavery at Cumberland Island, Georgia, referred to these kinds of material culture as being a "soundtrack" that would allow one to "discover and convey a sense of daily life as it might have been experienced by the people" who lived in the slave cabins they excavated (1971:3). Few other archaeologists have attempted to capture this essence through writing narratives. Leland Ferguson's prologue to his book on Lowcountry slavery, *Uncommon Ground*, and woven into the chapters of Brian Crane's (1993) dissertation on slave made pottery, are

attempts at narratives, or stories, that are based almost primarily on the written historical record and archaeological data. An entire Society for Historical Archaeology journal entitled *Archaeologists as Storytellers* (Praetzellis and Praetzellis, eds. 1998) was dedicated to the exploration of archaeological narrative. If we can take our data and apply it to place-making in the form of a narrative, then would the public be able to grasp our concepts, ideas, interpretations, and most importantly, our goals, better? Or, would our attempts at such literature be ridiculed by the 'hard-scientist' archaeologists who think the data should speak for itself? To summarize how important place was, and how crucial the five senses were in the creation and upkeep of meaningful places, I will use narrative to describe how a slave could have made place on the plantation.

Wednesday, August 20, 1755.

Cesar was hot. He knew today was going to be muggy, but he never imagined it would have been like this. Just two more rows to hoe, and he could call it a day. At least, for the field. He still had to help his wife Rachell mend their clothes, since she had to hoe in the fields too. He figured he'd be able to finish before her, and that he might have a chance to plan the evening hunt with his uncle. His hands hurt from the sweat in his palm and the wet wood of the hoe. The sun beat down hard on his back. He only hoped that his house would be cool tonight. A break before the hot day tomorrow. The heat and humidity made Cesar hate the field a little more today, and the women's field songs in the distance did little to stir his spirit and give him strength to get through these last two rows of rice. He had already spent too long, and was upset that the heat made him lethargic and slow to finish his task on time today. After another hour, he was done. He walked immediately to his water pail, it now full of warm water and a few dead insects. He scooped them out and took a big drink. It didn't matter if it was warm, it gave him his strength back and would do until he could get some food in him. It at least washed the salt taste out of his mouth. He began the half-mile trek back to his village. He found the patch of lilies he saw that morning on the walk to work, and picked a bunch for Susan, the field girl who cut her shin badly while hoeing the day before. He also picked some for Rachell. Samuel, the planter, had thrown out a wine bottle after he dropped it at dinner three nights before. Cesar found an old broken quartz cobble that had a rough exterior today while hoeing, and he could use it to file down what was left of the broken neck of that bottle. It would make a fine make shift vase for the lilies, he thought.

As he neared the village, he saw more smoke than usual rising from the oaks near their houses. He worried, but realized that it was not trouble since he would have heard shouting if it really was a house fire. Along with the smoke, he could smell the stew that the elders were cooking that day. Smells like home, he thought. This pleasant scent made him realize that he could smell his own sweat, which bothered him now, but at least he could wash up a little once behind the cover of shade. He could barely make out the elders' conversations at this distance. There was about five hours of light left, enough to get his house chores done, eat, clean himself up, and gather what he needed for the hunt. Mostly, he wanted to eat. He was close enough to the village now that he could see the children picking up the now dry, loose wood that got knocked down in the storm from last week. Maybe there would be a pot firing soon, he wondered, but with all the rain, the pots have not been drying out well. It didn't help that there were muggy days like this either.

At last, he was home. He put his hoe down outside and walked into his two-room abode. He sat on the bench and rubbed his foot. He leaned back against the surprisingly cool, clay wall. The sun never hit this wall, and this bench was his favorite spot, and first stop-off from the field, during the summer months. After a minute or two, he walked outside and back into the sun again. He grabbed the broken bottle off the ground near the door, pulled the cracked cobble out of his pocket, and began to grind down the neck. After a minute, he put some fresher water and the lilies in his new vase, and set them by the back window on a table where Rachell would see them when she got home. They immediately brightened up the room. He went back out, and ran to give Susan the rest of the flowers. She thanked him with a quiet smile. With his wooden bowl, he first spooned some potato fufu into it, then some stew

from the clay pot his aunt made months before, sat down away from the fire, and ate. Extra spicy today, he grinned. He glanced across the yard to Ben's house, and saw that no one was there. Ben acted out against their driver two days ago and was beat hard, right up against his own house. A month ago, Ben had lost his wife to a horrible illness she contracted after she had accidentally put her hoe into a ground hornet's nest while preparing their late summer garden. Ben had been angry for a while now, but every man eventually has his breaking point. Cesar could hardly look at that wall of the house now, after the driver made everyone nearby watch as he beat Ben for over 15 straight minutes. Afterwards, Ben was picked up and taken to Samuel's manor house, and no one has seen him since.

Who would live there now? Will Ben come back? At that thought, he heard a horrific cry of a child next door. The poor little boy, he thought; he might not make it to be one year old. These thoughts made Cesar resent this place, this village that they all worked hard to build. His stew was getting cold, and he really wasn't hungry anymore, even though he should have had three bowls after how hard he worked that day. Just as he got up, some clouds broke the sun for a moment—the first clouds all day. He sighed a heavy sigh, washed his bowl, returned it to his table inside, and walked over to sit on the fence by the path his wife would be traveling. Minutes later, she came. He was relieved to see her, but upset he didn't get to talk with his uncle. He told her this, but she wasn't upset. Instead, she told him to talk while she ate. He helped her with her water pail and they went into their home. She saw the flowers and gave him a thankful hug. He smiled, not just at her, but at himself for being so clever to save that bottle. Back outside, two five year-olds ran by, smelling like playtime. He yelled at them to get home to clean up and eat. Their mothers were following slowly behind, not as worried about their kids as they were about their conversation. Ben shook his head, knowing that when he had children, he would care more about such things.

The sun was setting. He mended his pants and hat with Rachell quickly, but not without breaking their only needle. She scolded him lovingly as he got up to get ready. Minutes later, he had his rifle, a piece of smoked venison for a snack, and his uncle at his side, sharing the water ladle. They would hunt for about three hours, maybe finding a doe along a new deer trail his uncle identified a week ago. They returned with only an opossum. He left it to his uncle to clean and then headed home. Finally, he got to wash off. The water was a little cooler now, and it felt good. He did not bathe in the last few days, but after today, it was the cooling rather than cleaning effect he desired. He joined his already sleeping wife and thought to himself before falling asleep. Despite the problems with Ben being gone, and the recent string of injuries, accidents, and illnesses, he was thankful for he and his wife's health and safety. He couldn't let such things worry him. He had to stay strong to stay working, and he had to keep his mind sharp to take advantage of things, like that broken bottle he had saved from the trash pit. He couldn't help but think of the day when the planter's wrath might come down on him, for reasons he might never know or understand. This helped to balance his thoughts and left him content, knowing that tomorrow was another day, and that he would try to do his best for his wife, his home, his community, the rice crops he tended, and of course, he would do his best for Samuel.

This story shows how Cesar's five senses helped him to connect with places on the plantation. His awareness of heat while working made him hate the field, equating pain and discomfort with his place of work. The sounds from the village and elsewhere in the field allow him to spatially connect with other places on the plantation, furthering his development of the plantation landscape. The smells and tastes bring both delight and annoyance. They alert him from a distance, and bother him when they do not fade. The introduction of flowers not only helps the eye, they give off an overall good feeling, or as we say today, they "brighten up the place," even though that phrase has little to do with light. Knowing that pain and violence is now associated with a place also changes the way Cesar, and everyone else, might have thought about their own places.

REFLECTION

The above narrative is obviously a piece of fiction. However, this scenario is not unbelievable. In fact, some of the things that Cesar did I myself did recently. Walking back to the truck after a good day of excavation, I remembered a patch of lilies on the side of the dirt road and picked some for my wife. I had nothing to put them in, so one generous member of my crew lent me his water bottle to use as a make shift vase for the ride home. I did not include the story about the lilies in my narrative about Cesar because of a personal event in my life. I included it because I imagine that ‘Cesar’ was in love with his wife. Whether free or enslaved, love is a power that no institution, no matter how crippling or horrible, can ever be taken away from a person. People throughout all history were capable of kind acts. Cesar’s story, if the scenery and time period were different, could happen today: a man goes to work, has a hard day, feels tired, goes home, finds something nice for his wife, deals with the hardships of their everyday lives, eats, engages in some kind of enjoyable activity (even if it is just thinking about something enjoyable), finds a level of comfort amidst their living condition, ponders the wrongdoings in today’s society, and goes to sleep; only to do almost all of the same things again tomorrow.

The excavation at a slave village may uncover the curved strap iron fragment to an unidentifiable object, pottery sherds of Colonoware and Euro-American manufacture, fire pits filled with the remnants of cinders and burned bones, glass bottle fragments, hoe blades and other tools, post holes for fences, and remains of mud-walled houses. We find these items frequently. All of these items played a role in the narrative above. The children that Cesar yelled at may have been throwing sherds of different colors at each other, or used them in a quick made up game. What if the sherds consisted of polychrome handpainted Delft, dark green Whieldon ware, Jackfield sugar bowl, dark blue Westerwald, and a combed and trailed Staffordshire Slipware? What if these sherds were found during the excavation of a cabin’s yard? Would the archaeologist interpret the Euro-American (some high-end) sherds as evidence of hand-me-downs from a generous planter? Or, did children pick up the sherds from around the kitchen where they originated and use them for all sorts of things because they were colorful? Was the strap iron part of Cesar’s water bucket? Is the row of postholes interpreted as a fence the same fence he sat on? Has an archaeologist found the bottle he changed into a vase, or the sewing needle he broke?

Political ecologist Arturo Escobar (2001) questioned why place has taken a back seat to the study of space in his article, *Culture sits in places: reflections on globalism and subaltern strategies of localization*. He notes how “Western philosophy...has enshrined space as the absolute, unlimited and universal, while banning place to the realm of the particular, the limited, the local, and the bound” (Escobar 2001:143). Escobar summarizes Arif Dirlik’s (1998, 2000) descriptions of space and place in terms of globalization, where “the global is often equated with space, capital, history and agency, and the local with place, labor, and tradition” (Escobar 2001:141). Taking Escobar’s concerns and feelings about the importance of place in the social sciences, I too feel that his words are directly applicable to the field of historical archaeology; especially, to the study of how enslaved Africans applied cultural memory to the landscapes of the New World—the landscapes born from colonization—in order to create a new, Creole landscape that was filled with important places. These important places were influenced by the social orders, ideologies, and power structures (i.e., slavery, capitalism, the plantation system, etc.) that were in place and applied during the colonization of Carolina. With these structures in place, slaves could then resist against them.

What makes the utilization of place, place-making, and place utility so exciting to the field of historical archaeology is that we can examine how the historical forms of plantation society effected peoples daily lives, and then examine how those people responded to the forms through the places they created, lived in, and maintained. This brings the cultural and social resistance to these structures into places, where they were then dealt with. This also brings the person who works hard on maintaining a sense of place today down to earth with the people who also did the same

thing in the past. I believe that place studies will take our archaeology into new directions when we deal with the hard issues and realities of Lowcountry slavery.

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