DOES SENSE OF PLACE STILL EXIST?

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ABSTRACT

In this article* my aim is to discuss place, locality and their role and changed significance in the ethnological studies. I argue that although the meaning and role of place have been changed, place still is an important concept in ethnology. Researches are now paying more attention to the changed nature of the concept, e.g. for the multivocality of places. The anthropological literature on space and place forms my theoretical framework, with which I study some empiric cases from my familiar environment, from Finnish Lapland and from Kola Peninsula.

'Place', in my examples the *sieidi* of Taatsi, Lake Seidjavr, the Pallas fells or the tourist centre Levi, can have a unique reality for each inhabitant and visitor. While the meanings may be shared with others, the views of the place are often likely to be competing, and contested in practice. According to Margaret Rodman (2004: 207), researchers should empower place by returning control over meanings of place to the rightful producers, and empower their own analysis of place by attending to the multiplicity of local voices found about place.

KEYWORDS: place • locality • Lapland • landscape • tourism

INTRODUCTION

My home landscape, the landscape I saw through my window as a child, opens towards a small lake. This type of lake is called '*lompolo*' in Lapland. Behind this landscape of lompolo, the horizon is chained with fells. Part of this chain of fells consists of the Pallas fells, which in 1994 were selected as one of the 27 national landscapes in Finland by their environmental administration. The selection of national landscapes was part of the 75th jubilee year of Finland's independence. National landscapes are landscapes which reflect the national identity by encapsulating the special characteristics of the nation. The concept 'national landscape' is emotionally charged and has strong symbolical value. This concept is historically connected with literature and fine arts from the era of national romanticism. Therefore, these national landscapes are considered as an important part of national culture, history and the image of nature. The landscapes selected by Finland's environmental administration represent the features of Finnish nature and

culture and the use of land by the most important sources of livelihood and their effects on landscape in different parts of Finland. Most national landscapes are located in the southern part of the country. In addition to the Pallas fells only two other areas, i.e. Utsjoki valley, and Aavasaksa and Tornionjoki valley were selected as national landscapes in Lapland.

In this article my aim is to discuss place, locality and their role and changed significance in ethnological studies. I argue that although the meaning and role of place have been changed, place still is an important concept in ethnology. Researchers are now paying more attention to the changed nature of the concept, e.g. for the multivocality of places. The anthropological literature on space and place forms my theoretical framework, with which I study some empiric cases from my familiar environment, from Finnish Lapland and from the Kola Peninsula.

CONCEPTIONS OF PLACE

Conceptions of place are formed by the society we live in. The emotional relationship between a person and a place is called a *sense of place*. 'Place' has traditionally belonged to the core of Finnish ethnological research. The concept of place is still important, but its meaning as well as the themes for research has changed in the last few years. Even the society we study has gone through several changes. Ethnologist Johanna Rolshoven (2003: 213) writes that cultures do not simply occupy space but produce, design and maintain it. Therefore, space becomes a central notion in the ethnography of everyday life. It can evolve from a concept to a tool for contextualizing knowledge from fieldwork. Globalization as well as time and space, which are becoming denser, are challenging our perceptions about place. Cultural globalization creates new trans-local spaces and forms of public culture embedded in the imagination of people dissolving notions of state-based territoriality. (Gupta, Ferguson 2002: 65, 67; Low, Lawrence-Zúñiga 2004: 25)

Interest in spatial issues, space and place has continued in ethnology and anthropology. The environment has become an arena of different discourses and views, and it is not seen only as a geographic location of, or background for everyday life. It is a complex structure consisting of time-stratified meaningful experiences. (See, e.g. Åström & Korkiakangas 2004: 15) The focus on spatial issues has liberated and challenged ethnologists and anthropologists in terms of examining cultural phenomena that are not fixed in isolated locations, but surround us where we live and work. Studies of nation and identity, border issues and migration, mobility and home, and multilateral and global phenomena are drawing attention to spatial dimensions. Interest in space and place is necessary in terms of understanding the world we are constructing and producing, and of being able to participate in the discussion in our disciplines and in/about society. This is also our duty.

Globalisation, as migration processes in general, changes the relationship between the local and the global. It shapes the significance attached to place and the way it is understood by making us rethink and re-conceptualise our understandings of culture in spatial ways. On the other hand, awaking and strengthening of ethnicity is seen as a counterforce to the standardising impact of globalisation. Ethnicity is used as a starting

point for creating and showing cultural differences. This process is based on the existence of borders between separate groups and the ethnic groups are defined in relation to each other.

The significance of place and locality in ethnology has been considered, e.g. by Barbro Blehr (2000). First of all, locality used to be characterised by non-anonymity, familiarity and several overlapping relationships between the members. The members knew each other and had connections with each other in a variety of ways. An example of these connections is gossiping. Secondly, locality was closely connected with the environment, i.e. places and physical environments in general. A case in point is how place has been utilised in natural sources of livelihood. This type of activity creates a strong connection between people and their physical environment. Thirdly, locality was characterised by history between people and place. This history was used as a basis for making a difference, e.g. between indigenous people and people who had moved in; in Russia people who have moved from other parts of Russia are called *prishlyje ljudi*. An example from Finland is the group of Sámi who either moved or were born in southern Finland. These people are called city-Sámi and also their association has the same name. The term city-Sámi is inherently multi-local, since the Sámi are traditionally localised in the north, whereas the word 'city' refers to their present place of living in southern Finland. Fourthly, locality is characterised by cliquishness, self-satisfaction and/or inability to handle unfamiliar issues. These four characteristics presume the creation of a distinct culture as an outcome of locality. As globalisation and modernisation processes shake these preconditions for communities, they also change place and locality and our perceptions of them.

CHALLENGES OF DETERRITORIALISM

Migrations and phenomena like globalisation have challenged our conceptions of the static and homogeneous, of one genuine culture and one place. In other words, relationships and connections are created on the basis of different preconditions as earlier. Culture is not connected with one society or state since the meaning of geographical borders has disappeared in the process of adopting influences across borders. Culture is seen as a flow and process, not as essence and stability. It is a creative practice, a process of combining elements adopted from a variety of sources. This insight of culture is characterised by hybridisation and creolisation. These concepts are used to portray specific features typical of the process of culture. Hybridisation refers to the fact that there is no cultural purity or ethnic absolutism but everything is borrowed from some source. Creolisation, on the other hand, refers to the process, where historically and culturally separate cultural features have been mixed with each other. This process has produced new cultural combinations and new versions of these combinations (Hannerz 1992: 5; Hall 1999: 71).

In some parts of the world and for some people everyday life has become multi-local or international because of increased mobility. People, phenomena and issues increasingly cross borders and identities, and de-terrorialism has increased everywhere. Therefore, culture cannot be anchored in a particular place and we cannot take it for granted that people would be committed to one place only. Yet, this does not mean

that people do not have anything in common anymore or that place would lose its significance (Gupta, Ferguson 2002: 70). Further, life lived locally does not end, but new forms, versions and possibilities of locality are created. As a consequence, 'place' should not be understood only in the physical or integrated sense, as separate and stable but the concept should be completed with ideas of a meeting place, where connections, relationships, impacts and movements are intertwined with each other (Massey 2002: 55). Instead of local communities, there are imagined communities, where it is not necessary for people to live close to each other, know each other or have contact with each other (Anderson 1983: 6–7).

Changed ideas about place and locality and the changed significations of place are also reflected in ethnologic studies (cf. Hauser-Schäublin, Braukämper 2003: 11–13). Therefore, we can ask, whether individual places still have particularity as part of the "global village". If they do, is this particularity based on the same features as earlier? Further, do our conceptions of places and localities make any sense, when we consider the hybridisation of cultures, international migrations and internationalisation of economics? Do increasing mobility and internationalisation and the related feelings of an unstable and insecure world make people question the prevailing conceptions of place and long for the old, familiar and safe place even more?

The framing of questions in regard to place and locality has changed. Studies charting and examining cultural areas have been replaced by studies which focus on mobility, multi-locality, trans-nationalism, the phenomenon of second-home, modern mobile identities, transit-spaces or non-places and gendered space and place[1]. Regional or local identity used to be an easily definable target, because cultures were considered and perceived to be local. Identities were understood as anchored in only one location, in the home region. From the essentialist perspective identity was considered complete and stable from "the cradle to the grave".

The meaning of place has changed but place, region and local identity still have great, though different, significance; they show themselves as heterogeneous, changing and progressive. These new features also produce new targets for research, e.g. productisation of culture both in general and locally and the questions related to this process. The effects of the integration process in Europe can also be considered as a trend towards "Europe of areas", where the focus is shifted from nation states to regions. Local and regional targets of study are also related to the stronger impact universities have on society, which results in studies ordered by the environment or in studies considered important by the environment. However, this new role of the universities can also involve conflicts; in other words, either the commissioner or the target of study may desire to attach nostalgia to the issue. In other words, as Seppo Knuuttila (1994: 124) has pointed out the object of study can be regarded as the past in the present. Thus, to express it a provocative way, an area can be made into a "museum" which complies with the illusions and stereotypes of the past. E.g. Lapland and its culture are often expected to be represented as a place which modernisation and development have not yet touched. In this way, the inhabitants of the area are marginalised, because they are not allowed to live their own, modern life on the basis of their own choices, since this does not fit the image outsiders have of this area and its everyday life.

What can be done in this changed situation? One possibility is to regard place in terms of positioning, motion and process, where something takes place or where something is positioned. Alternatively, we can accept the fact that locality can and is changing in a variety of ways. (Blehr 2000: 7) Another approach is provided by a cultural anthropologist, Arjan Appaduarin. According to him locality can be problematised by questioning how local commitment and local identity are recreated or rather by questioning the fact that locally lived life is identified as something special. In Appadurai's (1996: 178) terms locality is relational and contextual, but this does not, in particular, refer to a specific size, definition or place but to relationships within locality and its relationship with others.

At present, a variety of factors make people move from one place to another. Many people have changed their domicile or country either because the circumstances have forced them to, e.g. refugees or out of their free will. Sociologist Alberto Melucci's (1992: 196) term 'post-modern nomads' comprises the idea that identities are in constant motion, because people have to define who they really are over and over again. In addition, people have several identities, some of which are situational, some overlapping or more permanent. An important question is, whether the romantic conception of place, e.g. of the home district, is particularly characteristic of people who are able to leave it behind. An ability to leave home, travel somewhere and return can be as fundamental for identity as attachment to a particular place. Some people reach their identity by escaping the restrictions attached to a place (Massey 2003: 70–71). Consciousness of identity may be awakened only after moving away or in new, revolutionary situations. A common, former home with its shared history and memories acts as a connecting symbol for all people living in diaspora despite the fact that their relation with the former home may be different from that of the other members (Bauman 1996: 36–40; Gupta, Ferguson 2002: 67).

Even the theoretical perspectives related to culture have gradually changed from acculturation and assimilation into regarding culture as a process. The studies do not aim at finding genuine, indigenous features but culture is seen as a process of mixing influences from the outside world and it does not exist in a void. Many researchers have searched for new ways of analysing this situation, where cultures and identities are no longer homogeneous or static and have no clear boundaries anchored in a region or in time, but are instead in constant change. For example, Appadurai (1996: 33) has developed a model to describe globalisation which consists of five different types of flows and their relations: ethnoscape, mediascape, technoscape, financescape and ideoscape. In particular, ethnoscape is interesting from the perspective of the present situation. Ethnoscape comprises groups of people in motion such as refugees, immigrants and tourists. They bring to their old homes new ideas, customs and also the currency they have earned and they take to their new homes cultural features, traditions and values from their former home.

An applicable approach to the relationship between culture, place and identity is provided by the concept of diaspora. This concept has recently been broadened to include a specific type of dispersion of peoples, where people are either unable or unwilling to return to places they have been forced to leave. Therefore, they need to be recon-

ciled with new and 'stronger' cultures. In this new environment they have constructed new cultural identities by combining features from their own and other cultural repertoires (Inda & Rosaldo 2002: 30; Kokot 2002: 95–97). In addition to diaspora caused by traumatic or dramatic reasons (diaspora of terror and diaspora of despair), Appadurai (1996: 6) speaks about diaspora of hope, in which people have left their former home to look for a job and livelihood from somewhere else.

In this broader sense diaspora may provide an alternative way of considering imaginary communities both within and beyond nation states. The idea of diaspora challenges the traditional way of anchoring place in culture and identity, because at the imaginary level it includes several different places. The relationship of diaspora with culture, identity and place provides an opportunity to be at home in a variety of places in the same way as people today have connections with different places and homes (Grossberg 1997: 360–361; Hall 2003: 122).

INSCRIBED PLACES AND LANDSCAPES

The concepts of landscape and place are frequently used in ethnology to describe settings pertinent to ethnography. A landscape is understood either as an area, which is limited by certain criteria, an object of protection or planning or as part of the subjective experience world. Ethnological studies emphasise that landscape is both in our minds and a physical reality. Therefore, the studies should focus on the relationship between the physical and mental landscape.

It was mentioned above that the concept of national landscape is important in marketing these places, because national landscape sells well in tourism. National landscape does not have any administrative significance, e.g. this label places no restrictions on the use of the landscape. It only brings additional value to marketing. Tourism industry has major significance in today's Lapland, since it is regarded as the only dynamic source of livelihood there. The logic of movement is provided by the tourism industries, which create tourist sites and locations. Locals and people who have arrived either to spend their free time or because of work meet in tourist centres which consequently turn into trans-localities. Many marriages have been contracted between local men and women who work in the tourist industry (Ruotsala 2002: 313). In addition to leisure and everyday life, child care, school attendance or political activities bring together people who originally come from different places.

Modern tourists expect entertainment, activities and new experiences. As a consequence, new modes of tourism have been introduced, e.g. cultural tourism, eco-tourism, sustainable tourism, and even ethno-tourism. An increasing number of tourists, who come to Lapland, are, in particular, attracted by the idea of experiencing the wilderness, but also by the idealised images of traditional indigenous cultures. On the other hand, tourism is also an important source of income for local people, and native leaders and politicians stress that locals should have control over the tourism in their areas instead of the southern or international companies who use indigenous people as a marketing strategy and as illustrations in their brochures (Nuttall 1998).

The northern landscape includes several "supernatural" elements, which have influenced the culture until the present day but the rational worldview is replacing them.

Nonetheless, a cautious attitude is still taken towards certain places and things. The relationship between human beings and the environment has always been reciprocal. The way the environment and its resources are used has an impact on the future of the environment and thereby on people's survival. Therefore, the environment should not be destroyed because people's future depends on it and we have to secure our future. E.g., earlier when the people offered natural products, as fish and reindeer, at their sacred places to the powers of nature, it can be regarded as a symbolic act of returning back nature's gifts. The environment and landscape have a very deep impact on people and they leave traces in our minds. In studies on the influence of culture on our experiences of landscape or place, the physical landscape turns into an experimental phenomenon, an individual experience of nature which is experienced through many senses.

There are different ways to see, look at and experience landscape and there are different classifications regarding the Sámi landscape, which has become a target of increased tourism. First, there is historical landscape, i.e. historical sites and artefacts give information about the dwelling and economic history, different sources of livelihood and ways of living. Secondly, magic landscape refers to places with magic, ritual and religious practices. Sacrificial sites can be formed either by a human being or nature, but they always carry a ritual meaning. Thirdly, mythical landscape has connections with the origins of the environment or landscape – why the place has become what it is. Mythical and magic landscapes differ in relation to rituals, i.e. mythical landscape does not have any connection to ritual practices. Ethnologist Rolf Kjellström (2000: 66–68) emphasises the emotional features in experiencing the landscape. He speaks about historical, magical and even emotional landscapes. In his view, sacred places of worship and memories related to the specific events are part of historical landscape.

Political landscape refers to the strategic and conscious use of the symbolic meanings and resources of the landscape or environment. It is also used to manifest collective, ethnic or political identity. This political dimension is becoming more important in the manifestation of ethnic identity and in the struggle for rights to land and waters which is carried out in Sápmi. So, the landscape also includes reversed and competing meanings. In some places it even transforms to a contested landscape. The important question is who has right to its resources and who has the power to make decisions in regard to landscape.

Kjellström (2000: 68), among others, argues that religious sites have been used longer than literature and other sources give us to understand. Sacred places are still powerful and ritual practices might have been carried out until present days in some places. However, these rituals are not usually talked about or mentioned to outsiders. I have heard hints and comments, which confirm Kjellström's claim, during my field work on the Kola Peninsula in Russia. A case in point is Lake *Seidjavr*, Seidozero situated near Lovozero, which is the biggest Sámi village in Russia. It is even today an essential part of the mental landscape of the local Sámi and one of their sacred places. The local discourse includes rules about how to behave there, e.g. women were not allowed to stay overnight at Seidjavr and this is always mentioned, when non-local people visit the place. When I was there for the first time, I lost my silver earring during the excursion. Later, when I noticed this, a local friend told me that *Seidjavr* wanted a sacrifice from me and now I am allowed to return there.

In conclusion, sites are identified both verbally and spatially. The norms and stories

connected to sacred places provide a way to maintain locality against others. Space and time are socialised and localised through complex and deliberate practices of performance, representation, and action. These practices have been either cosmological or ritual (Cf. Appadurai 1996: 180). Thus, e.g. sacrificing rituals can be regarded as spatio-temporal production of locality.

FROM MYTHICAL PLACES TO 'NON-PLACES'

A landscape or a site is experienced in different ways depending on whether it is looked at by a local or visitor. A place, which belongs to mythical landscape and has significance because it conveys meanings of our past and origin, can be deprived of these meanings and become a purely exotic *tourismscape* for outsiders, the landscape of tourists. As a consequence, places have become multi-vocal and this multi-vocality often involves multi-locality. According to Margaret C. Rodman (2004: 214–215), polysemic places bespeak people's practices, their history, their conflicts and their accomplishments. Narratives of places are not mediated with words only; in addition to speech and hearing they can be told and heard with other senses as well. Such narratives deploy, e.g. an image of a rock that was situated near the place, smells, like the smell of spring in Lapland, brawling of home rapids or murmur of trees in the wind.

Ethnologist Marc Augé (1994: 92) perceives a trend in the present physical and mental travelling. In his view, this process demonstrates the placelessness and homelessness of the post-modern era. These kinds of transit-places include, e.g. motor ways, airports, high speed trains, business, tourist and congress centres and refugee camps. These places are not defined on the basis of reminiscences; neither do they have a specific identity (cf. Obrecht 1998: 87–89, 102–103). In addition, they are not intended as permanent places for their users or visitors, but they are characterised by temporariness. Some old villages in Lapland have developed into transit-places with seemingly no history and identity and with the same brands and business chains as elsewhere in Finland or in Europe. In effect, these places have their history but it has been wiped off into invisibility because of the rapid development and construction work there.

According to ethnologist Wolfgang Kaschuba (2004: 185), post-modern transit-places and non-places in the world can be viewed as from the flight deck of an airplane where landscapes pass rapidly forward. When the speed increases, it becomes difficult to perceive details. Similarly, I can view the tourist centre of Levi in the village of Sirkka in Kittilä through the car window, when I travel through the village to my own home landscape. Levi has become one of these transit-places and one can ask, whether it has anything else that can be considered local than the fell Levi. In the 1990s they even considered changing the name of the municipality into Levi, because they were afraid that the tourists would get lost on the way. There are over 20,000 beds in the tourist centre of Levi and the village of Sirkka has a few hundreds of inhabitants and the whole municipality about 5,000 inhabitants. When I return to the north annually, I do not recognise the roads, routes and places, because every year they build new roads, bypasses, roundabouts, hotels, restaurants and a variety of shops, blocks or whole villages of cabins there. The buildings resemble each other both in other tourist centres in Lapland and in the Alps. In addition to snag pine cabins, chalets typical of the Alps

have been constructed on the slopes of Levi. To find a cabin among identical cabins and cabin areas the roads have been given names. The names used, e.g. Rakkavaara, give a piquant, local and exotic label on the tourist centre, because the old vocabulary, related to the nature and the landscape, has been used in the nomenclature.

This development raises a lot of questions. The workers in the tourist centres mainly come from other parts of Finland, mostly from the home districts of the customers. It remains to be seen how many of these workers will commit themselves to this place. If they do, how long is this process of commitment going to take? Or should they be considered multi-local? Another issue is the attitude of the locals; how do they feel about this new development? The tourist products are mainly based on local culture but do the locals identify them as their own?

'LAPP BAPTISM'

An extreme example of a 'local' cultural programme, which is offered to tourists, is the so-called *lapinkaste*, 'Lapp baptism'. The name 'Lapp baptism' refers to some kind of a rite of passage. In Lapland you can also purchase a diploma or a certificate of crossing the Arctic Circle or visiting the North Cape, the northernmost place in the European continent. The Arctic Circle is an example of a non-political, non-national boundary, which is widely used as a tourist attraction – not only in Finland, Norway and Sweden, but also in Alaska. As Dallen J. Timothy (2001) puts it "lines of time and position on the earth, while not necessarily forms of political boundaries, are borders between temporal and spatial element of the human experience. Demarcated lines of longitude and latitude signify temporal differences between, and define the locations of places. Like borders, these lines in many cases wield significant tourist appeal in communities throughout the world."

'Lapp baptism' is an invented tradition (about invented traditions, see Hobsbawm 1983) created to give a playful experience to tourists. It has been transformed into an invented form without any proper model and it has nothing to do with local or Sámi culture. There are different variations of it but they all have ceremonial characteristics. It is usual to alarm and tease the participants both verbally and physically. They are, e.g. told about shamans and wizards, and the ceremonial master puts an ice cube on their neck or their eyes are tied so they cannot see the place or the ceremony. Other common elements, such as marking and drinking can also be frightening. Some of the performers pretend to cut a mark on the ear with a *leuku*, a big knife, as in branding a reindeer calf. (In fact, reindeer calves are marked with a smaller knife, not with a *leuku*). At the end of the ceremony, the tourists share a drink, which is said to be reindeer milk, but which often tastes bad, salty and acidic. It is also common that the ceremonial master is dressed up in a Sámi dress, *gákti* – or supposed Sámi costume – or leather clothes.

This product called as 'Lapp baptism' is widely provided for tourists in different places in Finnish Lapland, but not in other parts of Sápmi. It is even given at the *sieidi* of Taatsi, which is situated 60 kilometres from Levi tourist centre. *Sieidi* is a natural object that is worshipped and *sieidi*-stones are shaped through erosion by water, ice and wind. The *sieidi* of Taatsi is huge; over 2–3 meters high, a narrow stone construction on a bank of a narrow lake. On its left side, there is a place called the church of Taatsi, *Taatsinkirkko*.

It is a high, sheer rock wall facing the lake. It has high stone walls which resemble a room, and when water is running down, the echo is amazing. According to a tale, people used to sing their sacrificial prayers in the 'church' (Paulaharju 1932). The *sieidi* of Taatsi has been used both by the local people and also by the reindeer Sámi from more distant villages. It has been a powerful, important and well-known sacred place.

This example of Lapp baptism at the *sieidi* of Taatsi consisted of prayers and blessings by a performer, who at the end of the show gave the participants a necklace. In my view, the performer played a role of a shaman because, e.g. at the beginning of the ceremony he was drumming on the siedi and he also advertises himself as a shaman in brochures and the media[2]. Lapp baptism at the *sieidi* of Taatsi is an example of how local people's sacred place, their magic or historical landscape, has been transformed to a product, a play for tourists without any ethnographic origin – or rather, to a stage of a play. In that sense it enters the area of trans-cultural and trans-local politics of ownership, monetary value and representation. The *sieidi* of Taatsi presents an ideal stage for Lapp baptism in the tourist industry, because the place is 'authentic'. In a sense Lapp baptism is also authentic: it is an authentic part of the history of tourism in Lapland, but it does not belong to the culture or history of Lapland or Sápmi in any other form. In post-modern society, the questions of authenticity provide interesting perspectives but who can decide what is authentic and what is not? The least we can expect is that the ethnographic data are correct. The ethnographic details are always combined with time and place, different activities and groups of people (Siivonen 2003: 13). In the products of tourism industry time and space are easily reproduced by stretching and mixing. The process where a cultural landscape has been changed to a tourist place and at the same time has lost its unique sense of place is called as an 'erosion of place' (Relph 1976, ref. by Saarinen 1999: 234). The process of changing something that has clear connections to the national or ethnic cultural heritage should be carried out with dignity. Therefore, dignity is an important word. Also, an important issue is who has the power to define what is authentic and which elements of the local culture can be used and how they can be used in a tourism programme. The local people have a right to use their own traditions and cultural heritage for economic purposes, although the right to collective tradition is not clearly stated, e.g. in the UNESCO's Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore (1989). These principles should also be followed by tourist agencies when they represent, e.g. Sámi culture for tourist purposes (Cf. Kasfir-Littlefield 2002).

Using the Sámi landscape for contradictory purposes in the tourist industry raises interesting questions. The political dimensions of historical, mythical and magic landscapes are becoming more visible – or louder. The *sieidi* of Taatsi is an important ancient site, part of cultural heritage, which is protected by law. Tourist attractions and spaces of special or even sacred, national significance are regularly visited by tourists and by local people. Some even perform a pilgrimage to these places to show their respect for the place. The visitors are, however, variously connected to the site (Franklin 2003). Some of them are less motivated, some of them are motivated by curiosity or boredom or money. Even today, however, the *sieidi* represents a sacred place carrying a strong emotional significance or an important historical site with cultural heritage to some of the local people.

'Place', in my examples the *sieidi* of Taatsi, Lake Seidjavr, the Pallas fells or the tourist

centre Levi, can have a unique reality for each inhabitant and visitor. While the meanings may be shared with others, the views of the place are often likely to be competing, and contested in practice. According to Margaret Rodman (2002: 207), researchers should empower place by returning control over meanings of place to the rightful producers, and empower their own analysis of place by attending to the multiplicity of local voices found about place.

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NOTES

1 See Rolshoven 2003 for the changes in the use of the concepts of space and place.

2 On his web site the entrepreneur, who sells the "Shaman baptism", is photographed dressed in leather clothes with a drum in his hand, both on a fell with the northern lights in the sky, and inside a log house lying on a reindeer fur with a couple of women dressed in Sámi dresses. See http://www.levi.shamaani/.