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The living in a place for the dead

An exploration of place as assemblage

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Abstract

This thesis investigates how place can be understood through assemblage theory and what that implies for the understanding of human relation to place. The framework has been widely used outside and within human geography, at a few instances related to place. Exploring place as assemblage is done through a case study of S:t Pauli cemeteries in Malmö. Main methods are walk along interviews and observations to look at practices, borders, feelings and affect, religion and death, and relation to the city.

Place through assemblage theory is understood as multiplicity and fluidity. It is a complex place where different elements, from visiting bodies to policy discussions, together create the place as it is. It has connections in both time and space. The assemblage of the cemeteries is found to have two important components in form of usage as park and burial site. Both usages are vital to the assemblage of the cemeteries, making it a living place and guiding the development of the cemeteries. The human relation to place is individual and comes from affects creating a sense of place through the individual self. Every human is interacting with the place through practices and through affects between themselves and other bodies, both being important to how the assemblage works.

The framework gives a rich study, a focus on the complex and the multiplicity, and it has a lot in common with a relational view of place. On the other hand, assemblage theory, can be difficult to fully master since it challenges the norms of how to see the world. There is a high threshold for usage of the concepts.

Still, understanding place as assemblage could be useful for nourishing discussions of place in academia, but also for the urban planning profession. It reminds us that places are not a physical appearance or functionality, but something much richer. Changing one element can change the place in the foundation, stressing the notion of planning with people, not for people.

Keywords: assemblage, affect, place, urban cemetery, urban planning

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1 Introduction

Moving around in my hometown there are a myriad of places I feel a special bond to. From the patch of grass that is the only place in the city where I feel safe enough to sit and read alone, to the street corner where I once told someone I was in love with them. I choose different routes depending on mood, time restraint and purpose. Some streets I only walk by myself, some with a friend, and some when I am rushed. Sometimes I want to pass by that empty lot I like so much even if I have never been on the other side of the fence surrounding it. Occasionally I want to catch a glimpse of that house I find so interesting or go down the street that always makes me feel at ease even if I never figured out why. It is an intricate web of memories, feelings, habits, aesthetics, pace and real-time impressions constantly shaping and reshaping my connections to this town and its places.

We are all used to places. They are a part of our everyday life and something we are in daily contact with. From home to the workplace, to the old town, to the park bench or the football stand. No matter if it is based on an everyday understanding of place as a location or if it is a geographical understanding of place as something more, maybe not even depending on location. Places are important in our lives.

The human geographic understanding of place has been under negotiation for a long time and is still developing. From being primarily a location, to be subordinated to space, to be a relational concept stretching far out from the actual location in space, place is one of the most important concepts in human geography. It has not always been in the centre of attention, but today, recognising human geography as a social science which is heavily context based, the concept has become an integral part of both the academy and the practical professions relying on the discipline.

For both academic development and for practical professions the progression of concepts are important. Theoretical discussions and new perspectives are a vital part of research, knowledge creation and policy work. As an urban planner, for example, it is important to understand the intricate connections people have to places, how a place works and how changing a place affects use and experiences. To be able to understand this reality a little bit better we must always try to find the words to explain reality and try new perspectives to understand and translate it.

How is it possible to come closer to this complex reality of human relations to place? Geographers have used Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's assemblage theory to explore various fields of the discipline. Some has drawn the connection to place and opened up

for a possible perspective promoting the becoming, multiplicity and fluidity of place. The framework has not yet gained much attention in human geographic research in Sweden, but it is a lively debated perspective elsewhere, where it has gained influence in fields like architecture and urban planning.

From an urban planning perspective this is particularly interesting since place is sometimes still seen as an enclosed location by active practitioners. What if there is a possibility to see place from a perspective capturing more of the messiness reality offers? A perspective that can raise some new perspectives on our understanding of place.

1.1 Aim and research questions

This thesis aims to explore the possibilities of assemblage as a way to understand place. This is to cultivate the discussions about place as a concept and the discussion of using an assemblage framework on this central concept of human geography, discussions which in turn can provide insight for academia, but as well for, for example, the planning profession.

This is done through the question of:

How can place be understood and analysed through assemblage theory, and what does this imply for our understanding of human relations to place?

To explore assemblage theory and place the study has the form of a case study of S:t Pauli cemeteries in Malmö. The case provides an arena where the assemblage framework can be explored in relation to place and it is used as an example for the research question to be answered.

1.2 Disposition

This thesis is structured in six chapters. Following this introduction, the thesis dives into the theoretical chapter which is a literature review together with a theoretical background, landing in the theoretical framework for this thesis. Going forward, the research design is explained, and the case study and methods presented in chapter 3. Thereafter, the case, the S:t Pauli cemeteries, are contextualized and presented deeper. The gathered material is presented and analysed in chapter 5 where the S:t Pauli cemeteries are explored as an assemblage. Lastly, chapter 6 presents the conclusions, zooming out to the understanding of place as assemblage and answering the research question.

2 Discussions of place and assemblage within human geography

This chapter is both a literature review and an ontological discussion of the theory for the thesis. Firstly, to be able to elaborate on place as assemblage, a section on how the concept of place has grown in human geography is introduced. Emphasis lies on humanist geography which was the field to reinstate place as an important concept in the 20th century and it serves an important background in understanding human relation to place. Secondly, assemblage theory as a philosophy is presented to form an understanding of the underlying thinking and development of the concepts of assemblage and affect. The discussion goes thereafter into how place has been related to assemblage theory and the notion of placed assemblages. Finally, the theoretical framework for the thesis is presented.

2.1 Understandings of place in human geography

Place is an interdisciplinary concept in constant negotiation, rooted in philosophical thought as far back as to Plato and Aristotle. The concepts of *chora* and *topos*, used by both Plato and Aristotle, can translate to places of various kinds. Aristotle put place in the foreground by seeing place as something necessary for existence. Later place lost this ontological status for the benefit of space, seen as measurable and generalizable (Cresswell 2014). Place as a philosophical concept thus have a long history which is important to consider since all thinking builds on previous thoughts. However, this chapter will focus on place within human geography.

During the first half of the 20th century, Richard Hartshorne (1939) tried to develop geography and state it as a discipline concerned with the unique. He developed a regional geography incorporating all phenomena happening in a certain, unique, region. The understanding of place at this time was a particular unique setting in space. Space was still the more important ontological concept as it was considered measurable (Cresswell 2014).

Steps towards another view of place was taken through landscape geography, most prominent in France by Paul Vidal de la Blache. He focused on ways of life where he described culture and nature aspects of various parts of France (Cresswell 2014). This inquiry later inspired humanist geographers who tried to reconnect with place and decrease focus on space as primary concept.

Many humanist geographers (for example, Buttimer 1976; Relph 1976; Tuan 1977) was also inspired by Martin Heidegger¹ who discussed space and place from a philosophical perspective following Aristotle's thinking of place as important for human existence. Heidegger saw three aspects of reality in form of *Dasein*, region and world-space. He saw it as space being produced from the being-in-the-world, which for humans are through place, *Daseins*'s spatiality. Therefore, place was put before space, place-creation produce space (Cresswell 2014; Heidegger 1971; Wollan 2003).

Humanist geography, developing from the late 1960's, puts the human being in centre, particularly through phenomenology and existentialism (Cresswell 2014). Phenomenology is a field of philosophy concerned with structures of consciousness and experience. It is not a unified philosophical school by any means but rather a type of thinking. Existentialism was regarded as a starting point in form of the focus on existence before essence, noting the importance of context and experienced life to our beings.

The influence from both existentialism and phenomenology is clear in humanist writings. Edward Relph (1976) puts place in the centre of human consciousness by declaring that humans are conscious about place (intentionality), a clear phenomenological endeavour. The human relation to place is thus foundational in human life being the thing humans anchor the consciousness in.

Yi-Fi Tuan (1977) see place as first and foremost experienced by humans. By experience Tuan means how humans construct a reality through sensation, perception, and conception. Experience is influenced by thought and emotion and is directed towards the outside world. Humans learn about and construct the world through experience of spatial relations, from stretching the body as an infant to exploring the new neighbourhood after moving. The knowledge of spatial relations, feelings and ideas about space and place comes through experiences in life (Tuan 1977; 1974a).

Further, Tuan (1977) highlights that other people and relations to humans is important for the experience of place. A place without the right persons, without intimacy, can be a non-place. A place can change if, for example, a friend is missing from that place (Tuan 1977, p. 140). Intimacy does not have to come from long relationships but can be found in moments of human exchange.

¹ Heidegger was a supporter of the Nazi party in Germany which has led to it being uncomfortable to use his thoughts about human nature. Nevertheless, his thinking about space and place has in this case been influential and have a relevance for the understanding of place in human geography.

Intimacy and intense personal experience are important to humanist geographers. The home is one place that is important in this framework. The home is an intimate place which humans experience as real in contrast to, for instance, a vacation spot. The real here is the everyday life, the home, the places we feel at home in. There are also symbols of intimacy in every culture which are recognized as such by people. Some places are intensely personal, like an armchair, but the meaning of the place can be understood generally (Tuan 1977, pp. 145-148).

The intense sentiment towards a place Tuan calls *topophilia*. It is sentiment directed to a place of which someone has intimate knowledge, like a city or neighbourhood. It can be both positive and negative and differs by, for example, socioeconomic status (Tuan 1974a). It is also about familiarity which “breeds affection when it does not breed contempt” (Tuan 1974a, p. 99). Tuan divides place into two important categories: public symbols and fields of care. Public symbols are often monuments, places that can be recognized from the outside. Fields of care, on the other hand, come from inside and cannot be easily recognized from the outside. The field of care is intimate and comes from personal attachment. It can be as intimate as the home, but can also be a park, street corner or a town. The two categories are not mutually exclusive, a public symbol can be a field of care for some people. A place, for Tuan, is made through human sentiments and care:

“All places are small worlds: the sense of a world, however, may be called forth by art (the jar placed on the hill) as much as by the intangible net of human relations. Places may be public symbols or fields of care, but the power of the symbols to create place, depends ultimately on the human emotions that vibrate in a field of care. Disneyland, to take one example, draws on the capital of sentiments that has accumulated in inconspicuous small worlds elsewhere and in other times.” (Tuan 1974b, p. 245)

As seen, place for humanist geographers is often intimate and romantic. Tuan (1977) describes place as a pause in a space of movement. Space becomes place when it is meaningful to a human being. Place in general can be seen as something that humans have an intense experience of, a sense of place. That does not mean that sense of place, like *topophilia*, is always positive (Tuan 1977; 1974a).

The humanist tradition tends to romanticize place as sites of affection and see place from a privileged position in current structure of society. It is supposed that humans share a common connection to place as a fundamental way of being in the world. Since place is central for human consciousness, the relation to place is biological. Humans want to belong and understand themselves by the sense of place. Place becomes important not only to feel grounded, but also since feeling out of place becomes a negative experience.

The critique posed towards humanist geography thinking is mainly divided in three arguments: lack of notions of power, seeing place from a privileged position, and talking about human essence (Cresswell 2014). Seeing connection to place as something that is biologically rooted in every human is essentialist. This is part of a critique of the search for human essence, which poststructuralists pose. The search for a human essence can lead to political, social and economic consequences when a certain attribute (or essence) is seen as true and others false. Essentialism is a part of racist, extremist ideologies which, especially after World War II, was important to turn away from. Poststructuralist theory is therefore careful not to label or generalize anything as universal for humans. Feminist geographers have problematized the romantic view of the home since it is the place for domestic violence. Marxist geographers, in turn, have argued for place being socially constructed; that is, produced by humans and therefore changeable by humans. Place is created through processes of power and does not have a natural essence. Looking for essence in place obscures differences (for example, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, ability to move) that are basis for inclusion or exclusion in today's society.

The humanist geographers did leave some things to ask for, but their way of thinking was a step forward in thinking about place. Today, leaving measurable, empty space behind to some degree, place is more interesting to many geographers. Place today is used mostly as a more abstract concept and not as a specific location. Contemporary writings around place often have a mutual understanding that place is relational and non-essentialist, a product of the connections rather than something in itself. Some focuses more on the human experience of place, while some focus on scale or economic relations of place. Place has been conceptualized as networks or nodes in networks (Marston, Jones & Woodward 2005) or an area with connection reaching far over the globe (Massey 1993).

One notable addition is Doreen Massey's (1991) global sense of place. She goes beyond essence of place by contextualizing place as relational and spanning over scales. She also argues for places as multiple identities and with strong connection to time. A place is connected to a myriad of stories in time and space (Massey 1991; 1993). Massey's conception of place opens for an understanding of place less rooted in one particular location and feeling. Massey's work is in many ways a background to the ways place is conceptualized today and her focus on flows, multiplicity and becoming have a lot in common with the field of assemblage theory.

2.2 Assemblage theory

Assemblage theory originates primarily from Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), the second book in their series *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. They create a perspective on the world building on affect, assemblages, and rhizomes. It is a perspective that promotes fluidity, emergence, and an effort in seeing complexity. They also include a dimension of desire where desire is fundamental to human life (Deleuze & Guattari 1987).

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) formulate a philosophy to understand a complex world and a way of thinking. It is an attempt to avoid simplifying and break down phenomenon to solvable problems. For example, they criticize Freud for being obsessed with the original trauma and argue for an understanding where several traumas together shape a human being (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, ch. 2). It is also an example of how to think in a progressive way to overcome old dichotomies and hierarchal ways of thinking. They conceptualize the rhizome structure as opposed to the tree structure. The tree is hierarchical. Everything goes through the stem, down to the roots which are divided in smaller roots and finally comes to close endings. It symbolizes the close-minded and hierarchical thinking of, for example, institutions. Rhizomes are plant stems that shoots roots and shoots from their node, like ginger or turmeric. They grow horizontally and new roots shoots out whenever a part gets cut off. The rhizome stands for multiplicity, another way of thinking, where every point is connected to any other point. It symbolizes a more open-ended thinking and flowing of thoughts. A thought does not start from one stem, it starts somewhere in the middle (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, ch. 1). This is in opposition to thinking chronologically, from beginning to end, something Deleuze and Guattari denies being possible or useful. Living is being in the middle of things, between the plane of organization that stratifies and the plane of immanence that destratifies. The two planes cannot be separated and are in constant movement with each other. Neither plane is desirable, life must be in the middle (Buchanan 2021). Therefore, questions of where something came from is not interesting to Deleuze and Guattari. It is instead about how or why something works or what it can do (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 256; Buchanan 2015).

Rather than a clear framework, Deleuze and Guattari offer a perspective and a philosophy which has opened for multiple translations of central concepts. It is the foundation for several theories connected to assemblage theory in general, for example, actor network theory (see Latour 2005; Law 2009) and politics of affect (see Thrift 2004). It has also

influenced researchers in fields like urban studies (see Thrift 1999) and urban planning (see De Roo, Hillier & Van Wezemael 2012). In all, there are many similar views stemming from a desire to see the complex (see for example Urry 2005). In this thesis emphasis lies on assemblage theory covering assemblages and affect as main concepts.

To understand and get a picture of what an assemblage is, it is helpful to situate the word. Assemblage is an English translation of the French word *agencement*. This is important since the word assemblage exists in French, but it is not the word Deleuze and Guattari (1987) use in their original text. *Agencement* has a slightly different meaning than assemblage. It translates to arrangement and points to an agency, that the arrangement has been arranged, rather than assemblage which implies a more unstructured gathering. *Agencement*, in turn, is Deleuze and Guattari's translation or version of the German word *Komplex*² (as in Oedipus complex). *Agencement* is also a version of Deleuze and Guattari's own concept the desiring machine, a concept they abandoned as they saw it being devalued as a concept (Buchanan 2021). Through this linguistic journey it is possible to get some clues about how to understand the concept of assemblage. It is influenced by the concept of complex, an entity in where the parts together shape a whole. It is a word that in their own framework stem from the desiring machine, meaning there is a force of desire, like a purpose, in the assemblage. And finally, it comes from the word *agencement* which means arranging or arrangement, implying it orders or arrange, having some form of agency.

Assemblage is a whole, constituted by interconnected flows and parts. Nothing is anything in itself, everything is assemblages of parts (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). The importance lies in the flows between objects rather than the individual parts. The whole is a complex where a part can be taken away, but by that changing the whole. In contrast to something that is complicated which can be brought down to smaller, solvable problems (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 508).

Assemblage theory has, in one sense, a flat ontology, where no part, material or symbolic, of the assemblage has higher ontological value than another (DeLanda 2006; Kinkaid 2020). This in contrast to Marxist geographers who argue place is socially constructed and humanist geographers who argue human experience of place has the highest ontological value (Cresswell 2014). A flat ontology, in this case, means that one form cannot be without other forms in a certain assemblage. There is no point in giving an

² Hereafter I will not refer to complex as the German concept of *Komplex*, but use it in its everyday sense of something being multifaceted, complex.

element more agency than another because it will obscure how the parts co-operate. Therefore, it is also an epistemological question of how it is possible to gain knowledge of the assemblage. Ian Buchanan (2015, 2021) argues that the parts of an assemblage can be known and that it is crucial to explore the intersections between especially material and symbolic parts. He means there is a feedback loop between the parts and an arrangement of parts which are all possible to gain knowledge about.

Further, an assemblage exists through territorialization. Through the process of territorialization an assemblage spreads in space and time. It does not have to take up physical geographical space, but often has implications for a certain space, like the state for a nation. It is the territorialization process that establish the assemblage and makes it stable for a time. A deterritorialization will take part to dismantle the assemblage when it gets unstable enough, and the elements then can reterritorialize into another stable assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari 1987; DeLanda 2006).

A central concept for assemblage theory is affect. Affect can be described as the body's capacity to act, affect and be affected. While humanist geographers refer to a universal sense of place that a place either has or not, assemblage theorists refer to affects as pre-personal flows (Pile 2010). It precedes the human consciousness and cannot be sensed like feelings and emotions. Feelings and experiences cannot be traced back to affects since affects are flows between bodies which cannot be seen. The feeling or expressed emotion is, though, an indirect result of affects but imbued in a subjective process of the consciousness³. A difference between humanist geography and assemblage theory lies in how to conceptualize how an experience of a place comes to be. But also, what they denote as important – the subjective experience or the intrapersonal. Affect is a central concept in Deleuze and Guattari's framework and points to how objects interact on an unconscious level. How bodies interact and affect each other before being processed through human consciousness. Within the assemblage, affects are arranged and works in a specific way for that assemblage.

Assemblage thinking has been used in mainly three ways in geography and in social sciences in general: as a descriptor, a concept or an ethos (Anderson & McFarlane 2011; Kinkaid 2020). Using it as descriptor means describing a system as an assemblage. It tends to take away the meaning of the concept assemblage and using it as a noun

³ The complex interrogation of the human consciousness lies outside the focus for this thesis. What is meant by this process is that the individual's past experiences, mood, memories and present feelings will be incorporated in the outcome from the affects.

(arrangement) without seeing the verb (arranging) inherent in the word. As a concept assemblage has its own properties and is used as an analytical framework. Using assemblage as ethos is about using the philosophy to guide what to examine, trying to get hold on the fluidity of the world (Anderson & McFarlane 2011).

How assemblage should be understood is very contested. Two strands are visible with one strand seeing themselves closer to Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization (for example, Buchanan 2015; Shaw 2014), and one seen as incorporating various elements from the Deleuzian framework (for example Dovey 2010; DeLanda 2006). Buchanan (2015) argues that there are problems in how assemblage theory has developed. Not because researchers stray away from original theory, but because the concept of assemblage has become unclear resulting in lack of analytical power. This is visible in both Dovey (2010) and DeLanda (2006), who seem to have a challenging time defining and describing what an assemblage really is to them. It is also visible in the way there is a gap between theory and empirics, where it is not always clear how the term assemblage helps to see something "new" or contribute to a deeper understanding. Dovey's (2010) use of assemblage is more as an ethos where the overall assemblage thinking permeates his work. While DeLanda (2006) starts out by explaining what an assemblage is not, something that witness of the difficulty defining the concept. In DeLanda's understanding an assemblage can be anything, a conversation, a place, a network, an organisation or a process (DeLanda 2006; Kinkaid 2020).

Buchanan (2015) argues that the central questions for assemblage theory is what something is, how something is constituted, and why it works. The assemblage itself is an intersection of form of content and form of expression which are independent from each other but in constant interaction. Buchanan argues that the parts in an assemblage is known and not undecided. He critiques Latour for giving too much agency to material objects, which is inessential to Deleuze and Guattari in question of assemblages. His understanding of assemblage is as a clearly defined analytical concept. Buchanan himself is not overly specific of the limitations to an assemblage. He applies it to a fairy tale, climbing Mount Everest and gentrification. The part he argues for is that they all have form of content (material) and form of expression (symbolic) which intersect creating something that is the assemblage (Buchanan 2021).

With an overview of the philosophy of assemblage theory, how different researchers has conceptualized assemblage and in what ways it has been used, the the chapter goes into the section on how assemblage and place has been related.

2.3 Place as assemblage

In human geography, assemblage thinking is relevant to the concept of place. Even though place is not at concept in *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze & Guattari 1987), several researchers use places to conceptualize assemblage theory (for example, DeLanda 2006; Dovey 2010, 2020; Shaw 2014).

DeLanda (2006) describes an urban centre as assemblage and argues that a city centre cannot be considered without looking at the city it is in and the region it is placed in. In that sense it is also a relational outlook on place. Place as assemblage cannot be seen as a clear, bounded entity in space but rather as interconnected with the surroundings.

Dovey (2010) uses place as assemblage to see place as something complex, not reducible to text, materiality, or to subjective experience. It is all those, at the same time, always. He also further brings forward the potentiality of assemblages and promotes the fluidity. This brings in front how much a place is defined by movement and multiplicity instead of being fixed and rooted. In the same way, Grossman and Haase (2014), uses the framework to understand neighbourhood development. They argue for the use of assemblage theory to get a context-based study and to discover unexpected dynamics. They focus on the emergence and multiplicity in the trajectory for the neighbourhoods, showing that the framework can see beyond path-dependencies (Grossman & Haase 2014).

Shaw (2014) puts assemblage in an urban context developing a framework for understanding the night time city, a development of the night time economy. Shaw (2014) sees the city centre as an affective atmosphere understood as a placed assemblage. An assemblage is more than a system, as Shaw (2014) argues:

“Assemblage thus offers a combination of structure and process, forming contingent, vibrant arrangements that we interact with on a daily basis, both in their ‘structural’ form, and their ‘processual’ form. Here assemblage is thus about arranging co-existences: about how the stable and the unstable, the solid and the light interact to produce the thing.” (Shaw 2014, p. 88)

An assemblage can have a geographical connection. It is not depending on proximity or time but can include those elements. An assemblage is inherently fluid. It incorporates both supporting and undermining practices, as well as being instances where domains of practices meet. Shaw (2014) calls this a “placed assemblage” (Shaw 2014, p. 88), an assemblage with its own space. The placed assemblage covers a place but doesn’t have to be fixed in time. His night time city is an assemblage that unfolds in the city centre at

night. It shows just how changing places can be and how the material objects in a place have meaning but are not the only thing important for a place. It is easy to reduce a place to its physical features but in fact there are many factors that make it into that exact place in both time and space.

Placed assemblage is closely related to atmosphere, an intensity that can be felt. Shaw (2014) shows how bodies are brought together in the urban city centre at night and how affects are transmitted, creating an atmosphere. This atmosphere can be “felt” differently by different bodies, and it is always contingent to the assemblage. What distinguishes an atmosphere from an assemblage is the relation to place and time, where an atmosphere is situated in a certain place and a certain time (Shaw 2014).

The assemblage’s spatial spread is fragile to interruptions from “disturbing” elements (Shaw 2014). The practices upholding it get affected by other practices. Even if many of the practices support the assemblage, they can at the same time undermine it because they disturb other supporting practices. In this case, the drunk people walking around the city centre get disturbed by sober, working people cleaning the streets (Shaw 2014).

Affects are ordered and structured through the assemblage but are preceding it (Buchanan 2021). The affects ordered by the assemblage can create a contingent atmosphere (Shaw 2014) which people experience. This atmosphere can be connected to the concept sense of place. An atmosphere is felt by people at the place but can be experienced differently by individuals. Sense of place is something that a place can have (or produce in people) but differs by who is experiencing it. It is possible to see parallels to both affect and atmosphere, creating a sense of place.

2.4 Theoretical framework

“So assemblage involves within it an understanding of how coexistence occurs (McFarlane, 2009: 562), that is, it looks at how objects, agents, affects and discourses are gathered together. While this gathering is not inherently ‘geographical’, in other words, it is not always about things being gathered proximately to one another, equally the question of where these items are gathered is also an important one. Certain assemblages are placed, that is, they come to be located in and potentially to take over a particular time-space.” (Shaw 2014, p. 88)

An assemblage is a whole within all parts, discourse, material objects, bodies etc., are arranged to work in a certain way. It arranges both elements and affects which then gives a certain outcome, functionality, experience or dynamic in the assemblage. It is a coexistence where every part is needed for the assemblage to be stable and work as is

does. It is a way of seeing the world, seeing phenomena as these arrangements that makes something work in a particular way.

A placed assemblage has a territoriality and a spatial and temporal spread. For example, a gentrification process has both, an area that is being gentrified during a certain period of time. It is also depending on who is moving through the place, humans are a part of all assemblages in some way since we interact with them.

Focus lies on assemblage as analytical concept, but it must be understood through the entire philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. It is as important to see the assemblage as a conceptual tool as it is to understand the underlying thinking of how the world can be understood through the philosophy. In that way assemblage is here both an analytical concept and an ethos guiding the study. It is both the entity of investigation, the placed assemblage, and a way of seeing, the place as assemblage.

An important thing to draw from in further analysing is the notion that an assemblage always is both form of content and form of expression. One way to understand it is to find their interactions. The idea of a place and the physical place are intimately connected, and one of the two aspects are not ontologically important than the other. The intersections are also a way to discover things that may not be evident through other theoretical perspectives.

A place as assemblage in this framework is seen as interconnected, a relational place, with multiple identities. It has relations reaching far from its geographical location and is highly fluid. Every person interacting with the place will bring something to the place through affects. The advantage of the framework is to see the unexpected through an openness towards all types of findings and elements.

The focus for the study is the intersections of form of content and form of expression and how coexistence occurs. This through looking at objects, agents, affects and discourses gathered in a certain place.

Humans performs practices supporting the assemblage but also engages in practices that undermine it. The inherent multiplicities result in different experiences of place. Including and excluding factors of both material and expressional parts will influence the human experience of the assemblage. This leads the study to entail human practices, how they interact with each other and how they can produce different experiences.

Humans (and other objects) also create affects between themselves and other objects, therefore their existence and what they do matter. This is connected to the sense of place

and the creation of atmospheres. Both can be felt through the individual and be translated into different meanings and feelings. Studying expressed emotions cannot show what affects lies behind, but it is a key mechanism to understand what the assemblage can do.

Border making is about where the assemblage is arranged, where it is gathered through the territorialization process and gets stable. In this case, a place that has geographical borders is used. For another assemblage the borders might be unclear, geographically, but for a place the geographical borders can be clearer. Looking into border making with both physical and social elements as well as the relation to the city can help with seeing the territoriality of the assemblage. It will here incorporate sound, visuality, individual border making towards others, mental borders and physical borders.

In exploring place as assemblage, one major task is to address how to use assemblage theory. In this case study, assemblage is used as a concept and an ethos, to guide the study and the research design. The next chapter goes into details about operationalisation and the structure of the case study.

3 Research design

Building on the theoretical framework this thesis sets out to see what assemblage theory can say about place, and what it will imply for human relation to place. Can a place be an assemblage? Can this theoretical perspective nurture our understanding of place?

To explore place as assemblage a case study of the S:t Pauli cemeteries in Malmö is used. The timeframe given for this thesis will not be enough to cover all aspects and details of a whole assemblage. Therefore, the exploration of the cemeteries will focus on practices, borders, feelings and affect, religion and death, and relation to the city, following mainly Shaw (2014). Through these categories it will be possible to see intersections between form of content and form of expression.

To gain knowledge of the practices and what influence the behaviour the study uses in depth interviews. These make it possible to approach what the informants do, how they usually move around, what influence their practices and movements as well as why they use the place the way they do. This is all important to understand how the place works. The cemetery maintenance organization is also heard through shorter interviews to include how their work functions within the cemeteries. Observations were used to see volumes of bodies, how people move, and what they do. It is also a way to get a sense of the place and how elements, people, physical environment etc., coexist. These two main methods create the foundation for the exploration of the cemeteries.

To explore it further in time and to get knowledge about other actors involved, a desktop study is made. Documents and historic maps are used to get an understanding of how the place has developed over time, notions around religion and rules, and how responsible actors think about the place. All together to get an understanding of how the place works and if there is a possibility to see intersections and multiplicities. The following sections go more in depth with the case, methods, material and delimitations.

3.1 Case study

To explore place as assemblage a case study of S:t Pauli cemeteries in Malmö is conducted. The case study research design is used for in depth studies of a single case and produce context-dependend knowledge. With one case it is possible to reach deep knowledge about the case, needed to understand as many aspects as possible of the place as assemblage.

Social sciences cannot produce context independent knowledge since there is always context. There are different people, different movements, it is messy and biased. Being in close relation to a single case gives the researcher the advantage of exploring the case thoroughly and a chance to have an advanced understanding of the case. A closer connection to the case makes for a better learning process for the researcher (Flyvbjerg 2006). The knowledge created in this thesis is and should be highly context dependent.

The case here is supposed to work as an arena for exploring the theory trying to grapple what is possible to see or not to see. The chosen case is an ordinary place in people's everyday life but at the same time more than an ordinary place. It is an active burial site while it is also used as a park by residents in the area. It is situated in a part of the city that generally lacks open green space (see fig. 4.2) and the cemeteries has become an appreciated place for exercise, walks and contemplation. The cemeteries are a part of a bigger discussion on religion, life and death, and urban burial sites in relation to green space.

Inner city cemeteries are often used similarly to parks, creating a tension between intended function (burial site) and everyday function (recreation). It allows for clashed between mourning visitors and recreational visitors. It is a site for exploring the idea of the cemetery and the notions of religion and death.

The tension at urban burial sites became visible in media coverage of the usage of a cemetery in Stockholm in early 2021 (TT 2021). With large parts of Sweden covered in snow people took their sledges and went to Skogskyrkogården in Stockholm. This led to a debate on how to use cemeteries and what is appropriate to do at a burial site. As there is no formal regulation against going sledging on the hills in the cemetery the discussion comes down to what is respectful and appropriate behaviour (Matikka 2021).

One aspect from the debate is the respect for the dead and what that entails. This highlights the limitations of what is allowed in public or semi-public space and how rules are negotiated both by practices and ideas. Looking at the S:t Pauli cemeteries this notion is useful when exploring the place as an assemblage with supporting and undermining practices.

3.2 Methods

To explore the case the thesis relies on two main methods of data collection: observations and interviews. The study is complemented with a desktop study of planning documents, historical maps, news articles and information around rules at the cemeteries. The

methods will here be presented and connected to the overall research design and the theoretical framework.

3.2.1 Observations

A first step to approach the case was through non-participatory, unobtrusive, observations. By being in place it is possible to explore the physical features as well as practices and movements. Being at the place opens for tacit knowledge and taking in the place through the senses which is valuable for this kind of in-depth study (Flyvbjerg 2006). The observations serve as a base for the study providing information of the visual landscape, soundscape, movement and use. The observations also allowed for a connection and familiarity with the place necessary for the following walk alongs. The main interest for the observations was practices, sense of place and physical composition. Non-participatory observations in public space often have negligible effect on movements and practices going on and the observed does not know they are being observed. It interferes with the observed milieu within the limits of another body being in the place, especially in a semi-public place conducted through a customary practice, walking (Angrosino 2004).

The observations were focused on daytime activity since the cemeteries are locked during the night, when they are used much less and in another way than during the day. The opening hours (7:15-21:00) were divided into intervals where possibly different practices can be seen due to shifting amounts of visitors and different type of practices. The intervals take into account the common workday from 8-17 and were: morning, before lunch, lunch time, afternoon, after work and evening (see more in Appendix B). The weekends were divided into four intervals of morning, early afternoon, afternoon and evening since they are not dependent on the regular workday. The observations followed a fixed route, chosen to have overview of all parts of the cemeteries. They were organized systematically with two observations for each time but at different weekdays to reduce impact of weather and variations from day to day (see Appendix B).

The route was walked while continually recorded through notes on the phone. All activity was recorded at the moment of sight, grouped together when possible. From the corners of the cemeteries, it was possible to have overview of the paved roads which provided a snapshot of the movement on the road at that moment. The observation notes include sounds and weather conditions. Every observation was concluded with a note on the general experience of the observation (see Appendix B). The notes were after each observation rewritten on the computer and compiled in one document. Working with the

analysis the notes were looked through to get an overview of practices and when they usually take place. Most important was the range of activities and getting a picture of how the cemeteries are used.

The observations took place during the spring of 2021 which places the observations in a certain time, both in a specific season and in a global pandemic. This spring was characterized by unreliable weather pending from warm and sunny in late March to a blizzard in the beginning of April and later a lot of rain and some snow. In late April there was a couple of warmer weeks before it turned colder again in early May. Weather affects the usage and practices in the cemeteries and have been mitigated by doing a major part of the observations in the second half of April, during a period of warmer weather.

The global pandemic during this time has put restrictions towards everyday life which affects the research conducted. In Sweden, the restrictions at this time were mostly directed towards opening hours of restaurants and bars, limiting amount of people allowed inside shops and closing of clubs and private parties. It was recommended meeting people outside keeping distance. The pandemic could have affected outdoor life by more people using parks and recreation areas, a tendency that was seen during the first year of the pandemic (Carlstén 2021).

3.2.2 Walk along interviews

Interviews in form of walk alongs was held with a small number of participants. The aim was to follow the participant on a regular walk or activity in the cemeteries. Seeing people as a part of the place, creating the place, their perspective was important for the study. The in-depth interview allowed to penetrate how and why visitors act the way they do and being in place allowed for reflections and reactions to the surroundings (Kinney 2017).

To try out the method and prepare for the walk alongs, a pilot walk was held as a first step. During the pilot walk it was possible to test the topics and explore what could possibly come up during a walk along. This initially guided the format for the walk alongs and the researcher role to be passive and inviting the participant to take lead. At the same time, walking interviews are flexible and intuitive. Every interview is different, meaning the researcher must be open to changes and taking on different roles depending on who is being interviewed.

The chosen criteria for the sample were people who have visited the cemeteries for any reason. To be able to find people using the cemeteries, a notice was posted in a local

Facebook group for a neighbourhood close to the cemeteries. Practically, this made the sample to include the criteria of living close to the cemetery. All people responding to the notice (in total 10 individuals) visited the cemeteries for recreation and had lived around the cemeteries over two years. Out of these people, finally, four people was selected with respect to age and gender, to reflect possible differences in experience and usage. The participants were a 31-year woman (pilot walk along), 38-year man, 60-year woman and two 70+ years women (see List of interviews).

The walk along interview was introduced to each participant, taking background information around age, residency and profession. The participants were then asked to take the lead to a regular visit to the cemeteries. The interviews were built on themes to create a flexible and open conversation, allowing the participants to talk freely. The themes were: activities, other bodies, borders, religion and death, feelings, and relation to the city (see Appendix A). The themes build upon the theoretically chosen categories to investigate, as mentioned in the first part of this chapter. Practices are here called activities since it is a word easier to understand and “other bodies” is added to cover the aspect of relation to other people’s activities.

Making the participant take lead was a step in creating a comfortable setting for the participant, showing that their experience is in focus, hopefully making the situation less stressful. Walking alongside the participant instead of sitting across a table makes it a more dynamic situation. It allows for natural breaks in the conversation, unexpected topics, and real time interaction with the surroundings (Kinney 2017). During the walk along the participants lead the way and the topics were covered bit by bit.

The walk alongs were voice recorded and the data analysed through two stages. The first stage entailed listening through the interview while taking notes. This first listening was done directly after each interview to have the possibility to develop the interview technique and correct potential mistakes along the way. The second time, additional notes, corrections and quotes were written down. The second listening was conducted later in the analysis stage to refresh the memory and to be able to incorporate parts that potentially had been overlooked. The compilation from each walk along was used to inform the thesis.

An important reflection is that the participants all used the cemeteries mainly for recreation of different kind and no one stated themselves as religious. They all also lived near the cemeteries for a long time (see List of interviews). Having the opportunity to talk to someone that is less familiar to the cemeteries or visiting for other purposes would

have been useful for this study. To mitigate the lack of interviews with visitors visiting relatives or other aspects of the burial site it was important to contact the cemetery authorities.

3.2.3 Interviews

Shorter interviews (see List of interviews) were held with representatives from the cemetery maintenance organization (Malmö kyrkogårdsförvaltning). These interviews were aimed to investigate their perceived view of the usage in the cemeteries, how the cemeteries are managed and how they as an authority sees respect for the dead. The cemetery maintenance represents the active burial site in this thesis.

An email interview was conducted with the responsible manager of the cemetery maintenance (Interview A) to get information on rules, how they handle “disturbing” activities, complaints from visitors and how many burials of different forms take place on the cemeteries. The burials are an important practice of the active burial site and in relation to them disturbance can arise. This interview was structured with direct questions answered by text. Follow up questions were sent in a later email but never answered.

Short face-to-face interviews (Interview B and C) were held with two maintenance workers in the cemeteries. The workers were approached during visits to the cemeteries and the questions focused on how they deal with inappropriate behaviours, how they experience the cemeteries while working and rules for the monuments. The interviews were held short and focused on the practical work of the cemeteries. The interview with workers were written down during the interview and then immediately rewritten afterwards. The interviews were more direct informative and practical to inform certain parts of the thesis directly.

3.2.4 Desktop study

To understand the cemeteries both historically and today, additional material was consulted. For a historical understanding of the cemeteries and their place within the city, historical maps from Malmö city archives (Malmö Stadsarkiv) were useful. The maps are available on their online map service⁴. For additional history, secondary sources around the development of Malmö were used.

The map archive is huge with many maps for each year. Relevant maps were found through adjusting years and neighbourhood as well as consulting maps for the whole city.

⁴ The historic maps can be reached through: <http://kartor.malmo.se/kartarkiv/>

The maps consulted are from 1860s to 1950s, where of a few are included in chapter 4 and 5. The main objective was looking for changes in the cemeteries and the surrounding blocks, to see how the area has grown over time. The secondary sources provided additional information on definitive years for changes, possible intentions for changes and information on vegetation and decorations.

Other material is the master plan for Norra Sorgenfri where the municipality points out the direction for the whole area north of the cemeteries as well as places the cemeteries in this context of transformation. For further information around Norra Sorgenfri, the Malmö city website together with their portal for urban development areas were important. Regarding regulation of burial sites and usage of urban burial sites in Sweden, the cemetery maintenance organization (Malmö kyrkogårdsförvaltning) website and media articles were the main source.

These sources contributed with context and deeper understanding of the development of the cemeteries and the surrounding city. The master plan has been the main source for Malmö city plans and their way of seeing the cemeteries in relation to their redevelopment of Norra Sorgenfri. The master plan was read firstly looking for mentioning of the cemeteries and secondly for an understanding of aim and extent to the redevelopment.

The desktop study aims primarily to put the cemeteries in a context of the growing city and to understand their place in today's redevelopment plans. It is also a way to understand how the place is discussed by different actors. This context and understanding of the cemeteries are provided in the next chapter where the cemeteries are presented to give a background picture for those who has never been there.

4 Situating S:t Pauli cemeteries

The first part of the cemetery, S:t Pauli north cemetery, was opened 150 years ago, in 1870. It was there many years before the land around was built. To give an understanding of the cemeteries and their place in the city a brief background is given here before going into the analysis.

The first part of the cemeteries opened when the old cemetery in the city centre was full. The population was growing, increasing the need for new housing and burial sites. After that the middle cemetery opened in 1890 and the south in 1904. The north cemetery was connected to S:t Pauli church through a tree alley when the church was finished in 1882 (Malmö kyrkogårdsförvaltning 2021a, see fig. 5.4).

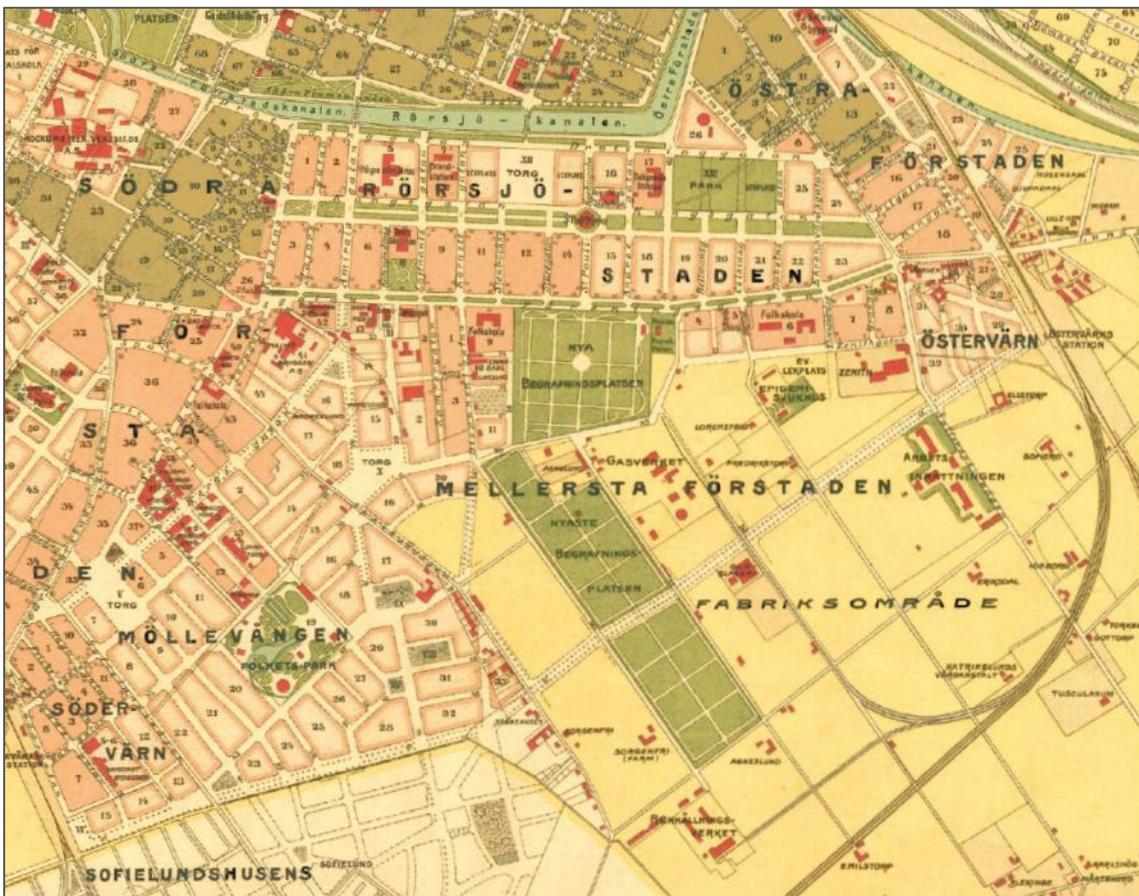


Fig. 4.1 – Map over the cemeteries and surroundings from 1904. Source: Malmö stadsarkiv, <http://kartor.malmo.se/kartarkiv/>

From being a remote place outside the city in the late 19th century, the cemeteries were already in the first half of the 20th century a part of the town. The city sprawled out around them to the north and southwest. The last built areas around the S:t Pauli south cemetery, Östra Sorgenfri, was built in the 1960's but from the 1920's the area was home to some

of the city's poor in the emergency housing often referred to as Hollywood (Malmö stad 2021a). Along the middle and south cemeteries there are still industrial areas on the north side while the other sides are surrounded by housing blocks from different eras.

The S:t Pauli cemeteries are today situated in central Malmö with Värnhem and Norra Sorgenfri to the north and Västra Sorgenfri, Östra Sorgenfri and Möllevången to the south. To the west it connects to Rörsjöstaden and the city centre. The three cemeteries are disconnected by two busy roads, S:t Knuts väg and Nobelvägen (see fig. 4.2).

The cemeteries have changed during the years with new grave sites, monuments and reshaping of vegetation. Their outer boundaries have been the same and the tree alleys has been preserved. S:t Pauli north had a frame of meandering paths which later were covered with grass (see fig. 4.3). S:t Pauli middle cemetery was constructed while the orphanage of Annelund still owned a patch of land and that lot was included in the cemetery a bit later (Isberg 1923, p. 893, see fig. 4.3). The middle cemetery was provided with a cremation garden in 1973 (Malmö kyrkogårdsförvaltning 2021a).

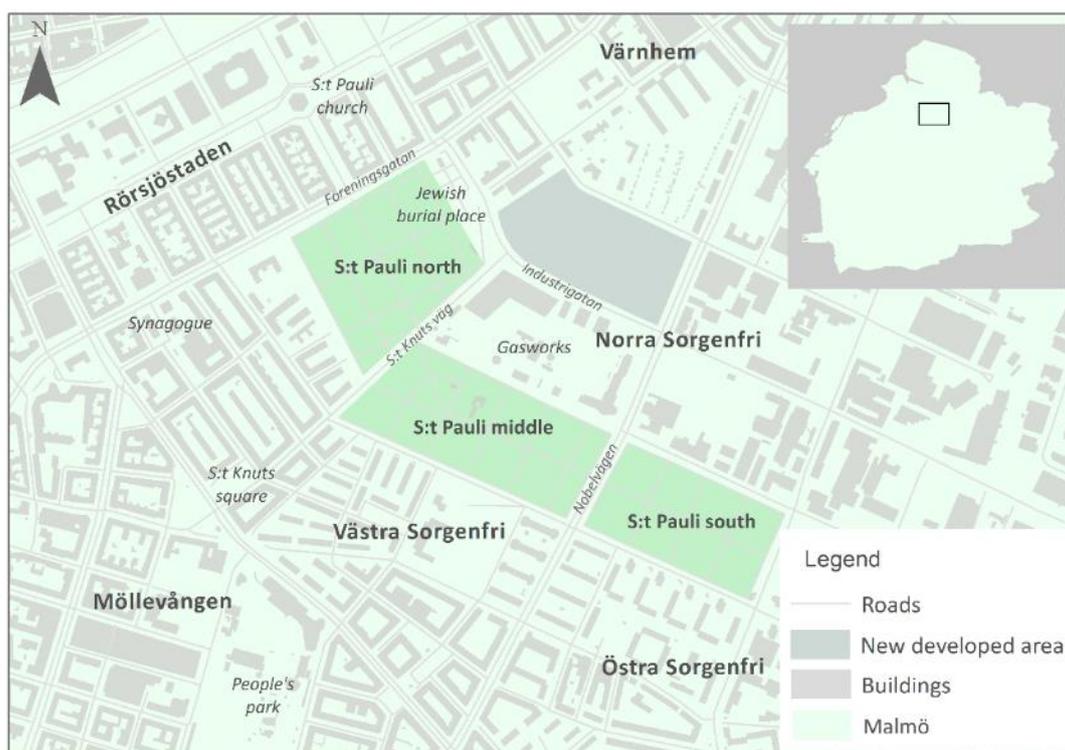


Fig. 4.2 – Map over the cemeteries and surroundings. Map: Emma Jonsson. Data source: Lantmäteriet 2017.

The cemeteries are lush with a lot of different trees and plants not seen in other green areas in Malmö. In summer, the tree alleys provide shade for walkers and runners and the

monuments interest visitors all year around (see fig. 4.4). The cemeteries are open for burials of any tradition if the rules for aesthetics in the burial plots are respected. An exception is the “free block” where it is possible to place bigger and higher monuments.

All three cemeteries have opening hours between 7:15-21:00 and are surrounded by fences. All gates are locked during the night. This unlike other green areas, like parks, which are always open to the public. The cemetery maintenance organization has raised issues around crimes being committed in the cemeteries and recently security guards started to patrol the cemeteries. The issues are mainly stealing, narcotics, sex trafficking and vandalism (Westerberg 2021).

The cemeteries are situated beside an industrial area which the municipality is currently redeveloping. Norra Sorgenfri is a large area along the northern borders of the three cemeteries and has been home to smaller industries and the gasworks (see fig. 4.2). Malmö city has for a long time planned for a redevelopment where 2500 new homes are being built during a period of 30 years (Malmö stad 2008). The first neighbourhood, situated along Industrigatan, is almost finished (see fig. 4.2). The remaining neighbourhoods near the middle and south cemeteries are being built the next two



Fig. 4.3 – Map over S:t Pauli north and middle (then called New and Newest) cemeteries 1894. The shaped paths can be seen in the north cemetery and the orphanage of Annelund in the middle cemetery. Source: Malmö stadsarkiv, <http://kartor.malmo.se/kartarkiv/>

decades. The redevelopment will change the surroundings and the context for the cemeteries.



Fig. 4.4 – Tree alley in the S:t Pauli north cemetery. Photo: Emma Jonsson, 21-05-13.

The municipality sees the cemeteries as valuable green areas in the larger green structure of Malmö. They are a connection of the central green areas out through the large Eastern cemetery up to Bulltofta recreation area at the eastern edge of the city. Having three large green areas in the city centre, Malmö city sees the cemeteries as suitable for recreation. The city plans to link the redeveloped neighbourhoods to the cemeteries through new entrances and paths as well as improving the connections between the cemeteries (Malmö stad 2008, pp. 34-35).

The cemeteries are in an area in rapid transformation which will affect the cemeteries in the future. But already today there are a lot of people living around the cemeteries and people using it in their everyday life beside the use of active burial site. Through providing this background the cemeteries can be seen in the bigger city of Malmö as well as being a bit more familiar going into the analysis chapter.

5 Exploring S:t Pauli cemeteries

This chapter presents the study of the S:t Pauli cemeteries. It provides a presentation of the gathered material together with analysis. The chapter is divided in sections of the themes derived from theory, starting by connecting to the previous chapter through the relation to the city, going into practices and other bodies, to borders and then feelings and affect. The last section provides a summary and focuses on the cemeteries as assemblage.

5.1 Relation to the city

The cemeteries are the largest green area for many people living around it. With clear borders around them, the cemeteries are still a backdrop of green trees and vegetation for the blocks closest. For those living in Sorgenfri and Rör sjö staden, the cemeteries are an important feature. The cemeteries are older than most surrounding buildings and has set geographical boundaries for the growing city. As Simon said, “the cemeteries are a constant for the neighbourhood” (Walk along D). For him, the cemetery provides not only a recreational place but also a view and daily interaction. Living across the street from the cemetery it is incorporated in the everyday life. In that sense, the cemeteries are more than an enclosed area. They have important qualities for residents providing a green view.

The cemeteries also bear witness of the city’s past through the monuments. They show a history of how Malmö was built but also provides more contemporary stories from people who are more recently deceased. It shows the perspective of what people have been prominent in the city history through the large monuments of the elite families, like Kockum or Friis (Malmö stad 2021b).

As mentioned, the cemeteries are and will be an important part of the green structure in the area, especially since there is a lack of green areas in this part of town. Malmö city recognizes this in their master plan for Norra Sorgenfri (Malmö stad 2008) where they describe the cemeteries as the backbone for the green structure in this part of the city.

Malmö city is currently planning and building the neighbourhoods of Norra Sorgenfri on former industrial ground north of the cemeteries (see fig. 4.2). There will be around 2500 new homes when it is done (Malmö stad 2021a). The cemeteries will be placed in a setting where there are residential blocks on all sides of them, increasing the number of people having them as their closest green area. Since the cemeteries are used for passage and recreation today already, this will probably increase traffic inside the cemeteries.

The city is planning for green areas in the developing neighbourhoods, but they are small and have the form of neighbourhood parks (Malmö stad 2008, p. 25). There is no plan for any larger green area suitable for a walk or any of the qualities the cemeteries offer. The influx of people will make it harder to balance the usage for recreation and mourning. A balance that is important to keep, making sure everyone feels welcome at the same time as relatives to the dead have a safe space to mourn in (Interview A).

The view and narrative of the cemeteries differ slightly between Malmö city and the cemetery maintenance organization. Malmö city regards the cemeteries more as recreational green areas and want to enforce that by incorporating the cemeteries in the newly developed areas and in the overall green structure of the city (Malmö stad 2008). The cemetery maintenance organization on the other hand protects the place as an active burial site through enforcing their rules. Still the cemetery maintenance welcomes recreational use, as long as it does not disturb other visitors, and they see the need for a balance between the uses (Interview A). In that sense, there is no conflict around how to treat the cemeteries, but the two actors have different perspectives on the cemeteries and what is more important.

5.2 Practices and other bodies

Practices can be a vital part of an assemblage since they both uphold and undermine the assemblage (Shaw 2014). Practices shows not only what is going on but also what limitations a place has, and to some degree what people want the place to be. When studying the cemeteries, practices are found regulated both by rules and by people. They form an important part in shaping the place and making the place what it has been and what it is now.

Observing the cemeteries, they are used primarily as a recreation area. People are walking, running, walking their dogs, sitting down in the sun, or hanging out with friends. Mostly these practices do not disturb anyone nearby. They are quiet and most often tranquil activities. The cemeteries are spacious and at most times there are rather few people in the near proximity. They are used as a passage during certain times when more people cycle and walk through on the paved roads. Sometimes cars drive in, most often to park near a burial plot where the relatives care for the plot. Usually there was a couple of burial plot visitors and cremation garden visitors during each observation. During warm afternoons or weekends activities like sunbathing are more common and at one instance a picknick was seen. Daytime there were sometimes school classes visiting, at

one instance to play on the lawns (see fig. 5.3). At two instances consumption of alcohol was seen, once at the picnic and once a person drinking alone on a bench. The practices hence varies but the most common practices are walking, sitting on benches or running.

Moving around the cemeteries there is a noticeable barrier for crossing over to the small gravel paths between the headstones. Most people move along the paved roads, especially for running or walking with company. Fewer people choose to walk along the paths and when they do, they are often alone or walking a dog. A few do run between the headstone but most often along the wider paths going around the blocks of headstones (see fig. 5.1). It suggests there is a difference between moving close to the headstones and moving on the paved roads, which all walk along participants also confirm (Walk along A, B, C and D).



Fig. 5.1 – Northern paved road and the parallel gravel path, often used for running, on the middle cemetery. Photo: Emma Jonsson, 21-04-29.

During the walk alongs, all participants chose to walk on the gravel paths at some point. Miranda said she felt like she came closer to the serene and reflecting atmosphere that

she experiences on the cemeteries (Walk along A). Elsa and Ingrid said they walk everywhere and enjoy looking at the headstone closely. For them it is an interest in history and an interaction with the physical environment they are in (Walk along B). Karin expressed a need for tranquillity and highlighted the lack of traffic noise and instead hearing birds singing. She used the gravel paths to walk on a softer surface (Walk along C). For Simon, the gravel paths offered another way to move around than he would on the paved roads. The sense of direction is less clear on the gravel paths, letting the body move more freely. For him it entailed walking in a slower pace and hearing other sounds, like the gravel crackling under the shoes (Walk along D).

Elsa and Ingrid also explained that their approach to the cemeteries have changed during their lives. They had to learn that it is acceptable to use an urban cemetery for recreation. When they were young the cemeteries were a place for the dead where the living was to pay their respects and be as quiet as possible. Raising their children, they taught them to be calm and quiet at the cemeteries but that it is a place for the living too. They gradually learned to use the cemeteries for recreation and started to use the cemeteries for walking since they live close by (Walk along B).

Both Simon and Karin highlighted that they used the cemeteries more or in a different way when their children were younger (Walk along C and D). Karin used the cemeteries as a park back then too and played with her children on the cemeteries (Walk along C). Simon started to use the cemeteries when his first child was born to avoid the heat (the summer was exceptionally warm) and to take walks for the baby to sleep. When the child was a little older the cemeteries were a good place to learn how to ride a bike. Since then, he has walked a lot on the cemeteries even if he visits a fewer now when the children need more activity (Walk along D). Both Simon and Karin regularly visit the People's Park, which is the nearest park, but they use it for other activities (Walk along C and D). It is not a place for walks or serenity.

There are rules for what is acceptable to do in the cemeteries. These are found on signs by the main entrances. Even so, they are not conclusive, leaving part of what is acceptable and not open for interpretation. Since the cemeteries are used for recreation by many people, practices that are more disturbing do take place. This can be picnicks, school groups coming to play, or dogs running loose (see Appendix B). For most participants this was behaviours that did not fit at a cemetery. These practices can be a disruption in soundscape as well as visually. Even if the participants themselves could see it as a disturbance, their concern was aimed at possible grieving visitors.



Fig. 5.2 – Lawn with smaller monuments at the middle cemetery. Photo: Emma Jonsson, 21-08-13.

Karin thinks the cemeteries should be used more as parks and that most kind of activities are welcome but is also affected by other bodies in the place. She respects burial plot visitors by walking around them, giving them space. She also mentioned unacceptable behaviour on burial plots, like having a picknick beside a monument. Even though she would not confront anyone, she thinks certain activities on the burial plots are unnecessary (Walk along D).

Several participants mentioned the thefts of metal from headstones as an unacceptable behaviour at the cemeteries (Walk along B and D). Stealing from cemeteries and churches is a frequent problem and for S:t Pauli cemeteries it has been a major issue (Westerberg 2021). Stealing is both legally and socially unacceptable in- and outside the cemeteries, but the participants through it was less acceptable to steal from a headstone since it is a monument for a dead person. This points to the status cemeteries have due to their intended function as burial sites.

A thing all participants mentioned as unacceptable was letting dogs urinate on the headstones or around the burial plots (Walk along A, B, C and D). This was recorded several times during the observations as a lot of people walk their dogs on the gravel paths right beside the burial plots, inside the blocks of monuments (see fig. 5.6). This practice



Fig. 5.3 – A larger lawn with a few older monuments, middle cemetery. Photo: Emma Jonsson, 21-08-13.

by dog owners seemed to upset the participants both because it is a violation towards the dead person and the monument, but also towards the living who tend to the burial site.

The understanding of the cemetery as a place for tranquillity and sorrow is still present for all the participants. It was also seen during the observations in the lack of loud activities, play and loud conversation. When walking around the cemeteries even a loud phone call could be disturbing in the otherwise quiet place. Even though none of the participants had a strict understanding of what practices should be allowed on the cemeteries, they all had a general accordant understanding.

As an active burial site, 37 in-ground burials took place in 2020 and two or three internments of ashes or scatterings happened every week (Interview A). The burials affect the environment not only when they take place by regulating the behaviour of other visitors, it also changes the physical environment for a longer period. Headstones are added whenever a person has been buried and the adding and removal of stones are a main practice for an active burial site. The removal of stones is done regularly but is

regulated by a lot of different aspects. The grave plots are owned by a family for 25 years and after that the plot reverts to the cemetery maintenance service. It can be reverted before due to lack of maintenance or relatives transferring the ownership before 25 years have gone by (Malmö kyrkogårdsförvaltning 2021b). Because of this, the physical environment changes over time even though the changes are small and not always notable. Even the dead bodies in the ground are decomposing, changing form along with new bodies being buried.

Another important practice is the physical maintenance of burial plots. Every weekday there are several maintenance workers busy with tending the plots, lawns and gravel paths. The workers are an important part of supporting the assemblage by tending the physical environment and enforcing rules. The bare existence of workers is important since they are a symbol for the cemeteries and the order. The workers are encouraged to stop activities like sunbathing, dogs urinating on burial grounds and sometimes school classes and youths if they are loud (Interview A). The workers said they sometimes talk to people when they feel it could be an easy conversation. If they feel unsure about the person's reaction, they will not interfere. Since the beginning of May, security guards patrol the cemeteries and have taken over the role of enforcing the rules (Interview B & C).

The practices carried out on the cemeteries are all a part of supporting or undermining the place. People behave in certain ways due to their understanding of what a cemetery should be as well as being affected by other bodies and their practices in the place. The practices that belong to the active burial site are affecting visitors who are there for other reasons. Not only at the moments when practices are carried out, but also through the possibility they could be carried out.

5.3 Border making

Borders here refers to geographical, physical, and social borders. When observing, and primarily doing walk alongs, the borders of the cemeteries became clear, not only physically but mentally. When walking out through the main gates of any of the three cemeteries you immediately find yourself on a narrow sidewalk in front of a busy road. This is not only a physical barrier for continuing through the next cemetery but also introduces another atmosphere. It is a disruption of the tranquillity the participants seek walking the cemeteries (Walk along A, B, C and D). At the same time, it makes the

borders clear and shows how the physical environment and movement of bodies impact the visitors inside the fences of the cemeteries. The contrasts are sharp.

Borders are also established towards other visitors through practices influenced by judgement, respect and distance. Borders are placed on themselves by keeping distance to burial plot visitors and people seemingly grieving. The care for other people's sorrow is what seem to restrict the participants' behaviour the most. They all more or less feel they would want life and movement around them when they themselves are dead but also respects that not everyone would feel the same way. Therefore, they are aware of their surroundings and gives space to possible burial plot visitors (Walk along B, C and D).

Judgement is also a form of border making where unacceptable behaviour is deemed wrong. This happens mostly towards loud activities like children playing in groups (for

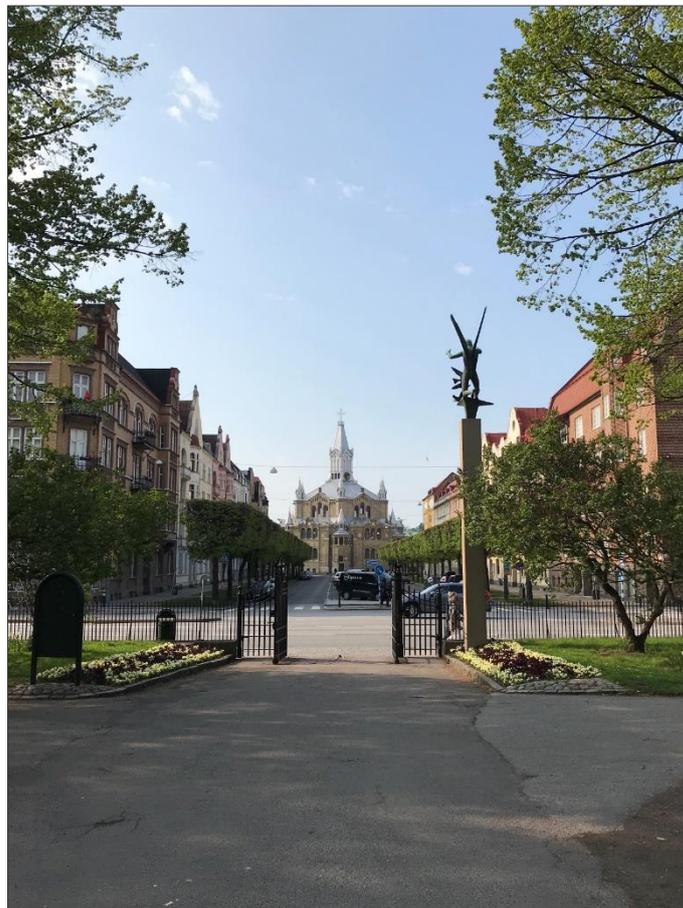


Fig. 5.4 – Outlook from North cemetery main entrance towards S:t Pauli church with the *Angels and birds* sculpture to the right. Photo: Emma Jonsson, 21-05-13.

example school classes) or dog walkers close to monuments. Even if most participants were not fond of correcting someone, some of them had contacted authorities (for

example, a school principal or the cemetery maintenance workers) about it (Walk along B). The cemetery maintenance organization gets a lot of complaints over different practices perceived as disturbing or wrong (Interview A). The judgement of others limits the judging person itself as well as having a more extensive effect in shaping the range of possibilities in the place.

In some parts of the cemeteries the borders are less clear, especially regarding the soundscape, but to some degree also the visual borders. The north cemetery borders to a school and a preschool at the south side. From there sounds travel into the southern road. Visually the view is open into the school yards and the fence is discreet (see fig. 5.5).

The interplay between the cemetery and the buildings along the south side of both north and middle cemetery is different from the other more enclosed sides. The sound travels and permeates this part of the cemetery with sounds that are not associated with cemeteries, like children playing and laughing.

The soundscape is quieter further to the centre of the cemeteries, away from busy roads and other buildings. There, the sound of birds singing and sounds from the maintenance



Fig. 5.5 – Outlook from north cemetery towards the preschool. Photo: Emma Jonsson, 21-04-17.

work are more common. Along the north side of the middle cemetery lies the old gasworks where an energy company still has activity. It provides the north side with a layer of noise whenever they are using their machines.

A feature of the cemeteries that is not taken for granted in the dense inner city is the possibility to see far ahead (Walk along D). In this case it is possible to see a couple of hundred meters forwards as well as having an overview of a larger area. In the city roads provide a chance to see far ahead but the view is most often restricted by buildings on each side. Inside the cemeteries the view is restricted to go beyond the fences because of vegetation. What is possible to have overview over is mostly restricted to what is inside of the fences, even if some sides give more visual interaction with the environment on the outside.

5.4 Religion and death

The most significant signs of both religion and death at the cemeteries are the monuments. The dead is not present as visual objects, but visitors are reminded of them through the stones and the names. They are mostly ordered in rectangular blocks or scattered on the lawns. On the middle cemetery lies a chapel for funerals and a cremation garden. Near the main entrance from Föreningsgatan on the north cemetery there is an ash grave site and on the northern corner lies the old Jewish burial site in an enclosed area (see fig. 4.2).



Fig. 5.6 – Outlook over a block with monuments, north cemetery. Photo: Emma Jonsson, 21-08-13.

Religion and religious places are a part of the neighbourhoods around the cemeteries as well. Religion has been a visual part of Rörsjöstad, with the S:t Pauli church, and Västra Sorgenfri through the synagogue alongside the Betania church and KFUM (Young Men's Christian Association) (Malmö stad 2021a).

For a few participants, like Elsa and Ingrid, the history and the monuments are important. They enjoy reading the texts and searching for certain monuments. At the same time, they are mindful of the dead and creates a connection to the place through the headstones and the dead they belong to (Walk along B). For others, the headstones create a more intimate sphere which transitions into a different feeling or a different atmosphere (Walk along A, D). It can be a barrier for walking on the gravel paths, coming too close to the headstones.

None of the participants said there were religious, belonging to a religion or religious group. The fact that the cemeteries are mainly Christian grounds was of less importance. Still, issues around life and death were present for them in diverse ways. Karin admitted it is a bit morbid to take daily walks at a cemetery, though she did not think about it a lot when walking (Walk along C). Ingrid, Elsa, and Simon mentioned that death is inevitable and that they were not intimidated of the dead who resides at the cemeteries. For them, the dead provided stories and history, and invited to reflection (Walk along B, D).

The notion that a cemetery is a religious room is still a part of the symbolic expression, but it does not seem to be the respect for religion per se that guide the participants' practices. Even though it might not directly be the cause for recreational visitors' practices it still is a key factor in several other ways.

When discussing practices, religion guides the practices of burials and interment of ashes at the cemeteries. It is also a reason the physical environment is shaped the way it is. Cemeteries over the world look quite different and the Swedish church has their own rules and guides for how a funeral and burial can be conducted. This is something that changes over time and something that is to a high degree influenced by what happens in society in general, architectural styles, and the culture of the country or region.

The properties of the cemeteries have changed over time and new ways to bury bodies have been introduced, like the ash grave site. The cemeteries are burial sites not only for Christians. There is a possibility to be buried on the cemeteries no matter what religion the deceased belonged to (Malmö kyrkogårdsförvaltning 2021a). The same goes for the Jewish burial site by the north cemetery. It differs from the other parts of the cemetery by not being active since a burial plot cannot be reused according to Jewish tradition. To

meet the need for larger monuments, a block in the middle cemetery was opened. The block now houses several, large, house like, monuments.



Fig. 5.7 – View from middle cemetery towards S:t Knuts väg and the north cemetery. Photo: Emma Jonsson, 21-08-13.

5.5 Feelings and affect

During all walk alongs the participants expressed a bond to the cemeteries. For most of them it is a mixture of memories, routine, and present needs. For the ones who started visiting the cemeteries with their children the bond is partially built on memories and tied to their children growing. It is also a bond through frequent use and being there. At the same time, the place itself seems to have certain qualities that cannot be exchanged or found elsewhere. Simon mentioned the shade, the stories he got from the headstones and the pace in the movement on the gravel paths (Walk along D). Karin mentioned the selection of trees and the gravel paths (Walk along C). Elsa and Ingrid mentioned the headstones, the vegetation and the small changes they discover when they walk (Walk along B). These things are particular for the S:t Pauli cemeteries and there is no other place to go to get the same experience.

The cemeteries have a sense of place for the participants. It is a special place in their eyes in several ways. It is a physically interesting place where vegetation, paths and

monuments together create a unique composition. It is also a historical place where it is possible to take part in the history of people and the city's evolution. It is a place where most of them feel comfortable during opening hours. It is a place where they can find serenity. It is a place where they are reminded of life and death. All this together creates a sense of place, a subjective experience of place.

Affect differs from sense of place since it cannot be connected to individual responses but collective responses and movements. It can though be a part of the subjective experience indirectly. If affect flows between bodies and alter the bodies' capacities it is possible to internalize the affects in the subjective experiences. It is not possible however to trace back parts of the experience to certain flows of affect. It is rather about the collective response and how the general atmosphere is at the cemeteries. This atmosphere will be experienced differently by visitors but are created through the flows and ordering of affects. At the cemeteries the atmosphere can change slightly depending on flows of bodies, but for the most part the atmosphere could be described as calm and quiet. Some would surely find it morbid or sad, but the participants find it serene and tranquil. This is to a high degree influenced by what people are doing, and is translated through every human, and imbued with mood, feelings and attentiveness. The atmosphere shapes what practices are carried out and is in turn shaped by these practices.

5.6 Assemblage of an urban cemetery

Through the exploration tensions has been uncovered. They spring mainly from two, sometimes opposing, needs: burial of the deceased and recreation. This tension is visible in all parts, from practices to discourse about urban cemeteries.

On the other hand, both uses are needed. When the north cemetery was constructed, the recreational aspect was a factor. The meandering paths around the cemetery was supposed to be used for walks (Isberg 1923). There is room for both uses, since there is an understanding that space should be given, and practices are adapted to that. As long as this mutual respect works, there are no conflicts. As in all public or semi-public spaces, the practices are negotiated and opinions of what is acceptable and not differs between individuals. Discussing the cemeteries, a new layer of respect comes into play due to the dead and their living relatives. This makes the place particular in how it works.

It is at the same time a multiplicity, as a green space, a bird watching place, a place for serenity, for meditation, for daily walks, for mourning, it is a workplace, a view, a final resting place, a religious place, a place to learn how to ride a bike, a place to do drugs, a

pause, a place for rituals, for history, a place to protect, a place to change. It is all these places and more.

Still, thinking of all these identities of place, it is also most often a serene place where people act within a certain frame. Through the intersections of form of content and form of expression this set of practices, through written and unwritten rules, and the atmosphere of the cemeteries are created. All the parts coexist to have exactly this outcome for how the cemeteries work.

In a way, the assemblage of the cemeteries builds on pairs of living and dead, now and then, recreation and burial. They should not be seen as dichotomies but as pairs where both are needed supporting the assemblage. Through time the pairs have coexisted but with more recreational use, a secularisation, and a material need of recreational places, this can be changing. The importance of the recreational use is a cornerstone in the place being an integrated part of the city, and through that supporting the assemblage, making the cemeteries valuable in the city's development. The part that makes the place living, instead of morbid. In the long run, through discussions about the need of green areas, the city's perspective, secularization, and urban densification, a morbid place, even if the intended use is important for society, could be less valuable to keep.

The assemblage seems to be very stable, but looking into to it, there is always a fluidity, multiplicity and a state of becoming. Changing one part is more than changing that part, it is changing the assemblage, leading it into deterritorialization. There are always possibilities of change, it is just unknown to us what the change would entail. It is not a journey from beginning to end, it starts somewhere in the middle. As the participants in the walk alongs pointed to, they would like to have life around them even when they are dead, and death is just an unavoidable part of life (Walk along B, C, D).

6 Conclusions

This study sets out to explore place as assemblage and what this understanding would imply for the human relation to place. Assemblage theory promotes the complex, the multiplicity and the fluid. The complex lies in the intersections, giving all aspects ontological value, and in seeing the multiplicity. The fluidity lies in the light and the dark, in the possibilities of change, and in movements.

Place in an assemblage context is understood as complex, where all the parts, from visiting bodies to policy discussions, together create the place. It is more than a location; it has connection in both time and space. Like the manifestations of power in big monuments, the influence it has on the whole area around it, and the collection of trees from over the world.

It is a perspective that has a lot in common with a relational view of place. Seeing the connections to other places, time, and the multiple identities a place has. Assemblage theory promotes a perspective from where this multiplicity can be noticed, by not excluding elements for being irrelevant in the framework. It gives a rich study where a focus on intersections between material form and symbolic expressions can open for innovative ideas and knowledge.

Assemblage theory considers the human interaction by giving their bodies agency physically in the assemblage. The bodies moving around the place are crucial by their affects towards other bodies and by supporting or undermining practices. Through the placed assemblage and creation of atmospheres from affects, this is a part of how humans relate to place. The atmosphere created is felt and experienced by people, creating a sense of place. The framework opens for the fluidity in experience of place due to affects working differently from place to place as well as the affects being processed through the individual consciousness, ultimately creating a sense of place in a person. The sense of place, from intensities in affects, at the cemeteries was strong for the participants and they all expressed a similar sense focusing on the tranquillity and reflection.

The perspective does not focus on the individual experience of place and cannot explain why people feel one way or another. But it can provide clues through examining the parts of the assemblage, discovering reasons and affects which would lead people to stay away or use it. It also acknowledges it is not only about materiality and human need, but also about ideology, norms, and discussions within us and in society. The practicality of the soft gravel paths and shaded roads come forward together with a place for grief and

reflection. Understandings of death and religion was alongside the need of movement and interest of history. It gives credit to both material and symbolic forms and considers that they intersect creating something entirely particular – the assemblage. At the same time, it provides a framework for incorporating a temporal and fluid aspect of place. The multiplicity of place means humans can connect to a place in many ways.

The concept of assemblage can be used as a useful analysing tool to answer questions like how and why a place works. For example, how does S:t Pauli cemeteries work? It is also useful to uncover multiplicities and to paint a rich picture of a case. Seeing this, it can be particularly useful in examining processes of power, like policy processes. Analysing place can evidently uncover interesting intersections but it lies close to the understanding of relational place, even if some would argue there is ontological differences between the two. Another point is that it is sometimes needed to focus on a certain perspective, for example, the economic and social relations of a place.

As with any theory, the goal is not reflecting reality as it is. Reality never translates to text. It is always more complex, personal and messy. Deleuze and Guattari's thinking is another way to see the world. Their own language is hard to grasp, and they try to show how they think through their style of writing. Hence, it is not an easy theory to work with, leading to both misconceptions and a high threshold for engaging with it.

In a way assemblage theory allows for a deep understanding of human relation to place. It does not stop with expressed emotions around what a place feels like. It allows for seeing that these expressed emotions come from somewhere and that what creates these emotions already are in the place, the affects. All bodies affect each other which makes a place uncontrollable. Even if it is not possible to track back from what affects a certain emotion came from, it is possible to investigate the affects and how they are ordered. That allows for a more complex understanding of place. Since moving bodies, other objects and narratives are involved in the process, sense of place can never be reduced to functions of a place.

This can be useful in an urban planning perspective since one problem for planners is that it is impossible to satisfy everyone's desires or opinions. Reminding planners of that how much a planner plans for a certain outcome for the sense of place or place experience, it will not apply to all people. Having the perspective of how a place works in its entirety changes the perspective just a little bit. If there is an understanding of how a place works, it is possible to be better prepared for what changes can do in that particular place. It provides an understanding that the place already functions in its own way and

redeveloping will change that entirely. Therefore, it is important to include as many people in the process as possible, stressing the point of planning with people rather than for people. In that sense, planners could function more like coordinators of inclusive planning where the ones living in and using a place together develop places. It makes the planning process messier, but reality is already messy. It is neither desirable nor possible to control the messiness from a power position in the public sector.

List of interviews

Walk alongs

All the names are fictitious for anonymity. The names are used to refer to the walk alongs in a personal way in the text. Here is a presentation of the participants.

Walk along A: 14 April 2021. Miranda – 31 years old, archivist, participant in the pilot walk along. Usually takes walks alone or with friends. Lived close to the cemeteries for three years.

Walk along B: 21 April 2021. Ingrid – 70+ years old, retired preschool teacher. Has lived close to the S:t Pauli cemeteries for 50 years. Walks and look at headstones on the cemeteries. Walks with Elsa every week. They both have an interest in history and enjoy looking at the monuments.

Elsa – 70+ years old, retired preschool teacher. Has also lived close to the cemeteries for around 50 years. Was interviewed together with Ingrid.

Walk along C: 27 April 2021. Karin – 60 years old, librarian. Lived close to the cemetery for 25 years. Uses the cemeteries as a park for walking and looks at the headstones from time to time. Used it as a park with the children when they were young.

Walk along D: 28 April 2021. Simon – 38 years old, worked on the seas but now works with economics. Lived close to the cemetery for around 10 years. Started to use the cemeteries when the children were younger.

Interviews

Interview A: Malmö Kyrkogårdsförvaltning, 2021-04-14, e-mail interview with head of cemetery gardening (kyrkogårdsmästare).

Interview B: Maintenance worker at S:t Pauli cemeteries, face-to-face interview at the cemetery, 2021-06-14

Interview C: Maintenance worker at S:t Pauli cemeteries, face-to-face interview at the cemetery, 2021-06-17

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Appendix A

Walk along structure

Goal: to see how people use the place and how they feel about practices going on. How they are affected by other bodies and physical environment as well as norms and ideas about the cemeteries. Connect to surroundings and the city.

Inform about ethics, anonymity, department and how the interviews are planned to be used.

Let the participant lead the way where they usually walk.

Background

Work, age, residence

How often are you visiting the cemeteries? When?

Themes

Activities

Borders

Other bodies

Feelings

Religion and death

Relation to the city

Appendix B

Observation plan

Times:

Before work: 7.15-8.00

Mid-morning: 10.00-11.00

Lunch: 11.30-13.30

Afternoon: 14.00-16.00

After work: 16.30-17.30

Evening: 18.00-20.00

Two observations each time = 12 obs. on weekdays. 6 obs. on weekends

Weekends: mid morning + afternoons + evenings

Week 15	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Before work							
Midmorning			X			X	
Lunch		X					
Afternoon			X				X
Awork	X						X
Evening					X		
Week 16	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Before work	X			X			
Midmorning		X					X
Lunch					X		
Afternoon			X			X	
Awork		X					
Evening				X		X	

Observation route



The observation route starts in the North cemetery walking over to the Middle cemetery. The route was a little bit more complex in the Middle cemetery due to more greenery which made it more difficult to have an overlook of certain areas.

Extract from observation notes

Observation, 2021-04-18, Sunday, 14:30-15:15. 17C, warm and mostly sunny

North

More people than yesterday when walking in, around 12 ppl

Mostly people walking

Two runners

Two groups sitting on the first lawn, one group with a dog

One person sitting on the ash memorial place

One person lying down on a bench

A few people walking dogs

One walking with trolley on the gravel paths

A person with a child having picknick at the tables by the cemetery maintenance building

5 people walking on the gravel paths

A child learning to ride bike

2 visitors to burial plots

4 groups hanging out in the third lawn

One is walking and looking at the headstones

Middle

Mostly people walking

One person running

In total 4 people on the north side road

4 pairs in the cremation garden, sitting and talking

Two are sitting on the wall surrounding two sides of the grove

A larger group of people are hanging out on two benches on the grass by the newer headstones

Around 10 people on the south road, one is running, some are walking and some hanging out on benches

Two people are walking on the gravel paths

3 people sitting on the bigger lawn

A picknick with 6 people

Middle road: two walking and a couple sitting on a bench

One car

Two cycling through

Two visitors to burial plots

Two groups looking at the monuments in the "free quarter"

Comments: Overall a calm feeling. A lot of people sitting in the sun, hanging out or walking slowly. Not as many running or walking fast as usual. More people walking on the gravel paths than other days. A bit more life and hanging out as well as the picknick. Probably due to the warmth and Sunday.