Chapter 8
City on Fire: Deterritorialisation and Becoming at Edinburgh's Beltane Fire Festival

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Abstract The focus of this chapter is to highlight the potential of festivals to deterritorialise and reterritorialise urban spaces. Deterritorialisation is able to expose urban spaces, albeit temporally and provisionally, to new re-organisation; it is conceptually understood by the theorists Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari as a movement producing change, which is immanent to space itself. The study context of this chapter is the Beltane Fire Festival in Edinburgh. It has been associated to the category of neo-pagan festivals, celebrated as revival of ancient Celtic rituals. Beltane is celebrated in Calton Hill, a contested place that is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Old and New Towns of Edinburgh site, situated at the fringe of Edinburgh city centre. Although Edinburgh's Beltane Fire Festival has been criticised for its 'playful deviance', these and other festivals that draw on Scotland's cultural heritage are increasingly appraised as powerful visitor attraction assets and therefore included within the destination's event portfolio strategies.

Keywords Deterritorialisation · Reterritorialisation · Fire festivals · Cultural heritage

8.1   Introduction

Calton Hill is a promontory accessible from the East end of Edinburgh city centre. The hill and its properties that are part of UNESCO World Heritage Old and New Towns of Edinburgh are well visible during the day but at nightfall, it is not illuminated like the other hills of Edinburgh city centre. Calton Hill almost disappears from the city night skyline once the sun sets. This is the case on all but one night of the year. On April 30, specially erected structures are set alight and a torchlight procession circumambulates the hill for the celebration of the Beltane Fire Festival. This festival is inspired by an ancient Celtic ritual connected to the changing of seasons. Beltane is a celebration of the rebirth of nature and returning of light after winter (MacCulloch 2009).

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The festival has been discussed for its carnivalesque character (Matheson and Tinsley 2016) and for its spiritual attitudes and visitors' motivations (Matheson et al. 2014). While it does not appear in the Edinburgh Festival programme, Beltane is currently listed in 'ICH Scotland', a Wiki style web inventory created for the development and support of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Scotland (see Museums Galleries Scotland 2019). Compared to tangible cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage was once less emphasised in academia and real world; however, this type of heritage has been much more respected as subjects of research and conservation in the past 15–20 years to value and conserve diverse kinds of cultural heritage (Jimura 2019). Here, the Beltane Fire Festival is spoken about in terms of a modern revival a Celtic tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Interestingly, it can be noted that, the festival lies in a grey area in-between an authorised Celtic heritage narrative (Smith 2006) and a less authorised contemporary neo-pagan revisitation. Together with this discursive perspective, this chapter aims at illuminating, through a Deleuzian appraisal (Deleuze 1987, 1994; Deleuze and Guattari 1987), the space of Calton Hill and how space is continuously deterritorialised and reterritorialised through festivals' spatial tactics (De Certeau 1984) and their politics. In terms of regeneration, the continual making and unmaking here is a form of cultural revival.

According to Paterson (2019), Calton Hill is regarded as a *symbolic intense oddity,* a marginal space within the urban fabric of Edinburgh. Despite its collocation within the city centre, the space is scarcely used, almost neglected. Thus from an urban regeneration standpoint, Calton Hill emerges as a contested space: on the one hand, for the presence of monuments, expressions of the Hellenization of the city of Edinburgh and symbols of the Scottish Enlightenment (as Calton Hill gained inclusion within the Edinburgh's UNESCO World Heritage site). On the other hand, Calton Hill has gained in time a controversial reputation. During the interwar period, the hill had been put on the spotlight for Queer subcultures gathering and sexual activity, at that time considered a threat to public order and actively prosecuted (Meek, 2015). More recently, the hill attracted media attention for episodes of crime and anti-social behaviour. Such urban spaces are often identified by urban planners as spaces to regenerate, as areas with monuments or amenities are seen as commercial spaces that can be creatively transformed (Wise and Clark 2017). However, the complexity of meanings associated to the hill might explain its current state of spatial (central) marginality and resistance to change. The presence of any newly built tangible features here could challenge the meanings associated with Calton Hill and any new developments could eventually be a threat for the survival of the Fire Festival held here.

Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) images of smooth and striated space and the concept of state and war machine, this chapter aims to highlight the dialogue between formal and informal urbanities (Villanueva 2013). Festivals are regarded as a force of deterritorialisation, in other words, a force of change able to convert space physically and discursively (Johansson and Kociatkiewicz 2011). The festival is also regarded as a war machine (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) for its ability to disrupt and counteract mainstream dominant discourses and at the same time impose and occupy space powerfully, through human festival practices as well as the deployment

of powerful non-human elements such as fire. The chapter opens with background information about the Beltane Fire Festival, and Edinburgh, which holds the city brand: the Festival City. Then, drawing on the philosophy of Deleuze (1987,1994) and his work with Guattari (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), the discussion will move to an analysis of the festival space and practices. At the end, final considerations and conclusions are drawn.

8.2   Edinburgh and the Beltane Fire Festival

The Beltane Fire Society, the organisation responsible for the Beltane Fire Festival, was found in 1988. Every year since then, on April 30, the festival is organised in Calton Hill and attracts thousands of people, both locals and tourists. The Beltane Fire Society was created as a community arts project, with the aim of creating an awareness of the general public in the traditions of the Celtic lunar calendar fire festivals as well their significance in today's society (Beltane Fire Society, 2018). Another aim is to promote the Scottish street theatre performances tradition.

To step back for a moment and consider some history linked to the event, in Ancient Gaelic the word 'Beltane' seems to be derived from *bel-tene*, or 'a goodly fire'. According to other theories Bel stands for *Bel-dine*, because apparently *dine* (newly born cattle) were offered in sacrifice to the divinity Bel. Beltane is known as an ancient Celtic holiday celebrated around May 1 each year, not only in Scotland, but also in Ireland and the Isle of Man (Monaghan 2014). For the Celtic populations, Beltane was a festival of life, celebrated to mark the return of the sun shining in his strength—thus represented by fire. Its celebration used to mark the beginning of summer. One of the main rituals at Beltane was the lighting of bonfires, often on hills. During Beltane every house had to extinguish their fire and a big bonfire used to be lit by a need fire up on a hill. The fire has a symbolic meaning. The belief was that fire can keep disease and evil away. According to MacCulloch (2009), cattle were driven between two fires lit by Druids in the credence that this would have ensured their health during the year.

Beltane was therefore used to celebrate the renewed fertility of the coming year. This festival or a revival of it has survived in Scotland where fires are lit across the region and private celebrations are held among groups of Pagans to mark the start of summer. The largest Beltane celebration in Britain is held in Edinburgh on Calton Hill. Upon nightfall, fires are lit and festivities associated with it are carried on until dawn. At the centre of attention are two main characters: the May Queen and the Green Man and their cortège of other groups of characters all symbolically connected with the two protagonists. The festival begins with a stage performance at the National Monument Acropolis. It continues with a procession to the top of Calton Hill led by the two main characters: the May Queen and the Green Man. After the National monument acropolis is lit on fire the procession continues and follows different stages. One of the main passages of the procession is the crowning of the Green Man by the May Queen. They then start a dramatic stage performance

where eventually the Green Man winter costume is removed so that he can reveal his spring costume. The two then engage in a wild dance before they are finally married. The whole scene culminates with the lighting of a huge bonfire that marks the beginning of summer. The beating of drums accompanies the Festival from start to finish (Beltane Fire Society 2018).

Despite the fact that the Beltane Fire Festival is described as a revival, its connections with ancient Scottish festivities are still an open debate (ICH Scotland 2019). It is described by the Scottish Intangible Cultural Heritage inventory as a robustly supported event, or one that is able to transmit intangible cultural heritage practices. Ancient and newly created festivals are therefore included within this inventory under the umbrella of intangible cultural heritage in Scotland. It is undeniable that the plethora of events included within the Scottish intangible cultural heritage inventory constitutes a powerful visitor attraction asset and one that can attract tourism beyond the high season as well as able to distribute touristic flows more evenly throughout the region—especially fitting for Edinburgh, known as the world's leading 'festival city' (Prentice and Andersen 2003). These events are increasingly included in portfolio strategies (Visit Scotland 2015) and used to promote Scotland as a festival and event tourism destination. From the realm of the popular tradition celebrated by the village community for the community itself, these celebrations are moving to the context of cultural heritage and tourism policy (the Scottish intangible cultural heritage inventory is an example of this). Spectacular festival imagery is increasingly used to expose and export the destination's brand globally to enrich the local visitor economy. Edinburgh is renowned for its fantastic range of purpose-built and non-purpose-built venues with events on throughout the year. The agenda of festivals in Edinburgh continues to grow year after year and attracts visitors from around the world.

8.3   Festivals and Smooth Spaces

While Deleuze's primary objective was to rethink philosophy and rethink the mechanics of Western thought, he is notwithstanding defined as the most spatial of all philosophers (Buchanan and Lambert 2005; Mould 2009; Johansson and Kociatkiewicz 2011). Space was in fact at the centre of his attention. Deleuze regards space as an entity, in a continuous state of becoming that presents a number of virtualities, possibilities and tendencies within (Conley 2010). The spatial images used by Deleuze are not only useful to understand his ideas of space but they also lend themselves very well to speak about Deleuze's idea of thinking as well as his idea of philosophy (Young 2015). Deleuze describes space in terms of degrees of smoothness and striation (Buchanan and Lambert 2005). The aim of this section is to illustrate the role of festivals in the dialectic between striated and smooth space.

Ideas associated to striated spaces are regulated, rectilinear and measurable. In their writing, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) identify that the city is the maximum example of a striated space because of its high degree of regulated distribution (see

also, Munro and Jordan 2013). Hierarchical arrangement comes into practice here because urban focal points are comprised of town centres or particular landmarks that catalyse flows. These settings and landmarks where flows exist can be predictable and predicted. The city as a striated space is characterised by fixed relations (Parr 2010). This means functional and mainstream buildings are built for a purpose and to accommodate the needs and expectations of a contemporary capitalist society. The city is therefore characterised by a mainstream arrangement as it presents itself as highly regulated and authorised by the state government or dominant religions. Pertinent to the conceptual arguments relevant in this chapter, urban festivals intersect this striated space. In other words, urban festivals are contained and constrained in urban striated space (Mould 2009).

An example of smooth space is the desert, but this image can also refer to other physiographic features including steppes and oceans. This space is called smooth for the absence of fixed relations (Parr 2010). In a smooth space, there are no privileged points of references, preferred flows or patterns. Its development can progress in any direction. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) argue characteristics associated to smooth spaces are oceanic, boundless, without distinction within and non-hierarchical (as no place is privileged over another). Other terms associated to smooth space are informal and unpredictable. An example of smooth space mentioned by Deleuze is the shanty town or 'informal cities', slums (Villanueva 2013). Thus, smoothness is a fertile ground for renewal, a terrain that allows for thinking space anew (Deleuze 1994). For Deleuze change and becoming are not brought from elsewhere but they are immanent to space itself (Conley 2010).

Deleuze's intention is not to describe such a space physically or for its tangibility but actually to account for its intangible, symbolic, capacities, intrinsic and imperceptible forces. In other words, Deleuze describes space as more than physical as well as more than discursive. Degrees of smoothness and striated are not interpreted by Deleuze in opposition. Indeed, despite the fact that they present contrasting features, any striated space has within himself the potential to become smooth again by revoking its dominant attributes and prevailing tendencies (Kamalipour and Peimani 2015; Koster and Nuijten 2016). As an example, several areas of the post-industrial city present themselves as smooth spaces, this is the case of unused, only partially used or completely neglected districts. These have become marginal to the organisation and functioning (striated) space of society and often lack a clear use and identity (Shields 1991).

This seems to conceptually align with the case of Calton Hill in Edinburgh. Its peculiar position within the topography and morphology of the city makes it possible that it is located in the city centre because of its proximity to both the Old and New town, but at the same time in its periphery due to its accessibility as well as 'use' (McKee 2018). Interestingly, Paterson (2019) notes that Calton Hill is mainly known and celebrated for its view and landscape than for its architecture and symbolic value; in other words, it is a place that is mainly 'looked out from than seen' and appreciated for its use (Paterson 2019, 361). In the sixteenth century, Calton Hill was home to a monastery, converted after the reformation into a hospital for lepers. Calton Jail was then opened in 1817, and is today the headquarters of the Scottish Human Right

Commission. The period between the mid-eighteenth century to the early-nineteenth century saw the construction of the most notable buildings in Calton Hill including the National Monument and the Royal Observatory (McKee 2018).

This era corresponds to the Hellenisation of the city of Edinburgh (Lowrey 2001; Naik and Stewart 2007; Mckee 2015) whereby the desire to associate the city with Athens was not only in terms of culture but also through the physical characteristics of the city. In fact, this era saw the construction of neo-Greek monuments and buildings which led to the granting among other aspects the inclusion of Calton Hill as part of the World Heritage Old and New Towns of Edinburgh. Despite such a significant symbolism and an attempt to restore the National Monument after World War I, Calton Hill fell, since then into local oblivion and disuse (McKee 2015). Today Calton Hill is occasionally transformed into a festival venue but it still mainly known and regarded for its view and iconic Greek-inspired landscape (Paterson 2019). Moreover, as noted, Calton Hill has gained a controversial reputation over time because its seclusion (geographically) allowed the space to become a place of illegal and anti-social activities (e.g. drug consumption).

This is to say that the city and the urban space have in itself the potential to reverse its striated tendencies and become smooth again. In the same vein, Villanueva (2013) emphasises the fluid physiognomy of the contemporary global city characterised by the dynamic exchange between the informal, smooth urbanism (such as submarket economies and construction of slums) and formal, striated urban geographies. Therefore, striated and smooth, being not actual spaces, but rather more like a tendency, are reversible. Smooth spaces can be enacted within striated space. To this end, Mould (2009) mentions the example of parkour (a popular urban trend consisting of athletic practices such as jumping, climbing and free running over and through any terrain counting only in the abilities of the body). In the urban environment, this translates into activities such as free running on building and jumping between roofs. This practice has been interpreted as an alternative way to experience the urban environment that challenges its dominant, capitalist mainstream usage. Here, according to Mould (2009), traceurs are activating smooth spaces within a highly striated space.

Likewise, festival practices are interpreted for activating a smoothing-up process of urban space in Edinburgh. For example, Munro and Jordan (2013) draw on De Certeau's (1984) conceptualisation of spatial tactics opposed to spatial strategies to investigate practices that artists employ to create hybrid workspaces within public spaces at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. While spatial strategies tend to manipulate space over time for the purpose of control, spatial tactics are provisional, and thus operate in an isolated fashion and create surprises (Munro and Jordan 2013). In other words, the festival space is in itself as smooth as it is defined by the spatial tactics by which a space is provisionally occupied.

The performers of the Beltane Fire Festival utilise a range of different spatial tactics. These are peculiarly characterised by the use of human and non-human elements. The human elements are represented by the main characters of the festival, namely, the May Queen, the Green Man as well as the groups of performers that form their entourage (Beltane Fire Society 2018). During the event the audience is a part of the festival performance as witnesses of the ritual as it follows the representation

since its start with the spectacular staging phase in the acropolis of the National Monument along the itinerant performance that culminates in an area in Calton Hill called the Bower where the performance of the festival comes to an end. Space is also appropriated through the use of non-human elements, in particular, the use of fire to illuminate the acropolis as well as the use of torches to guide the procession, and finally the lighting of the bonfire symbolising the returning of light (Beltane Fire Society 2018). These elements contribute to the co-creation of the performative field of the festival (Giovanardi et al. 2014) thanks to the practices of festivals volunteers, characters as well as the audience. The use of a non-human element made of props such as objects, costumes and other devices as the fire enables the performers' practices.

Another relevant feature of the Beltane Fire Festival is that this was born among other reasons also to celebrate Edinburgh street theatre tradition. The theatrical element has in itself the potential to convert space (Calder 2019). In fact, by definition, theatre is characterised by a 'double' as it has the ability to show the space in which it is enacted for 'what it is and what is not (or not yet and no longer)' (Calder 2019, 25). This is obtained by manipulating space and time and employing performances and embodied practices. The Beltane Fire festival, drawing as it does on an uncertain Celtic past, shows to use Calder's words (Calder 2019, 25), a 'mythologised pre-modern ideal', thus revealing that space for something that that space is not or no longer. Beltane rituals were traditionally celebrated on hills; temporarily and transitorily Calton Hill is converted for hosting a contemporary, neo-pagan version of the pre-modern Beltane tradition.

The second term of the equation in street theatre is the street. Calder (2019) defines street theatre as a comprehensive term encompassing theatrical forms performed in public streets. The street is an urban element that presents striated characteristics. It in fact directs and imposes flows of human and non-human elements, thus imposing a specific order. To this regard, the street determines hierarchy as it privileges specific places over others. It is disciplinary as it constrains and disciplines movement and flow. As such the street emerges as a site of power and by definition of resistance (which is immanent to power itself) (Foucault 1982). The fact that the Beltane Fire Festival has the street as a stage is significant. Namely, thanks to the theatrical element, it converts space transforming striated street space into a smooth one during the event (Calder 2019).

While the predominant argument is that festivals have the ability to convert striated spaces into smooth spaces, thus liberating the fixed relationship imposed by the tenets of capitalism (Johansson and Kociatkiewicz 2011; Munro and Jordan 2013), a counterargument (Smith 2017) maintains that festivals and events are increasingly used to leverage on their economic potential. Another way of conceptualising regeneration here in this case thus is the event transforms meaning and practice in space (even if for just one day each year). In terms of space, ticketed events staged in public non-purpose-built event venues (such as parks) have the effect of denigrating their publicness. Smith (2017) argues using public spaces introduces hierarchical and controlling mechanisms to spaces that are meant to be open and accessible to all (which confer back to that space striated characteristics).

In 2004, due to the increasing scale of the Fire Festival, in terms of audience, as well as licencing together with health and safety and security requirements, Beltane became a ticketed event (Beltane Fire Society 2018). Despite a partial neoliberalisation of the Beltane Fire Festival space, it is argued that festival tactics extend far beyond the ticketed space. Volunteers of the Beltane Fire Festival, in fact, engage in spatial practices even before (through street theatre performances in Edinburgh's city centre) and after the festival (in the occasion of non-advertised post-festival parties). This suggests that against the increasing tendency to neoliberalise the festival space, there are figments of the festival that can still be recognised as smooth, nomadic elements (Deleuze 1994). The concept of nomadism is better explained in the next section together with the concept of war machine (Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

8.4   Festivals and Urban Subculturalisation, State and War Machine

Daskalaki and Mould (2013) explore the process of urban subculturalisation. The authors argue that despite the chance of subcultures becoming solidified, institutionalised and ultimately assimilated by the mainstream, the city can be regarded as a fluid and continuous fabric of identities and exemplifies a state of continuous becoming. In other words, striated spaces are the generative force for the existence of smooth spaces. The Expression State and war machine, as conceived by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), encapsulate dialectics between the simultaneous co-existence of a mainstream striated urban order and subcultural smooth tendencies and forces. For the two philosophers, the State presents a central, arborescent, striated nature with branches and roots subordinated to a central stem and root (see also: Crociani-Windland 2011). The war machine presents a smooth nature and its main characteristic is that of nomadism. The State represents the tendency to control, manipulation, neoliberalisation of the urban space (Smith 2017), while the war machine corresponds to a force of insubordination to such an order. In the words of Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 386), 'each time there is an operation against the State-insubordination, rioting, guerrilla warfare, or revolution as act- it can be said that a war machine has revived, that a new nomadic potential has appeared'. The nomad is an image that emerges in several contexts: it is not used to describe actual nomadic people (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Deleuze 1994) but instead describes forms of subjectivity, or 'a disposition towards' war, that is activated (as a war machine) when there is an attempt to contain it (Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

Insubordination can be both physical and symbolical. For the war machine to be activated, a powerful force that unlocks change has to occur. Deterritorialisation can be described as a movement, a force that is able to produce change. It indicates a creative potential that is immanent to a space assemblage: 'to de-territorialize is to free up the fixed relations that contain a body all the while exposing it to new organization' (Parr 2010, 69). Festival practices and performances have been recognised for this

creative potential and for being a force of deterritorialisation not only physical but also discursive (Rofe and Woosnam 2016).

Specifically, mainstream and taken-for-granted meanings are, in fact, subverted by the introduction of new themes, under-represented actors and instances. Subcultural creative expressions that do not receive attention during the usual everyday life of the city become, during the festival, the focus of attention (Rofe and Woosnam 2016). Nomadic creative forms of expressions not formally recognised by the mainstream urban policies still survive in the suburbs of the city and are exposed and celebrated during the festival. While features of a festival associate with notions of liminality, concerning the festival space, Hetherington (1997) reworked this notion by regarding festivals as events that produce socially ambiguous spaces, or 'heterotopia'. For Hetherington (1997), heterotopia is a site where societal normative assumptions are brought into question. This is conceptualised through performances of alternative identities (Markwell and Waitt 2009; Wise 2014). To this end, Markwell and Waitt (2009) highlight how events such as the Gay Pride in Australia bring into question such normative assumptions through displaying the performance of drag queens and kings, or how Wise (2014) assesses how Haitian's and Dominican's use spaces that combat and transcend meaning to impose different layers in a single space based on contested identities.

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, Calton Hill is known for being involved in subcultural practices. It is argued that by hosting the Beltane Fire Festival this urban area is still a theatre for Edinburgh's urban subcultural expressions. In fact, the Beltane Fire Festival has been celebrated in Calton Hill since its beginning in 1988 (Beltane Fire Society 2018). Despite the fact that the festival is catalysing increased audience volumes, it does not appear in the official festival programme of the city and it is scarcely promoted. This suggests that the festival is constructed as subcultural, as there seem to be at present, tensions as for its inclusion within the official creative and cultural policies of Edinburgh (Matheson and Tinsley 2016). The festival presents elements of nudity and euphoria and it has been criticised for its 'Playful deviance' (Matheson and Tinsley 2016, 13) which appears in contrast with the uptight, striated and mainstream order of the urban context.

Drawing on Bakhtin (1984), as well as Matheson and Tinsley (2016), both highlight the Beltane Fire Festival presents carnivalesque elements. Bakhtin (1984) understands carnival as a suspension of social conventions that challenge hierarchal establishments and utilise sites for protests, resistance and transgression. Indeed, spatial tactics employed during the Beltane Fire Festival is regarded as a war machine, for the event discursively and physically presents elements of insubordination with respect to the mainstream order.

The origins of the fire festival themselves suggest its nomadic connections. The Beltane Fire Festival was born at a time when there were reactions to counteract the British Government's extreme conservativism. At the time, in the late-1980s, the government of Margaret Thatcher promoted a strong conservative stance with a traditional vision for Britain. Thatcherism was characterised as an authoritarian approach, marked by a strong emphasis on the respect of the law, discipline and social order. This political phase was also associated to a lack of willingness to

tolerate those who would not conform to the conservative ideal. Hill (2003) maintains that at that time also apolitical subcultural expressions, such as those associated to the Acid House project, became to be identified as the 'enemy within' and regarded as dangerous to the government project. Motives behind Beltane are the search of a human primal nature, the need to reconnect with land and nature, the contraposition of the chaotic and wild movements of the elements of life and nature in opposition to the over rationality and disciplinarian order of the central state at that time (Beltane Fire Society 2018).

Festivals in Scotland have a long history of resistance to the central power (situated in London). In fact, the Reformation and Calvinism period was for Scotland an engine of profound change, and recent work has considered the staging and performing of events as a form of (passive) resistance, for instance, the Exit Festival held in Serbia (see Wise et al. 2015). Calvinism eliminated festivities associated with Christmas, Easter and saints days (Houston 2008). However, in certain parts of Scotland like Perth, although the strong Calvinist influence did exist, festivities persisted as a manifestation of popular resistance. Celebrations of the patron saints days survived and together with them also other pagan celebrations such as Yuletide as well as May and midsummer festivities continued to be performed. In 1620, those practices were officially accepted by the authorities of the church in exchange for a fine (a tax on entertainment). This was the attempt by the Calvinists to accommodate aspects of popular celebration and as such compromise between the old and the new. The very evolutions of some of these festivals (such as Beltane) are still celebrated today. Other pagan festivals are celebrated throughout the year as revival or reinvention of ancient rituals dating back to the Celtic or Viking period. Examples are festivals linked to the cycle of season and of the harvest such as Beltane but also New Year's festivities linked to the Viking tradition that are still alive within the Shetland Islands (for example, Up Helly ha) in the Moray Region (the Burning of the Clavie), Aberdeenshire (Stonehaven Fireball Festival) and Perth and Kinross (Comrie Flambeaux).

On Calton Hill, the Beltane Fire Festival emerges as a place of contemporary resistance and nomadism (Deleuze 1994). In fact, McKee (2015) highlights that Calton Hill' monuments celebrating the values and ideals of the Scottish enlightenment symbolise Scotland's golden era romanticisation in a pre-union/pre-reformation stage. However, this era is often celebrated for its tangible legacy than 'as a cultural manifestation of any broader contemporaneous dialogue' (McKee 2015, 64). Calton Hill has, in fact, a highly symbolic value for Scotland's regionalist and nationalist aspirations. In 2004, it became the main theatre for the campaigns for Scottish devolution. The Calton Hill Declaration, Declaration of Scottish devolution, was proclaimed on the hill on the same year. This also suggests that one of the mechanisms that supports the Beltane Fire Festival and its staging in Calton Hill is also a non-declared sense of regional awareness, a deployment of spatial practices that seeks to unlock a quest for tradition and continuity in a fast-changing society (Devismes 2013).

8.5 Conclusions

This chapter endeavoured to discuss urban space and the way it interfaces with festival practices not only physically but also discursively. The conceptual focus of attention has been Deleuze's (1987,1994) and Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) spatial images. Space is not only understood for its tangible characteristics but also recognised for its intangible, symbolic capacities and tendencies, intrinsic imperceptible forces and rhythms. These tendencies and discourses are immanent in space itself in the form of imperceptible virtualities. In other words, drawing on Deleuze and Guattari space emerges as more than physical as well as more than discursive. This challenges us to understand how urban spaces are regenerated, or perhaps renegotiated, if only temporarily as spaces in transition for the purpose of power and consumerism are met with resistance, and thus regeneration does not take on a physical presence but is interpreted based on intangible meaning that marks chance and presence in space.

Urban discourses are becoming increasingly central to urban policy (Rofe and Woosnam 2016). Festivals are often explored in terms of their potential to induce and catalyse change, disclose alternative dimensions of cities, unlock counter-narratives against the more mainstream ones (Heath 2018). They are also represented as creative moments (Richards 2014), forces of experimentation (Olsen 2013) and spaces of Heterotopia (Markwell and Waitt 2009). However, such creativity does not always receive attention and there are sometimes tensions around its recognition within official programmes and policies (Rofe and Woosnam 2016).

Festivals provide a window which is contained and constrained within urban space (Mould 2009) and in which identities are constituted, negotiated and reframed. However, identities are not merely discursive, but also constituted through performances (Butler 1997). Such performances exceed the temporal and physical boundaries in which festivals and events are staged. This suggests the nomadism (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) of the festival space. While there is an increasing tendency to a neoliberalisation (Smith 2017) of space, in fact, it is argued that this mainly applies to the ticketed phases of festivals. However, as the example of the Beltane Fire Festival shows, the performative field of the festival is wider as it includes moments such as the pre- and post-event spaces that exceed the neoliberalisation tendency.

Specifically, the Beltane Fire Festival has been described as an expression able to open up a counter-public space for the organising community and its audience to gather, shape their identity and sense of belonging and express their critical stance. Somehow, therefore, the possibilities opened up by festivals evoke a transformative functionality, an eruption of forces and potentialities that are already immanent to the urban space itself but not evident in the everyday life of the city. The festival represents, therefore, a cutting edge, a force of deterritorialisation capable to provoke the eruption of these forces, or to echo Deleuze and Guattari (1987), to activate a war machine.

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