

SPACE AND PLACE: HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE<sup>1</sup>

Ce n'est pas la distance qui mesure l'éloignement.  
Le mur d'un jardin de chez nous peut enfermer  
plus de secrets que le mur de Chine, et l'âme d'une  
petite fille est mieux protégée par le silence que ne  
le sont, par l'épaisseur des sables, les oasis  
sahariennes.

ANTOINE DE SAINT EXUPÉRY, *Terre des hommes* (1939).

## I. INTRODUCTION

Space and place together define the nature of geography. Spatial analysis or the explanation of spatial organisation is at the forefront of geographical research. Geographers appear to be confident of both the meaning of space and the methods suited to its analysis. The interpretation of spatial elements requires an abstract and objective frame of thought, quantifiable data, and ideally the language of mathematics. Place, like space, lies at the core of geographical discipline. Indeed an *Ad Hoc* Committee of American geographers (1965, 7) asserted that "the modern science of geography derives its substance from man's sense of place". In the geographical literature, place has been given several meanings (Lukermann, 1964; May, 1970). As location, place is one unit among other units to which it is linked by a circulation net; the analysis of location is subsumed under the geographer's concept and analysis of space. Place, however, has more substance than the word location suggests: it is a unique entity, a 'special ensemble' (Lukermann, 1964, p. 70); it has a history and meaning. Place incarnates the experiences and aspirations of a people. Place is not only a fact to be explained in the broader frame of space, but it is also a reality to be clarified and understood from the perspectives of the people who have given it meaning.

## II. HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE

All academic work extends the field of consciousness. Humanistic studies contribute, in addition, towards self-consciousness, towards man's increasing awareness of the sources of his knowledge. In every major discipline there exists a humanistic subfield which is the philosophy and history of that discipline. Through the subfield, for instance, geography or physics knows itself, that is, the origins of its concepts, presuppositions, and biases in the experiences of its pioneer scholars and scientists (Wright 1966; Glacken, 1967; Gilbert, 1972). The study of space, from the humanistic perspective, is thus the study of a people's spatial feelings and ideas in the stream of experience. Experience is the totality of means by which we come to know the world: we know the world through sensation (feeling), perception, and conception (Oakshott, 1933; Dardel, 1952; Lowenthal, 1961; Gendlin, 1962). The geographer's understanding of space is abstract, though less so than that of a pure mathematician. The spatial apprehension of the man in the street is abstract, though less so than that of a scientific geographer. Abstract notions of space can be formally taught. Few people know from direct experience that France is bigger than Italy, that settlements in the American Middle West are arranged in nested hexagons, or even that the size of their own piece of real estate is 1.07 acres. Less abstract, because more closely tied to sense experience, is the space that is conditioned by the fact of my being in it, the space of which I am the centre, the space that answers my moods and intentions. A comprehensive study of experiential space would require that we examine successively felt, perceived, and conceptual spaces, noting how the more abstract ideas develop out of those given directly to the body, both from the standpoint of individual growth and from the perspective of history. Such an undertaking is beyond my present purpose. Here I shall attempt to sketch spaces that are sense-bound, spaces that respond to existential cues and the urgencies of day-to-day living. A brief discussion of mythical space will serve as a bridge between the sense-bound and the conceptual.

The importance of 'place' to cultural and humanistic geography is, or should be, obvious (Hart, 1972; Meinig, 1971; Sopher, 1972). As functional nodes in space, places yield to the techniques of spatial analysis. But as unique and complex ensemble — rooted in the past and growing into a future — and as symbol, place calls for humanistic understanding. Within the humanistic tradition places have been studied from the historical and literary-artistic perspectives. A town or neighbourhood comes alive through the artistry of a scholar who is able to combine detailed narrative with discerning vignettes of

description, perhaps further enriched by old photographs and sketches (Gilbert, 1954; Swain and Mather, 1968; Lewis, 1972; Santmyer, 1962). We lack, however, systematic analysis. In general, how does mere location become place? What are we trying to say when we ascribe 'personality' and 'spirit' to place, and what is the sense of 'the sense of place'? Apart from Edward Relph's dissertation (1973), the literature on this topic — surely of central importance to geographers — has been and remains slight. We have learned to appreciate spatial analysis, historical scholarship, and fine descriptive prose, but philosophical understanding, based on the method and insight of the phenomenologists, lies largely beyond our ken (Mercer and Powell, 1972). In this essay the phenomenological perspective will be introduced. I shall not, however, confine myself to it and will try to avoid its technical language.

The space that we perceive and construct, the space that provides cues for our behaviour, varies with the individual and cultural group. Mental maps differ from person to person, and from culture to culture (Hall, 1966; Downs, 1970). These facts are now well known. What is the nature of the objective space over which human beings have variously projected their illusions? It is common to assume that geometrical space is the objective reality, and that personal and cultural spaces are distortions. In fact we know only that geometrical space is cultural space, a sophisticated human construct the adoption of which has enabled us to control nature to a degree hitherto impossible. The question of objective reality is tantalising but unanswerable, and it may be meaningless. However, we can raise the following question and expect a tentative answer: if geometrical space is a relatively late and sophisticated cultural construct, what is the nature of man's original pact with his world, his original space? The answer can be couched only in general terms, for specification would lead to the detailing of richly-furnished personal and cultural worlds. We can say little more than that original space possesses structure and orientation by virtue of the presence of the human body. Body implicates space; space coexists with the sentient body. This primitive relationship holds when the body is largely a system of anonymous functions, before it can serve as an instrument of conscious choice and intentions directed towards an already defined field (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Ricoeur, 1965). Original space is a contact with the world that precedes thinking: hence its opaqueness to analysis. Like all anthropological spaces it presupposes a natural (i.e., non-human) world. This natural world is not geometrical, since it cannot be clearly and explicitly known. It can be known only as resistances to each human space, including the geometric, that is imposed thereon. Experientially, we know the non-human world in the moments that frustrate our will and

arbitrariness (Floss, 1971). These are the moments that cause us to pause and pose the question of an objective reality distinct from the one that our needs and imagination call into being.

Visual perception, touch, movement, and thought combine to give us our characteristic sense of space. Bifocal vision and dexterous hands equip us physically to perceive reality as a world of objects rather than as kaleidoscopic patterns. Thought greatly enhances our ability to recognise and structure persisting objects among the wealth of fleeting impressions. The recognition of objects implies the recognition of intervals and distance relation among objects, and hence of space. The self is a persisting object which is able to relate to other selves and objects; it can move towards them and carry out its intentions among them (Hampshire, 1960, p. 30). Space is oriented by each centre of consciousness, and primitive consciousness is more a question of 'I can' than 'I think'. 'Near' means 'at hand'. 'High' means 'too far to reach' (Heidegger, 1962).

### II.1. *Space and Time*

The notion of 'distance' involves not only 'near' and 'far' but also the time notions of past, present and future. Distance is a spatio-temporal intuition. 'Here' is 'now', 'there' is 'then'. And just as 'here' is not merely a point in space, so 'now' is not merely a point in time. 'Here' implies 'there', 'now' 'then', and 'then' lies both in the past and in the future. Both space and time are oriented and structured by the purposeful being. Neither the idea of space nor that of time need rise to the level of consciousness when what I want is at hand, such as picking up a pencil on my desk; they are an indissoluble part of the experience of arm movement. Units of time are often used to secure the meaning of long distances: it takes so many days to go from here to there. Distant places are also remote in time, lying either in the remote past or future. In non-Western societies, distant places are located in the mythical past rather than future, but since time tends to be perceived as cyclical remote past and remote future converge. In Western society, a distant place can suggest the idea of a distant past: when explorers seek the source of the Nile or the heart of a continent they appear to be moving back in time. But in science fiction distant stars are presented as distant future worlds.

II.1.1. *The primacy of time.* Though time and space are inseparable in locomotor activity, they are separable in speech and thought (Booth, 1970). We can talk abstractly about areas and volumes without introducing the concept

of time, and we can talk about duration and time without introducing the concept of space, although the latter is much more difficult to achieve in Indo-European languages. Experience in the real world supports both the primacy of time and of space. Confusion arises out of the different ideas that are grouped under these two terms. The time dimension matters more, one may say, because people appear to be more interested in narratives than in static pictures, in events that unfold in time (drama) than in objects deployed in space that can be comprehended simultaneously. That unique endowment of the human species, language, is far better suited to the narration of events than to the depiction of scenes. The apprehension of distance, we know, often rests on measures of time. Nature's periodicities, such as night and day, the changing phases of the moon and the seasonal cycle, provide units for calculating time. But nature, other than the human body itself, doesn't seem to provide convenient yardsticks for the measurement of space. The psychological reason for the inclination to estimate space in time units may be this. Man's ability to negotiate and manipulate the world depends ultimately on his biological energy. That energy is renewable. For each individual, however, it has a limit that is circumscribed by his expectable life-span. Man can annul space with the help of technology but he has little control over his allotted life-span, which remains at the Biblical three scores and ten, and is subject to termination through all manner of contingencies. Man feels vulnerable to events; he is more constrained by time than by the curbs that space may impose. Significantly we say of a prisoner in his cell that he is doing time. Fate is event, a temporal category.

In philosophical discourse, with the notable exception of Kantians (May, 1970) time has assumed greater importance than space since Leibniz (Jammer, 1969, p. 4). Both positivists and phenomenologists believe that time is logically prior to space. Among scientific philosophers the increasing interest in the nature of cause puts the limelight on time, for the direction of the flow of time is thought to be determined by the causal interconnection of phenomena. Space, in contrast, is only the order of coexisting data. Among phenomenologists time is believed to be more fundamental than space, a belief that seems to rest on their concern with the nature of being, becoming, duration, and experience.

II.1.2. *The primacy of space.* It is possible to argue for the primacy of space on the ground that space can be comprehended more directly than time; that a concept of space can give rise to theoretical science whereas, in Kant's view, one-dimensional time cannot (May, 1970, p. 116); and that spatialisation

is a capacity developed in tandem with the evolution of human speech, utterance directed toward the creation of a public world. From the psychological viewpoint, knowledge of space is much more direct and simpler than knowledge of time. We can perceive the whole of a spatial dimension, such as a straight line, simultaneously. "A temporal duration, however, no matter how short it is, cannot be apprehended at once. Once we are at the end of it, the beginning can no longer be perceived. In other words, any knowledge of time presupposes a reconstruction on the part of the knower, since the beginning of any duration has already been lost and we cannot go back in time to find it again" (Piaget, 1971, p. 61). Children apprehend space before time. A one-year-old child plays 'peek-a-boo' and can ask to be picked up or let down. At eighteen months a child plays 'hide-and-seek' and knows how to find his way in the house. But only some six months later does he acquire a rudimentary knowledge of time, recognising, for instance, the return of the father as the signal for supper (Sivadon, 1970, p. 411). At seven years a child shows an interest in distant countries and an elementary understanding of geography; he has some idea concerning the relative size and distance of places. But the appreciation of historical time comes much later. In treating mentally disturbed patients, psychiatrists are beginning to find that they respond more readily to attempts at restoring their fragmented spatial world than their fractured past (Mendel, 1961; Izumi, 1965; Osmond, 1966). The structure of the present world can be elucidated and enforced by architectural means: spatial coherence can be perceived. But the past is gone and can be recalled only with the help of language. Dreams, when we remember them, centre on a few images. These remain, often with great vividness, while the narrative itself fades (Langer, 1972, p. 284). The causal link of events in dreams has a slender hold on our memory, but certain pictures can make an indelible impress. For some people, not only spatial relationships but the complex flow of events are not clearly understood without the aid of diagrams, this is, explication in space.

Human speech is unlike animal utterance because it strives to create a stable and public realm to which all who speak the same language have access. Psychic states find public expression in the objective correlates that are visible in space. Ideas are 'bright' as the sun is bright and souls can be 'lost' like the bodies they inhabit. Sensations, perceptions, and ideas occur under two aspects: the one clear and precise, but impersonal; the other confused, ever changing, and inexpressible, because language cannot clothe it without arresting its flux and making it into public property. "We instinctively try to solidify our impressions in order to express them in language. Hence we

confuse the feeling itself, which is a perpetual state of becoming, with its permanent external object, and especially with the word which expresses this object" (Bergson, 1910, pp. 129-30). Speech creates social reality (Rosenstock-Hussey, 1970). In the social world the private lived-time of individuals is mapped onto space, where confused feelings and ideas are made sensible and can be tagged and counted. Pure duration thus becomes homogeneous time, which is reducible to space because its units are not successive but lie side by side. Heterogeneous and changing psychic states become discrete sensations and feelings; quality becomes quantity; intensity extensity.

Language is suited to the telling of stories and poor at depicting simultaneous order. On the other hand, Benjamin Whorf (1952) has made us aware that a characteristic of Indo-European languages is to spatialise time. Thus time is 'long' or 'short', 'thenafter' is 'thereafter', and 'alltimes' is 'always'. European languages lack special words to express duration, intensity and tendency. They use explicit spatial metaphors of size, number (plurality), position, shape and motion. It is as though European speech tries to make time and feelings visible, to constrain them to possess spatial dimensions that can be pointed to, if not measured. Not all languages attempt this to the same degree. Hopi speech, for example, eschews spatial metaphors. It has ample conjugational and lexical means to express duration and intensity, qualities and potentials, directly. Terms descriptive of space have much in common whether Indo-European or Hopi. The experience and apprehension of space is substantially the same irrespective of language (Whorf, 1952, p. 45). In this sense, space is more basic to human experience than time, the meaning of which varies fundamentally from people to people.

## II.2. *Space, Biology and Symbolism*

Anthropological studies have familiarised us with the idea that people's conception of, and behaviour in, space differs widely. At a more exalted level, mathematicians appear to pull geometries out of a hat. We need, however, to be reminded of spatial perceptions and values that are grounded on common traits in human biology, and hence transcend the arbitrariness of culture. Although spatial concepts and behavioural patterns vary enormously, they are all rooted in the original pact between body and space. Spatial concepts may indeed soar nearly out of sight from this original pact, but spatial behaviour among ordinary objects can never stray very far from it. As C. H. Waddington puts it, "Although in mathematics we are free to choose whether to build up our geometry on Euclidean or non-Euclidean axioms, when we need to deal



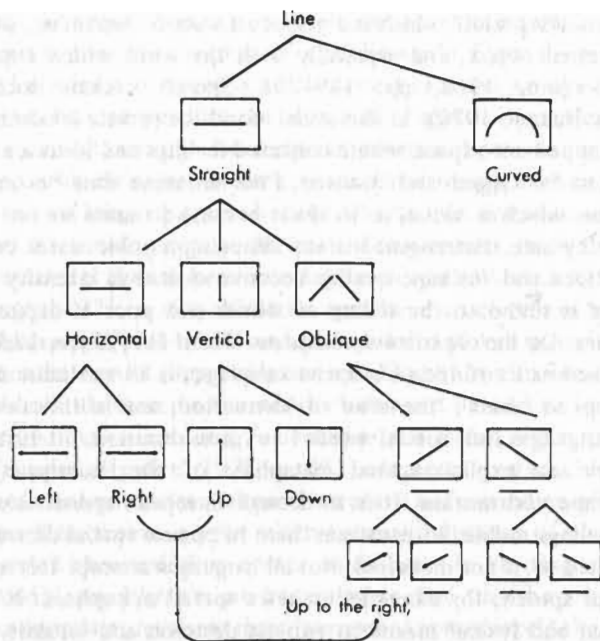


Fig. 1. A possible hierarchical schema for orientation in English: more words exist for horizontal and vertical orientations than for curved and oblique lines. Vocabulary – richness in some expressions, paucity in others – is a guide to what a culture considers important (Based on Olson, 1970).

with the world of objects of the size of our own bodies, we find that it is the Euclidean axioms which are by far the most appropriate. They are so appropriate, indeed, that we almost certainly have some genetic predisposition to their adoption built into our genotypes, for example the capacity of the eye to recognise a straight line” (1970, p. 102).

Human beings are more sensitive to vertical and horizontal lines than to oblique lines, more responsive to right angles and symmetrical shapes than to acute or obtuse angles and irregular shapes (Figure 1). An increasing array of evidence supports this view. Thus children aged three to four soon learn to choose | from —, but most of them have difficulty learning to choose / and not \. They can easily discriminate □ from ⊥ but not ⊏ from ⊐ (Howard and Templeton, 1966, p. 183). The bilateral organization of the human body and the direction of gravity have been suggested as the causes of such bias. Furthermore, orientations provide ecological cues for movement, and their

invariance is a decided advantage. When we move about, oblique lines are not invariant; left–right differences are similarly low in invariance, but up–down differences are relatively stable (Olson, 1970, p. 177). An angle of 93° is not seen as an angle in its own right but as a “bad” right angle. Streets that join at an angle are recalled as joining at right angles or nearly so. North and South America are not aligned along the same meridian but in memory they tend to do so (Arnheim, 1969, pp. 82, 183). In general, shapes that have their main axes tilted tend to be reproduced in a vertical orientation. Horizontally symmetrical shapes are sometimes reproduced in a vertically symmetrical position whereas vertically symmetrical figures are always recalled in their correct position. Two shapes are best discriminated when they are vertical. The apparent length of a line tends to be maximally exaggerated in the neighbourhood of the vertical, and it tends to be minimised at about the horizontal position (Pollock and Chapman, 1952).

Human beings are not alone in their greater sensitivity to vertical cues in their environment. Like the human child, an octopus can readily discriminate vertical from horizontal rectangles, but confuses rectangles oriented obliquely in different directions (Sutherland, 1957). Of course only among human beings do these natural biases acquire symbolical meaning. The direction upward, against gravity, is then not only a feeling that guides movement but a feeling that leads to the inscription of regions in space to which we attach values, such as those expressed by high and low, rise and decline, climbing and falling, superior and inferior, elevated and downcast, looking up in awe and looking down in contempt. Prone we surrender to nature, upright we assert our humanity. In getting up we gain freedom and enjoy it, but at the same time we lose contact with the supporting ground, mother earth, and we miss it. The vertical position stands for that which is instituted, erected, and constructed; it represents human aspirations that risk fall and collapse (Straus, 1966). To go up is to rise above our earth-bound origin towards the sky, which is either the abode of, or identical with, the supreme being. Horizontal space is secular space; it is accessible to the senses. By contrast, the mental and mythical realm is symbolised by the vertical axis piercing through the heart of things, with its poles of zenith and underground, heaven and hades. The gods live on the mountain peak while mortals are bound to the plain. On medieval T–O maps Jerusalem lies at the centre of the world; this is well known, but in Rabbinical literature Israel is perceived to rise higher above sea-level than any other land, and Temple Hill is taken to be the highest point in Israel (Bevan, 1938, p. 66). Centre implies the vertical and vice versa in mythological thinking (Figure 2). The human partiality for the vertical, with its transcendental

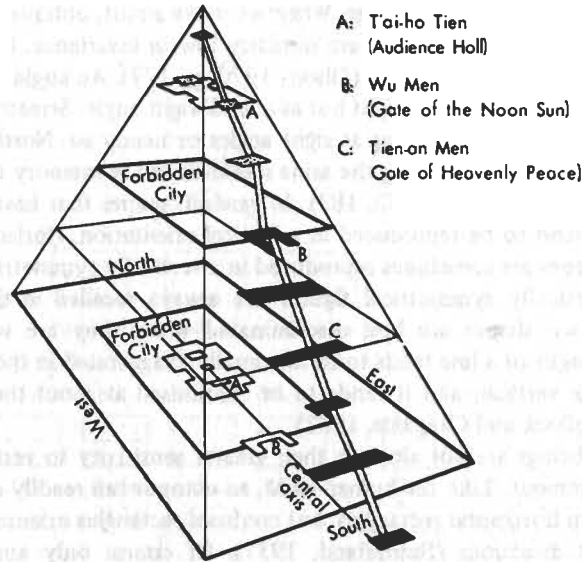


Fig. 2. The northern city of traditional Peking in a diagram of the Chinese conception of cosmic order. The emperor at the centre, in his Audience Hall, looks southwards down the central (meridional) axis to the world of man. The city's plan can be interpreted three dimensionally as a pyramid: going towards the centre is also to go up symbolically (Based on Wu, 1963).

message, is manifest in a vast array of architectural features that include megaliths, pyramids, obelisks, tents, arches, domes, columns, terraces, spires, towers, pagodas, Gothic cathedrals and modern skyscrapers (Giedion, 1964).

We begin with the biological fact of the animate body in space. Vertical elements in the environment provide relatively stable cues for orientation as the body moves. In action vertical and horizontal figures are easier to distinguish than those which are oriented obliquely in different directions. Gravity is the pervasive environment for all living things. Animals, no less than human beings, feel the strain of defying it: to move vertically is to make the maximum effort. From this common biological fundament the human being has elaborated a world of meaning that pervades his every act and accomplishment, from bodily postures to the verticality and horizontality of buildings. In the following sections I shall attempt to clarify further the nature of space as it is grounded in the needs of the human ego and of social groups.

TABLE I

(i) <i>Length and distance</i>			
Body	{	Thing	{ fingernail
			{ breadth and length of finger
			{ span from thumb to little finger
			{ top of middle finger to elbow (cubit, ell = elbow)
outstretched arms (= fathom)	{	Action	{ spear cast
			{ bow shot
			{ day's journey
various kinds of pacing	{	Action	{ spear cast
			{ bow shot
			{ day's journey
(ii) <i>Area</i>			
Thing	{	Action	{ day's ploughing with a yoke of oxen, land which can be sown with a certain amount seed, for example, the ancient Sumerian for area was <i>sē</i> (grain): the labour involved was a factor of measurement
			{ oxhide
			{ cloak
mat	{	Action	{ day's ploughing with a yoke of oxen, land which can be sown with a certain amount seed, for example, the ancient Sumerian for area was <i>sē</i> (grain): the labour involved was a factor of measurement
			{ mat

II.3. *Spatial References and the Ego*

(a) Primitive measures of length are derived from parts of the body. They also depend on the dimensions of commonly used objects, and on the actions that one performs with one's body, such as a day's journey, or with an object, such as the distance of a bow shot. The move from the biologic base, then, is from the body to the object, and to acts performed with the object. Measures of area seem less bound to parts of the human body. They are based on the size of common objects, those which have been made or partly processed by man, and to acts performed with them. Unlike the segmentation of time, nature itself doesn't seem to provide suitable units for the measurement of either distance or area. (See Table I).

The parts of the human body serve as a model for spatial organisation. Central African and South Sea languages, in particular, use nouns (names for parts of body) rather than abstract prepositional terms to express spatial relations, thus:

Parts of body:	face	back	head	mouth or stomach
Spatial relations:	in front	behind	above	within

In addition, material objects outside the human body can serve as

prepositional terms indicating position. Instead of 'back' meaning 'behind', the 'track' left by a person means 'behind'; and 'ground' or 'earth' means 'under', 'air' means 'over'. Natural objects lend themselves to locations in space but not, originally, to the measures of space, for which pre-scientific man depended on his body, his artifacts, habitual acts, and natural periodicities (Hamburg, 1970, pp. 98-99).

(b) Locative adverbs, spatial demonstratives and personal pronouns have parallel meanings, and in some languages, they appear to be etymologically related (Humbolt, 1829). Ernst Cassirer points out that both personal and demonstrative pronouns are half-mimetic, half-linguistic acts of indication: personal pronouns are spatially located. 'Here is always where I am, and what is here I call *this*, in contrast to *das* [that] and *dort* [yonder]' (Cassirer, 1953, p. 213). In Indo-Germanic languages the third person pronoun has close formal links with the corresponding demonstrative pronouns. French *il* goes back to Latin *ille* (that, there, the latter); Gothic *is* (modern German *er*) corresponds to Latin *is* (that, that way). In Semitic, Altaic, American Indian and Australian languages, I-thou pronouns appear to have close ties with demonstrative pronouns (Cassirer, 1953, p. 214). Egocentrism prevails everywhere. We make fun of the capitalisation of the 'I' in English, but in Chinese and Japanese *pen jen* (I) means 'this very self', the person at the 'origin' or 'centre'. As to the egocentrism of spatial demonstratives, consider the expression, "We talked of this and that - but mostly that". "Why", Bertrand Russell asked, "does the 'that' imply the triviality of the topics talked about?" (Figures 3(a) and (b)).

(c) To the speaker of a European language, a striking feature of some American Indian languages, and of Kwakiutl in particular, is the specificity with which location in relation to the speaker is expressed, both in nouns and in verbs. Spatial designations have almost mimetic immediacy; they bind actors to specific contexts and activities. Various languages can say 'the man is sick' only by stating at the same time whether the subject of the statement is at a greater or lesser distance from the speaker or the listener and whether he is visible or invisible to them; and often the place, position and posture of the sick man are indicated by the form of the word sentence (Boas, 1911, p. 445).

#### II.4. Personal Experiential Space

The structure and feeling-tone of space is tied to the perceptual equipment, experience, mood, and purpose of the human individual. We get to know the

world through the possibilities and limitations of our senses. The space that we can perceive spreads out before and around us, and is divisible into regions of differing quality. Farthest removed and covering the largest area is visual space. It is dominated by the broad horizon and small, indistinct objects. This purely visual region seems static even though things move in it. Closer to us is the visual-aural space: objects in it can be seen clearly and their noises are heard. Dynamism characterises the feel of the visual-aural zone, and this sense of a lively world is the result of sound as much as spatial displacements that can be seen (Knapp, 1948). When we turn from the distant visual space to the visual-aural zone, it is as though a silent movie comes into focus and is provided with sound tracks. Next to our body is the affective zone, which is accessible to the senses of smell and touch besides those of sight and hearing. In fact, the relative importance of sight diminishes in affective space: to appreciate the objects that give it its high emotional tone our eyes may even be closed. We cannot attend to all three zones at the same time. In particular, attendance to the purely visual region in the distance excludes awareness of the affective region. Normally we focus on the proximate world, either the intimate affective space or the more public visual-aural space.

Here is an example of how the visual-aural zone can be further subdivided. I am engaged with people and things: they are in focus and lie at the foreground of my awareness. Beyond, in the middle ground, is the physical setting for the people and things that engage me fully. The middle ground may be the walls of a room or hall. It is visible but unfocused. Foreground and middle ground constitute the patent zone. Beyond the patent zone is the latent zone of habituality (the past), which is also the latent zone of potentiality (the future). Although I cannot see through the walls of the hall, the unfocused middle ground, I am subliminally aware of the existence of a world, not just empty space, beyond the walls. That latent zone is the zone of one's past experience, what I have seen before coming into the hall; it is also potentiality, what I shall see when I leave the hall. The latent zone is the invisible but necessary frame to the patent zone (Ortega y Gasset, 1963, p. 67; Ryan and Ryan, 1940). It acts as a ballast to activity, freeing activity from complete dependence on the patent, i.e., visible space and present time.

In characterising the structure of space, I introduce the terms past, present, and future. The analysis of spatial experience seems to require the usage of time categories. This is because our awareness of the spatial relations of objects is never limited to the perceptions of the objects themselves; present awareness itself is imbued with past experiences of movement and time, with memories of past expenditures of energy, and it is drawn towards the future



by the perceptual objects' call to action. A tree at the end of the road stretches out in advance, as it were, the steps I have to take in order to reach it (Brain, 1959). Distance, depth, height, and breadth are not terms necessary to scientific discourse; they are part of common speech and derive their multiple meanings from commonplace experiences (Kockelmans, 1964; Straus, 1963, p. 263). Spatial dimensions are keyed to the human sense of adequacy, purpose, and standing. Certain heights are beyond my reach, given my present position or status. I feel inadequate and the objects around me appear alien, distant, and unapproachable. The window that is near seems very far once I have snuggled into bed. Distance shrinks and stretches in the course of the day and with the seasons as they affect my sense of well-being and adequacy (Dardel, 1952, p. 13).

A far-sighted person is not necessarily someone with good eyesight. He is a person who has a grasp of the future. Yet the popular image of far-sightedness is someone gazing into the distant and open horizon. Statues of eminent statesmen often overlook sweeping vistas. Their gaze into the distant horizon is intended to suggest that they have the people's present and future well-being in mind. The open horizon stands for the open future (Minkowski, 1970, pp. 81-90). What is ahead is what is not yet — and beckons. Hope implies the capacity to act and opens up space. However, specific hope or expectation inhibits activity: it is a kind of waiting during which the expected event appears to move towards oneself, and the co-ordinate spatial feeling is one of contraction.

Many of our waking hours are spent in historical or directed space (Straus, 1966, pp. 3-37). Such space is structured around the spatio-temporal points of here (now) and there (then), and around a system of directions, ahead-behind, over-under, right-left. In walking from here to there, energy and time are consumed to overcome distance. The pedestrian advances by leaving step after step behind him, and by aiming at the destination ahead as though it were at the end of a time-demarcated line. This commonplace observation gains interest if we think how radically space-and-time changes when a person is not walking but marching with a band. The marching man still moves, objectively, from A to B; however, in feeling open space displaces the constrained space of linear distance and point locations. Instead of advancing by leaving steps behind the marching man enters space ahead. The sense of beginning and end weakens as also the articulation of directions. Directed, historical space acquires some of the characteristics of homogeneous space — the space of present time without past or future.

In historical space, moving forwards and moving back may cover the same

route, but psychologically they are quite different activities. We move forwards or out to our place of work even if we are driven there and have our back to the direction the car is moving; and we return or move back home even as we drive the car forward on the same road. On a map the two routes are identical and may be shown by the same line with arrows pointing in opposite directions. However, strictly speaking, what is mapped is the route of the car and not that of its human occupant, for whom not only does the scenery change in major ways, depending on whether he is moving in one direction or another, but the route itself acquires different feeling-tones depending on whether the driver is moving *forwards* (as to dinner party or office) or *back* home. Distance is asymmetric for reasons more fundamental than the example of the one-way street that Nystuen gives (1963, p. 379). On the scale of moving one's own body, walking backwards is painfully difficult: one is afraid of falling over unseen obstacles or even of plunging into emptiness: in walking backwards the space that cannot be seen does not exist. Physiologically the human person is not built to walk backwards. There seems no need to look beyond this evident fact. Yet, as Erwin Straus has pointed out, when we dance to music, moving backwards does not feel awkward: we have no fear of it, it does not feel unnatural despite the fact that on a crowded dance floor moving backward may mean bumping into others. When we dance we are in homogeneous, nondirected 'presentic' space (Straus, 1966, p. 33).

Just as the human bias in favour of the vertical finds expression in the semiotics of body posture and in architecture, so the structures of experiential space are manifest in spatial behaviour and in the physical setting. The space of work is essentially directed. A project has a beginning and an end. In mental work it could occur entirely in the brain and leave no trace in the external world. The logic of such work is characterised, however, by the spatial metaphor 'linear'. Physical work requires the physical organisation of space: a manufacturing process, for example, starts here (now) and ends there (then). The space is historical and directed; it is elongated. The factory itself, of course may be square in shape, for any single work process can be repeated: individual work spaces can be placed side by side to form a more isometric figure. The historical, oriented space *par excellence* is the highway or railroad. The straight rail tracks leading from one station to the next show a perfect correspondence between single-minded intention, process, and form.

In contrast to work space, sacred and recreational spaces are essentially ahistorical and non-directed along the horizontal plane. Sacred structures such as temples and altars tend to be isometric; where they depart from



equidimensionality it is the result of the need to compromise eternity in the interest of time-bound human beings who feel more comfortable in directed space. Sacred monuments that are solid and cannot admit people are almost invariably equidimensional in ground plan. Recreational space is essentially homogeneous, 'presentic' space in which means and ends, here and now there and then, can be forgotten. Gardens of contemplation are isometric. Where recreational space is elongated it may well be in response to the demands of the physical environment, such as the bank of a river or a main thoroughfare; it is not required by the inherent character of recreation or the enjoyment of nature. Many modern recreational activities (mountain climbing and snow skiing, for instance) are as oriented as work, and hence require and acquire the elongated space of the work line. Race tracks, it is true, are oval-shaped. The starting and terminating points are clearly marked, but in racing the destination itself has no inherent significance; it can indeed be identical with the starting point. What is important is speed — speed in non-directed space. Race tracks in the desert or on the beach, drag-strips for hot-rodders, are linear and yet non-directed, for the sensation of speed itself, within an abstract world, is the essential experience (Jackson, 1957–58).

The type of directed space most familiar to geographers is that in which arrows are drawn to indicate the direction of movement of people, goods, and cultural traits. One map might show the flow of oil out of the Middle East to European ports; another the movement of people from America's eastern seaboard into the interior. We are used to seeing the one map as a cartographic device summarising certain economic facts, and the other as a means for representing events in historical geography. But the humanist geographer can read between the lines. From his perspective, the arrows symbolise directed activities that give rise to oriented, historical spaces on a world stage. Instead of a mere short walk from here (now) to there (then), the journey of a tanker over thousands of miles of water, taking several weeks around the Cape of Good Hope, acquires a little of the drama of an odyssey. Home port and destination, to the captain of the tanker, are hardly the indifferent points that they appear to be on a map. The arrow symbolises his lived-space, which is also his lived-time. If, instead of an oil tanker one thinks of a ship embarking on a voyage of exploration into the unknown, then destination is destiny. On maps that depict historical movements, the arrows appear to show mere routes in space; but they also represent the temporal dimension. Months, and perhaps years, have lapsed between the stem and the tip of the arrow. For the individual emigrants the journey takes them not only to a place that can be marked on the map, or to a point later in time that can be shown on the calendar, but a place that symbolises their future.

## II.5. *Group Experiential Space*

Personal experiential space focuses on the experience of space in which the effect of the presence of *other* persons is left out of account. This does not mean that the structure of the personally experienced space is unique and private to the individual. Enough people normally share its essential elements to have an impact on the physical setting. The sharing is made possible through 'intersubjectivity', a concept often explored by phenomenologists. By group experiential space, I mean the spatial experience that is defined by the presence of other people. The point of departure is no longer 'person-space', but 'person-other persons-space' (Buttimer, 1969; Claval, 1970; Caruso and Palm, 1973).

Consider the feeling of spatial constraint, the prickly sense that there are too many people. Students of animal behaviour have applied their findings to problems of human space with mixed results (Callan, 1970; Esser, 1971; Lyman and Scott, 1967; Getis and Boots, 1971). As a feeling, 'crowdedness' is not something that one can easily measure. It is only roughly correlated with the arithmetic expression of density. A phenomenological description of 'crowdedness', applicable to human beings, is needed to complement the floodtide of ethological literature based on the observation of animals. The idea that we can best (i.e., scientifically) understand humans by *not* studying them directly has, perhaps, been carried to undue extreme. As to the type of description a humanist geographer might undertake, I shall attempt to illustrate with a brief sketch of one type of sociospatial experience, namely, crowdedness.

Nature is not ordinarily perceived to be crowded. Not only is this true of the great open space but also of forested wilderness. A boulder field is a solitary place however densely it might be packed with boulders; forests and fields are a joy of 'openness' to the city man even though they are certain to throng with pulsating organic life. Even people do not make a crowd if they seem an organic part of the environment, as, for example, when we contemplate an early evening scene in which fishermen intone in unison as they haul in their catch, or undulating fields specked by peasants harvesting their crops. Two may be a crowd if both are poets of nature (McCarthy, 1970, p. 203). On the other hand, a baseball stadium packed with 30 000 people is certainly crowded in a numerical sense, but it doesn't follow that the spectators feel the spatial constraint, particularly when an exciting game is going on. The sense of spatial constraint and of crowding is more likely to occur on the highways leading to the ball park, although — objectively — the human density

then is lower than it is later in the stadium itself. The two poets of nature sense each other's presence as obtrusion because each requires, in psychological necessity, the entire field to himself: their purposes conflict despite the fact that they are identical. In the stadium, the eyes of the spectators are all turned to the same event; by focusing on the event the remainder of the visual field, including their neighbours, becomes an unoffending blur.

A well-attended ball game and a mass political or religious rally are alike in that the crowds do not detract, but enhance the significance of the events: vast numbers of people do not necessarily generate the feeling of spatial oppressiveness. On the other hand, a large classroom packed with students may well create a sense of overcrowding, even though — as in the ball game or political rally — the students' eyes are all focused on a performance occurring beyond the space they themselves occupy. Superficially and objectively the situations are alike — crowd on the one side and an event of narrow focus on the other — but psychologically they are worlds apart. The student feels that ideally learning is a leisurely dialogue between the teacher and himself: the more packed the classroom the further it deviates from the perceived ideal, and hence the more urgent the sense of crowding.

Where peasant farmers are barely able to eke out a livelihood on limited land, one might think that the sense of crowding would be prevalent. Yet it is possible that the half-starved peasants do not see it that way. Foremost in their minds are too many mouths to feed and not enough food to go around, but these facts do not add up to the sensation of crowding. To see the farmyard bustling with the activities of one's own half-naked children is to feel oppressed by fate and a sense of inadequacy rather than that there are too many people. Crowding, in this situation, would be the result of rational calculation, not a direct perception. The direct perception of crowding occurs when, for example, a person, desperately in need of a job, pushes open the door of the employment office and finds long lines of people waiting.

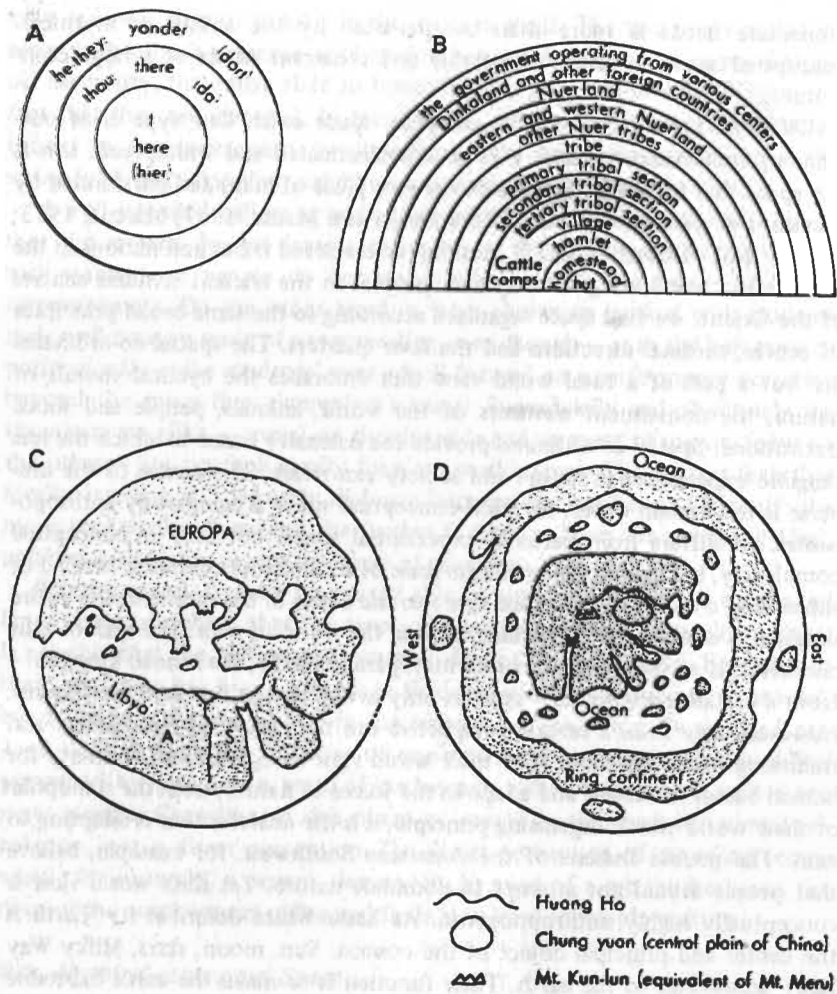
## II.6. *Mythical-conceptual Space*

In distinction to the types of felt space described thus far, the space that I call 'mythical-conceptual' (see Figures 3 and 4) is more the product of the generalising mind. On the scale of total human experience, it occupies a position between the space of sense perception and the space of pure cognition (geometry). Mythical-conceptual space is still bound to the ego and to direct experience but it extrapolates beyond sensory evidence and immediate needs to a more abstract structure of the world. The defect of distance from

immediate needs is more than compensated by the ability of mythical-conceptual space to satisfy the stable and recurrent needs of a large community.

Different types of mythical-conceptual space exist. One type is of outstanding importance because it is both sophisticated and widespread: this is the space that is focused on the centre (the place of men) and partitioned by a system of cardinal directions (Durkheim and Mauss, 1967; Marcus, 1973; Müller, 1961; Wheatley, 1971). Among the scattered tribes and nations in the New World, and among the disparate peoples in the ancient civilised centres of the Orient, we find space organised according to the same broad principles of centre, cardinal directions and the four quarters. The spatial co-ordinates are but a part of a total world view that embraces the cyclical rounds of nature, the constituent elements of the world, animals, people and social institutions. Spatial co-ordinates provide the ostensive frame to which the less tangible experiences in nature and society can relate. The centre of the universe is the human order. Mythical-conceptual space is egregiously anthropocentric. It differs from personal experiential space, not only in conceptual complexity, but also in the grandiose scale of its anthropocentrism. Instead of subsuming a sector of perceived space to the needs of the moment, the entire universe is conceptually organised around the world of man. The system thus conceived is so large and elaborate that, paradoxically, the human king-pin — from a certain perspective — appears only as one gear in the total mechanism. However, only from a certain perspective can the people of non-literate and traditional societies claim that their world view recognises the necessity for human beings to submit and adapt to the forces of nature; from the standpoint of their world view's organising principle, it is the universe that is adapting to man. The pueblo Indians of the American Southwest, for example, believe that people should not attempt to dominate nature. Yet their world view is conceptually highly anthropocentric. As Leslie White describes it, "Earth is the center and principal object of the cosmos. Sun, moon, stars, Milky Way [are] accessories to the earth. Their function is to make the earth habitable for mankind" (1942, p. 80).

A central theme in this survey of space is the bond between space and the human existential: body implicates space; spatial measures are derived from dimensions of the body; spatial qualities characterised as static, dynamic and affective, patent and latent, high and low, near and far are clearly called into being by the human presence; depth and distance are a function of the human sense of purpose and adequacy; 'crowdedness' is less an expression of density than a psychological condition. Mythical space is a sophisticated product of



the mind answering the needs of the communal group. Conceptualisation progressively removes spatial structures from the unstable requirements of the individual ego, and even from the biases of culture, so that in their most ethereal form they appear as pure mathematical webs, creations of the disembodied intelligence, maps of the mind — and hence, maps of nature insofar as mind is a part of nature.

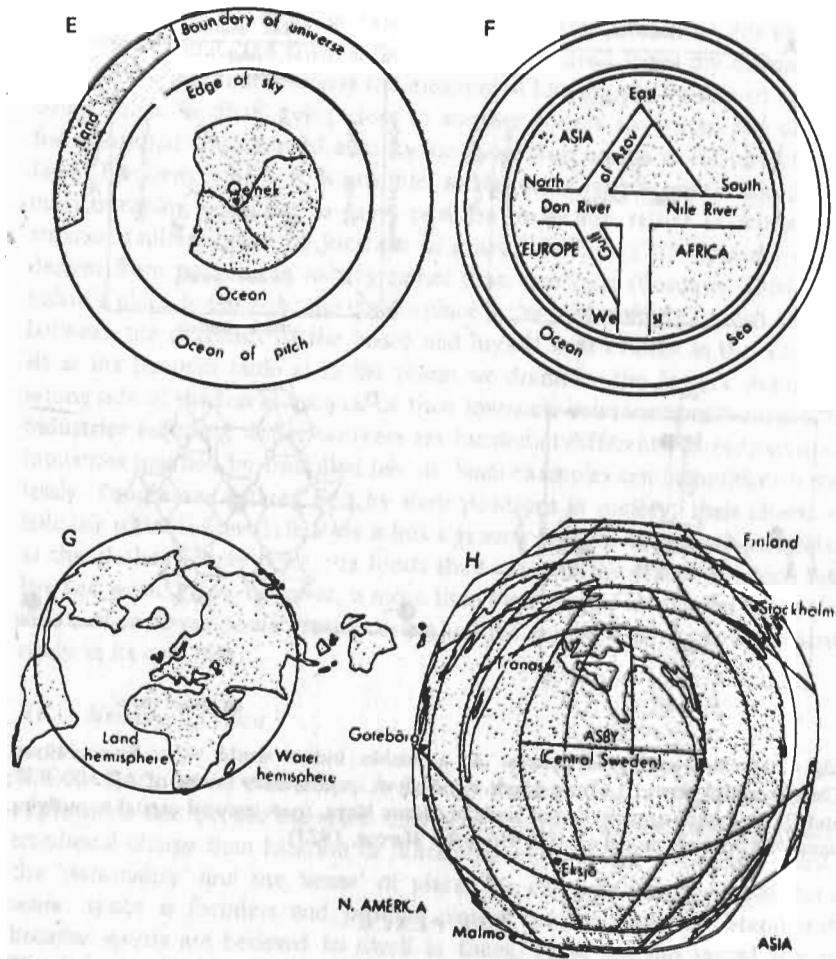


Fig. 3. Ego- and ethnocentric organizations of space (I) and (II), illustrating increasing cartographic sophistication at the service of persistent self-centred viewpoints, necessary to practical life: A: personal pronouns and spatial demonstratives; B: Nuer socio-spatial categories (after Evans-Pritchard, 1940); C: the world of Hecateus (fl. 520 BC); D: religious cosmography in East Asia; E: Yurok (California Indian) idea of the world (after Waterman, 1920); F: T-O map, after Isidore, Bishop of Seville (AD 570-636); G: Land and water hemispheres centred on northern France; H: Map with azimuthal logarithmic distance scale, centred on central Sweden (after Hägerstrand, 1953).



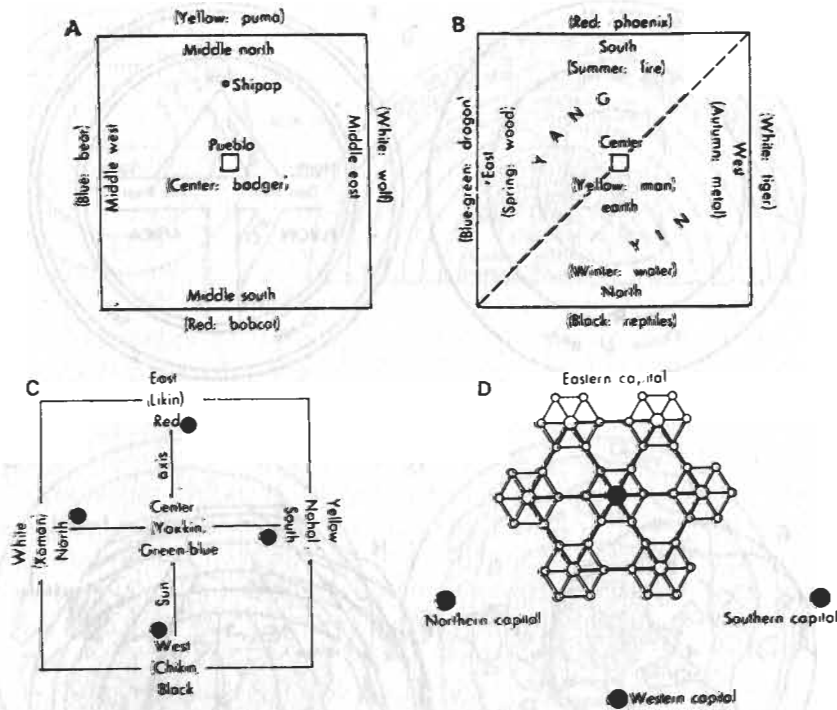


Fig. 4. Mythical-conceptual spaces: A: a Pueblo Indian world view; B: traditional Chinese world view; C: Classic Maya world view: quadripartite model of AD 600-900; and D: the spatial organisation of lowland Classic Maya, from regional capital to outlying hamlet: hexagonal model of AD 1930 (after Marcus, 1973).

### III. PLACE

#### III.1 Definition

In ordinary usage, place means primarily two things: one's position in society and spatial location. The study of status belongs to sociology whereas the study of location belongs to geography. Yet clearly the two meanings overlap to a large degree: one seems to be a metaphor for the other. We may ask, which of the two meanings is literal and which is metaphorical extension? Consider, first, an analogous problem the word 'close'. Is it primarily a measure of human relationship, in the sense that 'John and Joe are close

friends', or is it primarily an expression of relative distance as, for example, when we say that 'the chair is close to the window'? From my discussion of space, it is clear that I believe the meaning of human relationship to be basic. Being 'close' is, first, being close to another person, on whom one depends for emotional and material security far more than on the world's non-human facts (Erickson, 1969). It is possible, as Marjorie Grene suggests, that the primary meaning of 'place' is one's position in society rather than the more abstract understanding of location in space (1968, p. 173). Spatial location derives from position in society rather than vice versa (Sorokin, 1964). The infant's place is the crib; the child's place is the playroom; the social distance between the chairman of the board and myself is as evident in the places we sit at the banquet table as in the places we domicile; the Jones's live on the wrong side of the tracks because of their low socio-economic position; prestige industries requiring skilled workers are located at different places from lowly industries manned by unskilled labour. Such examples can be multiplied endlessly. People are defined first by their positions in society: their characteristic life styles follow. Life style is but a general term covering such particulars as the clothes people wear, the foods they eat, and the places at which they live and work. Place, however, is more than location and more than the spatial index of socio-economic status. It is a unique ensemble of traits that merits study in its own right.

#### III.2. Meaning of Place

III.2.1. *Spirit and personality.* A key to the meaning of place lies in the expressions that people use when they want to give it a sense carrying greater emotional charge than location or functional node. People talk of the 'spirit', the 'personality' and the 'sense' of place. We can take 'spirit' in the literal sense: space is formless and profane except for the sites that 'stand out' because spirits are believed to dwell in them. These are the sacred places. They command awe. 'Personality' suggests the unique: places, like human beings, acquire unique signatures in the course of time. A human personality is a fusion of natural disposition and acquired traits. Loosely speaking, the personality of place is a composite of natural endowment (the physique of the land) and the modifications wrought by successive generations of human beings. France, according to Vidal de la Blache (1903), Britain, according to Cyril Fox (1932), and Mexico, according to Carl Sauer (1941), have 'personality'. These regions have acquired unique 'faces' through the prolonged interaction between nature and man. Despite the accretion of experience the child

is recognisable in the adult; and so too the structural lineaments of a region — its division into highland and lowland, north and south — remain visible through the successive phases of change.

Personality has two aspects: one commands awe, the other evokes affection. The personality that commands awe appears as something sublime and objective, existing independently of human needs and aspirations. Such is the personality of monumental art and holy places. Powerful manifestations of nature, like the Grand Canyon and the Matterhorn, are also commanding personalities. By contrast, a place that evokes affection has personality in the same sense that an old raincoat can be said to have character. The character of the raincoat is imparted by the person who wears it and grows fond of it. The raincoat is for use, and yet in time it acquires a personality, a certain wayward shape and smell that is uniquely its own. So too a place, through long association with human beings, can take on the familiar contours of an old but still nurturing nanny. When the geographer talks of the personality of a region, he may have both aspects in mind. The region can be both cozy and sublime: it is deeply humanised and yet the physical fundament is fundamentally indifferent to human purpose.

III.2.2. *A sense of place.* Place may be said to have 'spirit' or 'personality', but only human beings can have a sense of place. People demonstrate their sense of place when they apply their moral and aesthetic discernment to sites and locations. Modern man, it is often claimed, has lost this sensitivity. He transgresses against the genius loci because he fails to recognise it; and he fails to recognise it because the blandness of much modern environment combined with the ethos of human dominance has stunted the cultivation of place awareness.

Sense, as in a sense of place, has two meanings. One is visual or aesthetic. The eye needs to be trained so that it can discern beauty where it exists; on the other hand beautiful places need to be created to please the eye. From one limited point of view, places are locations that have visual impact. On a flat plain, the buttes and silos are places; in a rugged karst landscape, the flat poljes are places. However, other than the all-important eye, the world is known through the senses of hearing, smell, taste, and touch. These senses, unlike the visual, require close contact and long association with the environment. It is possible to appreciate the visual qualities of a town in an afternoon's tour, but to know the town's characteristic odours and sounds, the textures of its pavements and walls, requires a far longer period of contact.

To sense is to know: so we say 'he senses it', or 'he catches the sense of it'.

To see an object is to have it at the focus of one's vision; it is explicit knowing. I see the church on the hill, I know it is there, and it is a place for me. But one can have a sense of place, in perhaps the deeper meaning of the term, without any attempt at explicit formulation. We can know a place subconsciously, through touch and remembered fragrances, unaided by the discriminating eye. While the eye takes in a lovely street scene and intelligence categorises it, our hand feels the iron of the school fence and stores subliminally its coolness and resistance in our memory (Santmyer, 1962, p. 50). Through such modest hoards we can acquire in time a profound sense of place. Yet it is possible to be fully aware of our attachment to place only when we have left it and can see it as a whole from a distance.

### III.3. *Stability and Place*

We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.

T. S. Eliot, *The Four Quartets*

An argument in favour of travel is that it increases awareness, not of exotic places but of home as a place. To identify wholly with the ambience of a place is to lose the sense of its unique identity, which is revealed only when one can also see it from the outside. To be always on the move is, of course, to lose place, to be placeless and have, instead, merely scenes and images. A scene may be of a place but the scene itself is not a place. It lacks stability: it is in the nature of a scene to shift with every change of perspective. A scene is defined by its perspective whereas this is not true of place: it is in the nature of place to appear to have a stable existence independent of the perceiver.

A place is the compelling focus of a field: it is a small world, the node at which activities converge. Hence, a street is not commonly called a place, however sharp its visual identity. L'Etoile (Place de Charles de Gaulle) is a place but the Champs-Élysées is not: one is a node, the other is a throughway. A street corner is a place but the street itself is not. As we have noted earlier, a street is directed, historical space: on the horizontal plane, only non-directed homogeneous spaces can be place. When a street is transformed into a centre of festivities, with people milling around in no particular direction, it becomes non-directed space — and a place. A great ocean liner is certainly a small world, but it is not rooted in location; hence it is not a place. These are not arbitrary judgments. They are supported by the common use and understanding of

language. It is a great wit who asks: 'When is this place (the *Queen Mary*) going to New York?'

### III.4. Types of Place

In the discussion on the personality and sense of place, I distinguished between places that yield their meaning to the eye, and places that are known only after prolonged experience. I shall call the one type 'public symbols', and the other 'fields of care' (Wild, 1963, p. 47). Public symbols tend to have high imageability because they often cater to the eye. Fields of care do not seek to project an image to outsiders; they are inconspicuous visually. Public symbols command attention and even awe; fields of care evoke affection. It is relatively easy to identify places that are public symbols; it is difficult to identify fields of care for they are not easily identifiable by external criteria, such as formal structure, physical appearance, and articulate opinion (see Table II).

Obviously, many — perhaps most — places are both public symbols and fields of care in varying degree. The Arch of Triumph is exclusively a symbol; the secluded farmstead, the focus of bustling rural activities, is exclusively a field of care. But the city may be a public (national) symbol as well as a field of care, and the neighbourhood may be a field of care and a public symbol, a place that tourists want to see. What do the Arch of Triumph and the secluded farmstead have in common so that both may be called places? I believe the answer to be that each is, in its own way, a small world, i.e., a centre of power and meaning relative to its environs. With a monument the question that arises is how a lifeless object can seem to be a vital centre of meaning. With a field of care the question is one of maintenance, that is, what forces in experience, function, and religion can sustain cohesive meaning in a field of care that does not depend on ostentatious visual symbols?

TABLE II

Places as public symbols	Places as fields of care
(high imageability)	(low imageability)
sacred place	park
formal garden	home, drugstore, tavern
monument	street corner, neighbourhood
monumental architecture	marketplace
public square	town
ideal city	

### III.5. Public Symbols

In the ancient world, as well as among many non-literate peoples, the landscape was rich in sacred places (White, 1967). Let a thunderbolt strike the ground and the Romans regarded it as holy, a spot that emitted power and should be fenced off (Fowler, 1911, pp. 36-7; Wissowa, 1912, 467-8, 477, 515). In ancient Greece Strabo's description suggests that one could hardly step out of doors without meeting a shrine, a sacred enclosure, an image, a sacred stone or tree (Book 8, 3; p. 12). Spirits populated the mountains and forests of China. Some were endowed with human pedigrees and carried official ranks (De Groot, 1892, p. 223). Although an entire landscape could embody power (Scully, 1962, p. 3), yet it was often the case that spirits lent numen to particular localities at which they received periodic homage. Examples of the holy place can be multiplied endlessly from all parts of the world. The essential point is that location, not necessarily remarkable in itself, nonetheless acquires high visibility and meaning because it harbours, or embodies, spirit (Eliade, 1963, pp. 367-87; Van der Leeuw, 1963, pp. 393-402). The belief system of many cultures encourages one to speak, literally, of the spirit of place. Modern secular society discourages belief in spirit, whether of nature or of the illustrious dead, but traces of it still linger in people's attitude toward burial places, particularly those of national importance; and of course in the attitudes of ardent preservationists who tend to view wilderness areas, nature's cathedrals, as sacred. Wilderness areas in the United States are sacred places with well-defined boundaries, into which one enters with, metaphorically speaking, unshod feet.

Public monuments create places by giving prominence and an air of significance to localities (Figure 5). Monument building is a characteristic activity of all high civilisations (Johnson, 1968). Since the nineteenth century, however, monument building has declined and with it the effort to generate foci of interest (places) that promote local and national pride. Most monuments of modern times commemorate heroes, but there are important exceptions. St Louis' Gateway Arch (St Louis, United States), for example, commemorates a pregnant period in the city's, and nation's, history. Public squares often display monuments and they are also a type of 'sacred area', in the sense that they may be dedicated to heroic figures and transcend purely utilitarian ends. Certain public buildings are also symbols: the Houses of Parliament, Chartres Cathedral, the Empire State Building, and, in the United States, the palatial railway stations. To modern geographers, it may seem lax usage to call monuments and buildings 'places', just like towns and cities, but this reflects our



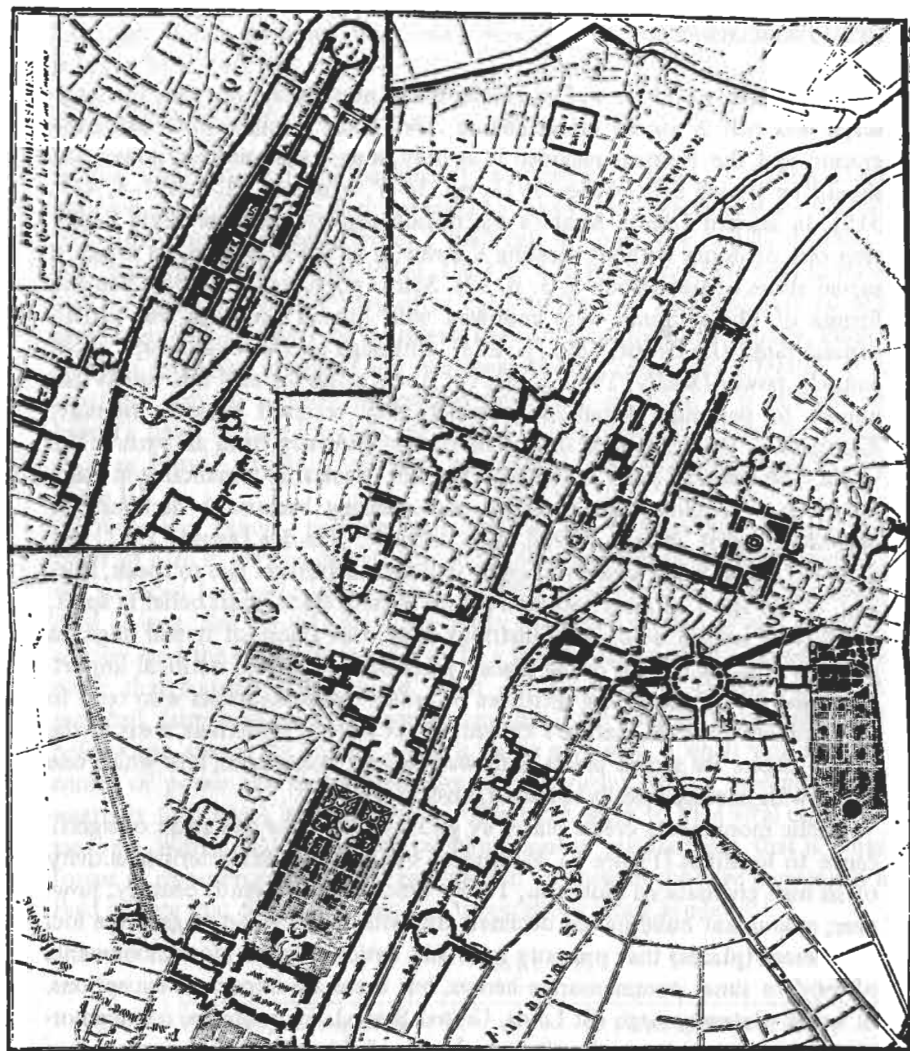


Fig. 5. Place as highly visible public symbol, something that architects can create. M. Patti's prize-winning plan for the Paris of Louis XV, in which the *place royale* is extremely prominent. Each *place royale* has a statue of the monarch at the centre, and streets fanning out like rays (Based on Moholy-Nagy, 1968).

parochialism and distance from phenomenological reality. Elizabethan geographers of the early seventeenth century did not labour under such constraint and freely described towns and buildings at the same level of concreteness (Robinson, 1973). Cities are of course places, and ideal cities are also monuments and symbols. In the second world war, Coventry and Hiroshima were destroyed but Oxford and Kyoto were spared from aerial decimation (Lifton, 1967, p. 16). Thus the cultural and historical significance (the symbolic value) of Oxford and Kyoto was recognised even by the enemy. This recognition by the outsider is characteristic of places that are public symbols.

Monuments, artworks, buildings and cities are places because they can organize space into centres of meaning. People possess meaning and are the centres of their own worlds, but how can things made of stone, brick, and metal appear to possess life, wrap (so to speak) space around them and become places, centres of value and significance (Norberg-Schulz, 1971)? The answer is not difficult with buildings and cities for these are primarily fields of care, habitats for people who endow them with meaning in the course of time. Buildings and cities can, however, also be considered as works of art, as piles of stone that create places. How they are able to do this is the problem for philosophers of art: that they have this power is a matter for experience. A single inanimate object, useless in itself, can appear to be the focus of a world. As the poet Wallace Stevens (1965, p. 76) put it:

I placed a jar in Tennessee,  
And round it was, upon a hill.  
It made the slovenly wilderness  
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,  
And sprawled around, no longer wild.  
The jar was round upon the ground  
And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.  
The jar was gray and bare.  
It did not give of bird or bush,  
Like nothing else in Tennessee.

Only the human person can command a world. The art object can seem to do so because its form, as Susanne Langer (1953, p. 40) would say, is symbolic of human feeling. Perhaps this can be put more strongly; personhood is incarnate in a piece of sculpture; and by virtue of this fact it seems to be the centre of its own world. Though a statue is an object in our perceptual space, we see it as the centre of a space all its own. If sculpture is personal feeling

made visible, then a building is an entire functional realm made visible, tangible, and sensible: it is the embodiment of the life of a culture. Thus monuments and buildings can be said to have vitality and spirit. The spirit of place is applicable to them, but in a sense different from holy places in which spirits are believed to dwell literally.

Some symbols transcend the bounds of a particular culture: for example, such large architectural forms as the square and the circle, used to delimit ideal (cosmic) cities, and such smaller architectural elements as the spire, the arch, and the dome, used in buildings with cosmic pretensions (Moholy-Nagy, 1968). Certain structures persist as places through aeons of time; they appear to defy the patronage of particular cultures. Perhaps any overpowering feature in the landscape creates its own world, which may expand or contract with the passing moods of the people, but which never completely loses its identity. Ayer's Rock in the heart of Australia, for example, dominated the mythical and perceptual field of the aborigines who lived there, but it remains a place for modern Australians who are drawn to visit the monolith by its awe-inspiring image. Stonehenge is an architectural example. No doubt it is less a place for British tourists than for its original builders: time has caused its dread, no less than its stones, to erode, but nonetheless Stonehenge is still very much a place (Dubos, 1972, pp. 111-34; Newcomb, 1967). What happens is that a large monument like Stonehenge carries both general and specific import: the specific import changes in time whereas the general import remains. The Gateway Arch of St Louis, for example, has the general import of 'heavenly dome' and 'gate' that transcends American history (Smith, 1950), but it also has the specific import of a unique period in American history, namely, the opening of the West to settlement. Enduring places, of which there are very few in the world, speak to humanity. Most public symbols cannot survive the decay of their particular cultural matrix: with the departure of Britain from Egypt, the statues of Queen Victoria no longer command worlds but merely stand in the way of traffic. In the course of time, most public symbols lose their status as places and merely clutter up space.

### III.6. *Fields of Care*

Public symbols can be seen and known from the outside: indeed, with monuments there is no inside view. Fields of care, by contrast, carry few signs that declare their nature: they can be known in essence only from within. Human beings establish fields of care, networks of interpersonal concern, in a physical

setting (Wagner, 1972). From the viewpoint that they are places, two questions arise. One is, to what degree is the field of care emotionally tied to the physical setting? The other is, are the people aware of the identity and limit of their world? The field of care is indubitably also a place if the people are emotionally bound to their material environment, and if, further, they are conscious of its identity and spatial limit.

Human relationships require material objects for sustenance and deepening. Personality itself depends on a minimum of material possessions, including the possession of intimate space. Even the most humble object can serve to objectify feelings: like words — only more permanent — they are exchanged as tokens of affective bond. The sharing of intimate space is another such expression. But these myriad objects and intimate spaces do not necessarily add up to place. The nature of the relationship between interpersonal ties on the one hand and the space over which they extend on the other is far from simple. Youth gangs have strong interpersonal ties, and they have a strong sense of the limits of space: gang members know well where their 'turf' ends and that of another begins. Yet they have no real affection for the space they are willing to defend. When better opportunity calls from the outside world, the local turf — known to the gang members themselves for its shoddiness — is abandoned without regret (Eisenstadt, 1949; Suttles, 1968). Strong interpersonal ties require objects: English gypsies, for example, are avid collectors of china and old family photographs (Lynch, 1972, p. 40). But the resilience of the gypsies shows that the net of human concern does not require emotional anchoring in a particular locality for its strength. Home is wherever we happen to be, as all carefree young lovers know. Place is position in society as well as location in space: gypsies and young lovers are placeless in both senses of the word and they do not much care.

The emotion felt among human beings finds expression and anchorage in things and places. It can be said to create things and places to the extent that, in its glow, they acquire extra meaning. The dissolution of the human bond can cause the loss of meaning in the material environment. St Augustine left his birthplace, Thagaste, for Carthage when his closest friend died in young manhood. "My heart was now darkened by grief, and everywhere I looked I saw death. My native haunts became a scene of torture to me, and my own home a misery. Without him everything we had done together turned into excruciating ordeal. My eyes kept looking for him without finding him. I hated all the places where we used to meet, because they could no longer say to me, 'Look, here he comes', as they once did" (*Confessions*, Book 4: pp. 4-9). On the other hand, it is well known that the dissolution of a human

bond can cause a heightening of sentimental attachment to material objects and places because they then seem the only means through which the dead can still speak. Sense of place turns morbid when it depends wholly on the memory of past human relationships.

What are the means by which affective bond reaches beyond human beings to place? One is repeated experience: the feel of place gets under our skin in the course of day-to-day contact (Rasmussen, 1962). The feel of the pavement, the smell of the evening air, and the color of autumn foliage become, through long acquaintance, extensions of ourselves – not just a stage but supporting actors in the human drama. Repetition is of the essence: home is “a place where every day is multiplied by days before it” (Stark, 1948, p. 55). The functional pattern of our lives is capable of establishing a sense of place. In carrying out the daily routines we go regularly from one point to another, following established paths, so that in time a web of nodes and their links is imprinted in our perceptual systems and affects our bodily expectations. A “habit field”, not necessarily one that we can picture, is thus established: in it we move comfortably with the minimal challenge of choice. But the strongest bond to place is of a religious nature. The tie is one of kinship, reaching back in time from proximate ancestors to distant semi-divine heroes, to the gods of the family hearth and of the city shrines. A mysterious continuity exists between the soil and the gods: to break it would be an act of impiety. This religious tie to place has almost completely disappeared from the modern world. Traces of it are left in the rhetoric of nationalism in which the state itself, rather than particular places, is addressed as ‘father land’ or ‘mother land’ (Gellner, 1973; Doob, 1964). Religion is maintained by rites and celebrations; these, in turn, strengthen the emotional links between people and sacred places. Celebrations as such demarcate time, that is, stages in the human life cycle, seasons in the year, and major events in the life of a nation; but notwithstanding this temporal priority celebrations, wherever they occur, lend character to place. The progressive decline in the sense of place, then, is the result of various factors, among them being: the demise of the gods; the loosening of local networks of human concern, with their intense emotional involvements that could have extended to place; the loss of intimate contact with the physical setting in an age when people seldom walk and almost never loiter; and the decline of meaningful celebrations, that is, those that are tinged with religious sentiment and tied to localities (James, 1961).

Unlike public symbols, fields of care lack visual identity. Outsiders find it difficult to recognise and delimit, for example, neighbourhoods which are a

type of the field of care (Keller, 1968). Planners may believe an area to be a neighbourhood, and label it as such on the ground that it is the same kind of physical environment and people come from a similar socio-economic class, only to discover that the local residents do not recognise the area as a neighbourhood: the parts with which they identify may be much smaller, for instance, a single street or an intersection (Gans, 1962, p. 11). Moreover, although the residents of an area may have a strong sense of place, this sense is not necessarily self-conscious. Awareness is not self-awareness. Total immersion in an environment means to open one's pores, as it were, to all its qualities, but it also means ignorance of the fact that one's place as a whole has a personality distinct from that of all other places. As Dardel puts it (1952, p. 47):

*La réalité géographique exige une adhésion si totale du sujet, à travers sa vie affective, son corps, ses habitudes, qu'il lui arrive de l'oublier, comme il peut oublier sa propre vie organique. Elle vit pourtant, cachée et prête à se réveiller. L'éloignement, l'exil, l'invasion tirent l'environnement de l'oubli et le font apparaître sous le mode de la privation, de la souffrance ou de la tendresse. La nostalgie fait apparaître le pays comme absence, sur le fond d'un dépaysement, d'une discordance profonde. Conflit entre le géographique comme intériorité, comme passé, et le géographique tout extérieur du maintenant.*

The sense of place is perhaps never more acute than when one is homesick, and one can only be homesick when one is no longer at home (Starobinski, 1966). However, the loss of place need not be literal. The threat of loss is sufficient. Residents not only sense but know that their world has an identity and a boundary when they feel threatened, as when people of another race wants to move in, or when the area is the target of highway construction or urban renewal (Suttles, 1972). Identity is defined in competition and in conflict with others: this seems true of both individuals and communities (Figure 6). We owe our sense of being not only to supportive forces but also to those that pose a threat. Being has a centre and an edge: supportive forces nurture the centre while threatening forces strengthen the edge. In theological language, hell bristles with places that have sharply drawn – indeed fortified – boundaries but no centre worthy of defence; heaven is full of glowing centres with the vaguest boundaries; earth is an uneasy compromise of the two realms.

### III.7. What is a Place?

The infant's place is in the crib, and the place of the crawling child is under the grand piano. Place can be as small as the corner of a room or large as the



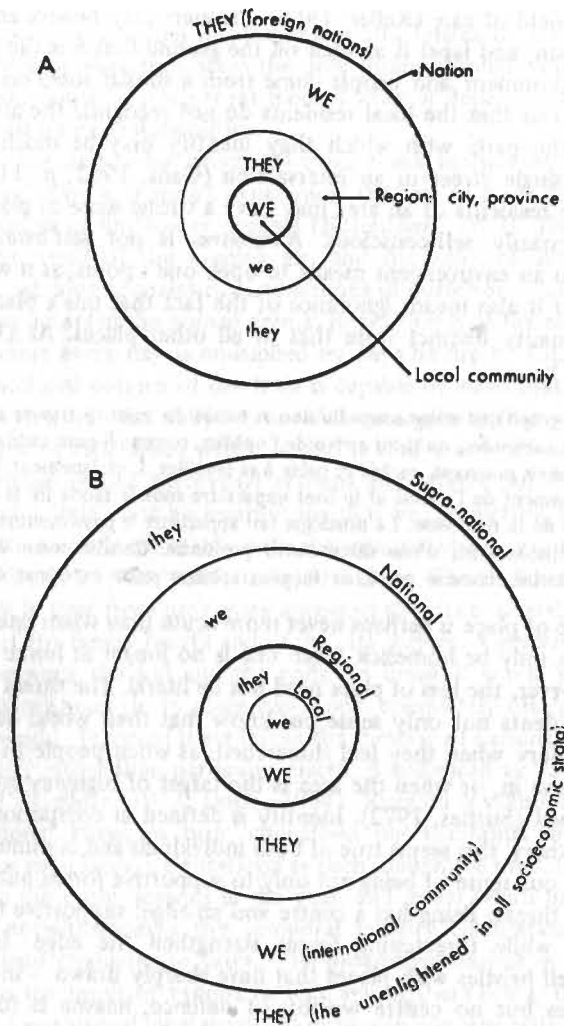


Fig. 6. The 'we-they' syndrome in the definition of space. Among people of the lower middle socio-economic class: A: the 'we-they' distinctions tend to be clearly recognized at the local and national (superpatriotic) levels. The suspicion of strangers and foreigners extends to their lands. Among the cosmopolitan and highly educated types: B: the home base is broadened beyond the local neighbourhood to a region, and nationalism (national boundary) is transcended by familiarity with the international life style.

earth itself: that earth is our place in the universe is a simple fact of observation to homesick astronauts. Location can become place overnight, so to speak, through the ingenuity of architects and engineers. A striking monument creates place; a carnival temporarily transforms an abandoned stockyard or cornfield into place; Disneylands are permanent carnivals, places created out of wholecloth. On the other hand, places are locations in which people have long memories, reaching back beyond the indelible impressions of their own individual childhoods to the common lores of bygone generations. One may argue that engineers create localities but time is needed to create place (Lowenthal, 1966; Lynch, 1972). It is obvious that most definitions of place are quite arbitrary. Geographers tend to think of place as having the size of a settlement: the plaza within it may be counted a place, but usually not the individual houses, and certainly not that old rocking chair by the fireplace. Architects think on a smaller scale. To many of them places are homes, shopping centres, and public squares that can be taken from the drawing boards and planted on earth: time, far from 'creating' place, is a threat to the pristine design of their handiworks. To poets, moralists, and historians, places are not only the highly visible public symbols but also the fields of care in which time is of the essence, since time is needed to accumulate experience and build up 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.

#### IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Space and place lie at the core of our discipline. From the positivist perspective, geography is the analysis of spatial organisation. From the humanist perspective, space and place take on rather different characteristics. Showing what these are in a coherent structure is the humanist's first task. It is true that "The modern science of geography derives from man's sense of place", then the humanist geographer would ask, "What is this sense of place on which we have not only erected a spatial geography of considerable elegance but, more important, on which we still depend for the decisions and acts in our daily lives?" Unlike the spatial analyst, who must begin by making

simplifying assumptions concerning man, the humanist begins with a deep commitment to the understanding of human nature in all its intricacy. The relevance of positivist and humanist geography to each other appears to be this. To the humanist, positivist concepts are themselves material for further thought because they represent for him an extreme example of the universal human tendency toward abstraction. It is not only the social scientist but the man in the street who constantly shuns direct experience and its implications in favour of the abstract typologies of people, space, and place (Schutz, 1970, p. 96). The broad aim of the humanist geographer must be: Given human nature and the direct experience of space and place in the ordinary world, how can man have conceived different worlds, more or less abstract, among which being the maps of utopia and the geographer's own concepts of location? As distinct from the concepts, the conclusions of the positivist geographer are of primary interest to the humanist because, like the findings of other scientists, they show him the limits to human freedom that he cannot otherwise know. Do the works of the humanist have any value for the positivist? I suggest that they do for two reasons. One is that they draw attention to, and clarify, certain kinds of human experience, at least some of which may be amenable to the positivist's own methods of research. The second reason is that humanist findings promote self-knowledge. The promotion of self-knowledge is perhaps the ultimate value of the humanities; and we are told on good authority that the unexamined life is not worth living.

University of Minnesota

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> First, I should thank my colleagues at the University of Minnesota for their tolerance – and even encouragement – of the humanistic approach to geography. Minnesota's benign climate makes it possible for at least twenty flowers (the present size of our faculty) to bloom. Among geographers I owe a special debt to Hildegard Binder Johnson for her knowledge of the European literature, her sympathy (and tea!); and to my former colleague at Toronto, J. A. May, whose training in philosophy enables him to resist, rationally, the doctrine that positivistic science monopolises sense and meaning in human discourse. This particular paper has benefited from the gentle surgery of Ward J. Barrett, Anne Buttimer, J. A. May, Risa Palm, and P. W. Porter; needless to add, I alone am responsible for its remaining warts and heteronomy.

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