

# HUMANISTIC GEOGRAPHY

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Prospects and Problems

Edited by  
David Ley and Marwyn S. Samuels

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SOCIAL AND CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY



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Volume 15

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MARWYN S. SAMUELS**

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*And men go about to wonder at the heights of mountains,  
and the mighty waves of the sea, and the wide sweep of rivers, and the  
circuit of the ocean, and the revolution of the stars,  
but themselves they consider not.*

ST. AUGUSTINE

*Humanisons la géographie humaine.*

MAX SORRE

## CHAPTER 1

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# INTRODUCTION: CONTEXTS OF MODERN HUMANISM IN GEOGRAPHY

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DAVID LEY  
MARWYN S. SAMUELS

*The humanist approach to learning may prove more congenial to  
the coming generation than any other viewpoint.<sup>1</sup>*

JAMES PARSONS 1969

During the late 1960s something was brewing in the conceptual domain of social science theory and geography that brought many, if not all, the accepted paradigms and priorities of the analytical tradition under question. A movement toward or, more properly, a reawakened awareness of humanist principles and aims over and against a preoccupation with the techniques of scientific rationality began to emerge. Humanism, as it were, was rediscovered as the central concern for a geography of man.

The contexts of that rediscovery, hence the tone of modern humanism at the outset, were initially negative or, at least, broadly critical. For all its munificence, the overarching growth ethic, highlighted by an explosive technology both on the planet and in extraterrestrial space, increasingly appeared as the bearer of monumental self-destruction. The convergence of science and technology, once the Promethean harbinger of utopian society, began to emerge more as a central villain in the exhaustion and despoilation of man's own environment. The linking of scientific rationality and politics, once the hallmark of enlightened democracy, moreover, began to emerge as the chief mechanism for a stronger, if more subtle and therefore less penetrable, despotism. This was perhaps especially the case in the United States where, in the wake of race riots, the decay of central cities, the repression of dissent, and one of the most viciously divisive wars ever fought by men in the name of common ideals, many of the most cherished aspirations of enlightened Western civilization were dramatically put to the test and found wanting.

For all the hyperbole and behavioral excesses of the period, in short, only those most insensitive to the social and intellectual nuances of their

own time and place could have lived through the 1960s and emerged without some profound doubts about the ethical base and efficacy of the goals, let alone the methods, of established authority and its supportive sciences. Indeed, that the sciences, and especially the social sciences, either reinforced the status quo or else ignored the ethical debate surrounding the intellectual community in the name of neutrality, detachment, or objectivity seemed, at least to many, an admission of academic irrelevance, not to mention the height of hypocrisy.

In the midst of this destructive milieu, at least one positive dimension of the intellectual and political furor began to emerge. The long-ignored and unfashionable issue of values and value-loaded science was reopened to examination from both within and outside the halls of academe. Christian and Jewish humanists like Jacques Ellul, Paul Tournier, and Martin Buber were joined by socialist or secular humanists like Jean-Paul Sartre, Erich Fromm, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and marxian humanists like Georg Lukacs and Leszek Kolakowski not merely to decry the alienating forces of modern society and its nihilism, but also to proclaim a more self-conscious, philosophically sound, and active understanding of the richness of a human existence beyond the self-limiting strictures of analytical methods and positive science.

The critique of the analytical tradition revealed the essential unidimensionality of rationalist abstractions concerning the nature of man, a unidimensionality true both of theory and of practice, of the normative and increasingly of the actual, for in the words of Herbert Marcuse, "Technological rationality has become political rationality."<sup>2</sup> The pallid rational man of theory and practice was exposed for both its intellectual and existential rigor mortis. William Alonso's humorless economic man, rather like the pale figure of Pavlovian imagination, was found to be nothing more than the alter ego of W. H. Whyte's pliable organization man,<sup>3</sup> and both seemed hopelessly inadequate to an understanding of the profundities, let alone the everyday richness and variety, of the human experience. Thus protest was directed not only against the *actions* of a technological society but its *cognitive categories*, its alienating worldview, built around the mystical glorification of technique.

As the sciences succeeded moreover in breaking man down into compartments of specialized knowledge, as with Humpty Dumpty, not even all the methodological weapons at their command could put him back together again. Even where they tried to do so, as in a systems theoretic framework such as that of Talcott Parsons, they merely reduced man further to the demands of one or another independent variable. Certain pieces of fractured man were necessarily and always left out of the puzzle. To put man back together again with all the pieces in place, including a heart and even a soul, with feelings as well as

thoughts, and with some semblance of secular and perhaps transcendental meaning became, as it were, the centripetal goal of the twentieth-century humanist renaissance. In this regard, modern humanism had its precedent in that earlier renaissance of the fourteenth century that similarly sought to defend the variety and the integrity of human existence.

### **The Range and Nature of Humanism**

Having already generously employed the term *humanism*, it is incumbent upon us to reflect however briefly on the essential connotations of the humanist endeavor.<sup>4</sup> There are, after all, any number of possible definitions of humanism, all of which can be traced to particular schools of thought and various periods of different societies. Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Confucian, Hellenistic, scientific, marxist, existential, and many other forms of humanism appear on the map of intellectual history. Yet, for all its apparent diversity, certain historical and logical elements are held in common. As regards the modern, Western version, not the least of those elements is the historic factor that the very term itself and the intellectual, artistic, and social movement of humanism derive from a modern self-consciousness born in the fourteenth-century Italian Renaissance. Such historical limitation is not to suggest that earlier philosophies and intellectual contexts, whether in the West or the East, were any less concerned with man. On the contrary, it is only to suggest that the peculiarity of the modern concern with man is its almost forced or purposefully self-conscious tone.

Humanism as a concern for or interest in the situation of man is, of course, hardly unique to the modern era. Indeed, Renaissance humanists found reason to indulge an enormous interest in classical literatures and art partly because the latter revealed its own proclivity for anthropocentrism. Still, a wide gap separates Renaissance and classical humanism on the grounds of the former's need to develop and articulate or even defend its concern for man. Classical thinkers, like their counterparts in the ancient Near East, India, and China could almost take their humanism for granted. Though they might have had a special term for "humanism" and some need to designate a "humanistic perspective" per se, the idea of an alternative, nonhumanist perspective was anathema to the dominant modes of ancient thought.

Just as the Socratic and Platonist logic insisted that all thought (i.e., philosophy as science and art) was aimed at greater self-realization, Greek art and science were almost everywhere engaged in greater human edification. Anthropocentrism prevailed in the sense that *man's*



world (i.e., the *oecumene* or “known” world) was the center of concern. Not even the gods, including Zeus himself, escaped the Greek penchant for anthropocentrism. That penchant, incidentally, seldom meant the glorification of man *sui generis*. Rather, it meant that learning or knowledge and understanding about the world and cosmos provided greater wisdom in man’s relationship to the world. The Greeks glorified wisdom, not man. In this sense, too, later Judaic and early Christian humanism (itself historically linked to Hellenism) were less concerned with the ascendancy of man than with the awakening of man to his own temporal situation. Much the same comment could be made about Chinese humanism with the addition that, in the case of Confucianists, humanism as a social ethic emphasizing cultured restraint in the manipulation of nature and man and in intrahuman relations was probably carried to its logical conclusion.

Simply phrased, humanism in its most ancient forms did not mean that man was the be-all and end-all of existence. Aristotle made it quite clear in his *Nicomachean Ethics* that any such notion was absurd (i.e., illogical). More obviously, for Judaism and Christianity, God—not man—was the beginning and end of all things. Indeed, those who would argue that Genesis I proclaims man’s supremacy in the world of God’s creation not only miss the point of Genesis II (the Fall of Man) but also the entire biblical enmity with the pagan glorification of men. At best, as witnessed in the tale of Noah, man’s position in the Hebraic hierarchy of God’s creation was that of steward over, not Lord above, existence: a position reserved for YWH Himself. Similarly, in Christian terms, only one man became divine in history and His was a unique existence. Even as His existence reminded men of their potential divinity, the message of Christian salvation, no less than Hebraic covenant, was that men were not yet worthy of glorification. Confucian humanists, though less concerned with transcendental meanings, were also little moved by thoughts of a human dominance over the earth or the notion that existence was intended to serve man’s interests alone. Indeed, it was left primarily to scientific humanism to discover the view that man is supreme. There too, however, an important debate over the meaning of humanism emerged.

### **Renaissance Versus Scientific Humanism**

It is intriguing that the situation of late twentieth-century humanism is closely allied to that of the fourteenth-century Renaissance. They are allied not only in substance but also in context. Italian humanists, like their founding father, Petrarch, were revolutionaries in the sense that

they revolted against the decay of Christian humanism during the Middle Ages, much as twentieth-century humanists revolted against the decline of Renaissance humanism in the wake of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century science. Both, moreover, were self-conscious efforts to restore a fundamental concern with the human condition. Where Renaissance humanism sought to overcome the narrow strictures of medieval scholasticism in a newly fashioned treatment of art, literature, science, and, especially, history, twentieth-century humanism sought to overcome the narrow methodological constraints of positivist logic and science in order to pursue questions of esthetic, literary, linguistic, ethical, and historical meanings. Here too, in the twentieth century as in the fourteenth, no one program for action or paradigm of thought would suffice to describe all the manifestations of the humanist endeavor. Rather, what held humanism together was not only a predominant interest in the human subject but also a common need to articulate that interest and concern.

The first humanist of the Italian Renaissance, Petrarch, was also, in the words of Kenneth Clark, the "first modern man [who] in his curiosity, his skepticism, his restlessness, his ambition, and his self-consciousness . . . is certainly one of us."<sup>5</sup> Petrarch was probably the first Western man to express a landscape sentiment and perspective upon which the modern arts and the humanist view of nature depends; namely, that a landscape viewed at a distance and an understanding of nature itself are attended by self-consciousness. Petrarch was among the first who, having climbed a mountain to gain the vista, publicly declared that vantage as being attendant to self-discovery. Having obtained the vantage of height or distance (hence, detachment) from the valley of the Rhône, he recalled that passage from St. Augustine's *Confessions*, where the latter opined that men "go about to wonder at the heights of mountains . . . but themselves they consider not." Satisfied that he had "seen enough of the mountain," Petrarch then "turned [his] inward eye upon [himself]." Kenneth Clark was, no doubt, correct when he suggested that "nothing could give a clearer idea of the state of mind which produced the landscape painting of the later middle ages" than Petrarch's rediscovery of self.<sup>6</sup> But we can go a few steps further to note that the self-conscious introspection of the humanists as a whole opened a new vista on the meaning of art, literature, science, theology, and the entire panoply of undertakings in the human search for understanding.

The flowering of Renaissance humanism, its articulate defense of man, and its emphasis on the appreciation of human artifice, especially language and history, are obviously too involved for adequate interpretation here. We nevertheless should also note that, especially as the humanist endeavor began to decay into a set of self-made dogmas and a revived scholasticism, it also revealed certain contradictory tenden-

cies. Perhaps the most important of these, at least for the history of twentieth-century humanism, was the way in which Renaissance introspection became the rationale for the nihilistic humanism of modern science.

Here, too, space permits only meager assessment of the important transition from Renaissance to scientific humanism. At the outset, one can argue along with Hannah Arendt and others that the chief factor in that transition was the shift from classical anthropocentrism and its geocentric focus to the heliocentric universe of Copernicus and Galileo. That shift was humanistic inasmuch as the central thrust of the Galilean argument was not just that the earth moved around the sun but that one could rely on the *human senses*, albeit aided by the telescope, to verify the theory of a heliocentric universe. Indeed, it was Galileo's empirical proof, not the Copernican proposition itself, that the medieval Church found utterly threatening, for it smacked of pagan humanism and defied doctrinal views that the senses (not nature itself) were the source of sin.<sup>7</sup> The Galilean proof was humanistic in method but not necessarily humanistic in conclusion. The heliocentric universe moved the center of attention away from the anthropocentric concerns of classical and Judaeo-Christian humanism. The empirical method, moreover, was itself only incidental to the growth of the logic of science, the foundations of which rest more comfortably on the intellectual bedrock of Cartesian rationalism. And, with Descartes, we begin to see the origins of the nihilistic humanism of modern science.

The negative connotations of scientific humanism are manifold. At the outset, the famous Cartesian formula, "I think, therefore I am," or, more simply, "To think is to be," introduced a new dimension to the history of Western humanism. It introduced a fundamental *doubt* about existence itself, not to mention an existential doubt about one's own being. Thereafter, the central issue for Western science and philosophy was the proof of existence and the verification of one's own self. Thereafter, too, the proof and verification of existence and self in the philosophy of science were necessarily and only by means of the logical method that was first developed by Descartes. That method was itself dehumanizing.

We need not here attempt to expose all the dehumanizing characteristics of the rationalist method. Certainly, at least since Descartes, quantitative reductionism has been one prominent aspect of that story. Similarly, another prominent feature is that mentioned by Spinoza in his famous rendition of the value-free pursuit of scientific truth, *non ridere, non lugere, neque destastari, sed intellegere* (not to laugh, not to lament, not to curse, but to understand). As Immanuel Kant was to make clear, once analyzed, the logic of science demanded knowledge only of phenomena (quantitatively measurable objects) and cut itself off from

considerations of the numinous realm of ethics, morality, and transcendent meanings. Teleology, the search for meaning and purpose in existence, and especially a human teleology, was set off as the business of theologians, mystics, and other none-too-reliable sorts, while science pursued the stuff of logical truths.

To be sure, as nineteenth-century science began to focus more sharply on man himself as an object of analysis, Comtean or positivist social science (blended with the liberal ideals of eighteenth-century rationalism) was inherently humanistic. That is to say, man was again the center of concern. But, even if the definition of man appeared to remain unchanged, the method deployed by the sciences to understand man began to impinge on the value of being human. In a word, man was "naturalized," which is to say, made over in the image of nature. John Stuart Mill's famous methodological statement to the effect that no special method of analysis or logic of understanding was required for the study of man as opposed to nature became, in the twentieth century, the hallmark of a logic that concluded with Max Planck's almost equally famous comment that the intent of the scientific method was to remove all anthropomorphic elements from the understanding of anything.<sup>8</sup>

What the modern sciences demanded by the removal of all human elements (save, of course, rationality itself) was simply an agreement that man himself must be seen as a mere product of an environment (whether physical or social), a being understandable only in terms of phenomenal relations, the meaning of which was purely semiotic. Indeed, questions of meaning beyond the strictures of symbolic logic, whether transcendental, teleological, or simply ethical, became a matter not for science but for the arts, religion, and philosophies of the irrational. The result was a parting of the ways between explanation and wisdom, and objects and subjects; science and man went separate ways, giving rise to a fundamental distinction between the sciences and the humanities.

The special irony of that distinction—and a chief source of complaint on the part of twentieth-century humanists—was that it was accomplished by men. Man, or at least modern man, increasingly appeared bent upon self-denial, or the abrogation of that part of his personality given to ethical, moral, or even crudely emotional judgments; and this at a time when the normative power of *techne* reached crisis proportions. One way or another, it was against that self-denial and against the separation of science and man that modern, twentieth-century humanism waged war. The purpose of the humanist campaign was to put man, in all his reflective capacities, back into the center of things as both a producer and a product of his world and also to augment the human experience by a more intensive, hence self-conscious, reflection upon the meaning of being human.

## Modern Humanism in Geography

The results of the twentieth-century humanist campaign have been mixed, nowhere more clearly than in the realm of social science and social theory. For the most part, the campaign has been waged by means of existentialist and phenomenological epistemologies as well as a marxian humanism based partly on the early writings of Marx but also on the neo-marxist work of Georg Lukacs and Herbert Marcuse. In psychology and psychotherapy, these epistemologies find expression in the writings of Bindswanger, Maslow, Rogers, and the popularly known Rollo May. In sociology, the pioneering work of Alfred Schutz and Karl Mannheim as well as that of younger sociologists such as Peter Berger stand out for particular attention. In the broad area of economic and social commentary, Jacques Ellul has his successors in the writings of the generally orthodox Kenneth Galbraith and Robert Heilbroner, as well as the less-orthodox Theodore Roszak, Paul Ehrlich, and Ralph Brown, not to mention the participants of the Club of Rome. Similarly, the humanist campaign finds its expression in the sweeping historical-cum-philosophical critiques of Lynn White, Jr., John Passmore, Leo Marx, and William Leiss on modern man's relationship to nature.

But what of modern geography? How have the humanist tradition and especially the twentieth-century humanist campaign entered or impinged upon the work of geographers? The humanist tradition is, no doubt, deeply pervasive in that genre of geographical studies linked to Paul Vidal de la Blache and the French school. Also, some connection between humanism and geography is to be found in the literature of environmental and place consciousness. The central contributors here are readily identifiable: J. K. Wright's pioneering essays on the history of geographical lore, ideas, and impressions; the epistemological speculation and biographical studies of David Lowenthal; the historical-cultural explorations of landscape imagery and meaning in the work of Carl Sauer, Andrew Clark, Donald Meinig, and Paul Wheatley; Yi-Fu Tuan's wide-ranging examination of the intellectual, psychological, and cultural contexts of place attachments and environmental attitudes; and, as the modern variant of the Renaissance humanist, the encyclopedic yet synthetic history of Western ideas about man's relationship to nature given to us by Clarence Glacken. Were there any serious doubt as to the capacity and desire of geographers to work in the humanist mode, these examples alone suffice to render any such doubt moot.

Yet for all their verve and with the most prominent exception of Yi-Fu Tuan, these scholars do not figure conspicuously in the social science wing of geography, nor do they directly address the twentieth-century debate over humanism and scientific rationality. As Andrew

Clark noted in his own case, when asked to present an overview of humanism in geography, he found the task irksome if only because "methodology is neither an enthusiasm nor forte of mine."<sup>9</sup> He might just as easily have said that epistemological and methodological questions of the sort raised by the most recent wave of humanism in geography were not the special forte of any traditional geographical humanist.

Being accustomed to an acceptance of the distinction between the sciences and the humanities, and little enthusiastic about philosophical arguments, most traditional humanists in geography, in the main, preferred to avoid the debate over the aims and methods of a geography suffused with analytical technique. The latter was, in any case, primarily a concern of geographers who, being predominantly social scientists, wanted to find a means to reconcile the sciences and the humanities in order to compensate for the nihilism of their own analytical techniques. The task of finding new, more persuasive modes of thought to meet the challenges of modern humanism was left primarily to those who lacked an already given humanistic perspective. Some historical geographers might comfortably avoid the issue. Social, cultural, behavioral, economic, political, or broadly human geographers in the midst of geography-the-social-science could not afford that luxury, especially in view of their claims or intentions regarding social relevance.

In short, to find the intellectual core of modern humanism in geography, it is necessary not only to address its precedents or origins but also its changing, adapting, and moving forms in the work of those who would pursue *human* geography and *social science*. We have to turn to the varied work of Anne Buttner, Yi-Fu Tuan, Gunnar Olsson, Julian Wolpert, and a host of other, less well-established but no less important scholars as well as the best representatives of traditional humanism in geography. And here there is at least one central, irreducible message: a principal aim of modern humanism in geography is the reconciliation of social science and man, to accommodate understanding and wisdom, objectivity and subjectivity, and materialism and idealism.

This is not to say, of course, that the aim has been fulfilled. On the contrary, despite an already burgeoning literature on humanist modes of thought in geography, three classes of problems remain outstanding. First is the issue of appropriate epistemologies; or, broadly stated, the philosophical base of humanism in geography requires clarification. Second, given a set of epistemological or even ontological principles, there remains a question of methodological development. Finally, assuming that particular methods are derived, we need address the question of substantive contributions to an understanding of man's place in the world. On all three counts much remains to be done. It was for this reason that the present volume was initiated by its editors, not as the pretended "final word" on a vast concern but as another hopefully

useful step toward the fulfillment of the modern humanist endeavor in geography.

### ***Humanistic Geography: Prospects and Problems***

Several points of introduction to the body of this volume are perhaps necessary, if only to explain its origins. Each of the contributors to the volume was asked to submit an essay on a predesignated theme, so that all of the essays are newly commissioned. In the course of writing or editing, some of the themes changed direction; but for the most part the essays reflect the original intention to obtain an integral cross-section of humanist thinking in geography in terms of epistemological, methodological, and substantive contributions.

Little or no effort was made to force one particular motif, paradigm, or definition of humanism on the contributors. On the contrary, though we hoped that the designation of themes might foster conceptual integration, the issue of fundamental definitions and the respective role each essay might play in the larger context of geographical humanism was left to the individual contributor. That the editors intended a centripetal theme goes almost without saying. We are more than satisfied that, for all their diversity, the essays presented in the volume do indeed converge toward the intended theme of man's place in the reconciliation of the science and the art of geography. To serve the interests of students and those who would wish better to understand the intended theme of the volume, we have chosen to introduce the essays under their respective sections; we might also add that our classifications of the essays according to one of three sections is not hard and fast. Epistemological questions, especially those that emerge from the social science tradition, easily blur into methodological issues, which, in turn, are almost meaningless without substantive commentary. The result is a necessary fluidity in design, so that one set of questions not only flows into the next but also reflects back upon an earlier set.

### **An Epistemology for Humanistic Geography**

As is explicit or implicit in a number of the essays in this book, the beginning of a humanist perspective may be found in the rich tradition of French human geography following the example of Paul Vidal de la Blache. Yet, as Buttimer (chapter 4) declares, we cannot simply return to Vidal. Intellectually, for all its strengths Vidal's human geography

contained some serious flaws that challenge its appropriateness to modern human geography. Existentially, Vidal's world is not ours. The stable rural society rivoted to the physical geography of its *pays*, where men "saturated themselves with the environment," is, in Western society, a world we have lost.

One of the serious omissions of Vidal's geography, moreover, was its reticence to engage epistemological questions and thus develop a sound philosophical underpinning. As Berdoulay (chapter 5) observes in his discussion of the Vidal-Durkheim debate, the French geographers had little appetite for methodological controversies. Interestingly, the same penchant was maintained by Carl Sauer and many of his students, who, while comprising the American school closest to the humanistic currents of the French regional geographers, similarly rejected an interest in epistemology. One result of this epistemological naiveté was the failure of humanist positions to mount a defense against positivism in the early 1960s. In drawing, however selectively and superficially, upon the literature of the philosophy of science, the positivists were able to overawe a generation of geographers whose philosophical reading had rarely passed beyond Hartshorne's *The Nature of Geography*. The triumph of Durkheim over Vidal in French social theory was repeated in the 1960s with the supremacy of the spatial analytical school in human geography.

A primary characteristic of a humanist position is its *anthropocentrism*. Existentialism and phenomenology, philosophies of human concern, provide some appropriate guidelines for pursuing an anthropocentric perspective. Samuels (chapter 2) shows how in existential terms space becomes place. The abstract notion of spatiality is transformed into dimensions of meaning, and distance becomes the language alternatively of human relations and human alienation. No object is free of a subject; whether in thought or action each phenomenon is part of a field of human concern. The intent of an author is present in all actions and all facts, including, as Ley (chapter 3) demonstrates, the subjectivity behind the apparent objectivity of scientific concepts. Even the geographer's rank-size rule is a social product and as such has its "humanistic coefficient."

*Holism* is a second epistemological property of a humanist position, opposed to a false analysis that artificially wrenches phenomena from their context. Buttimer outlines Vidal's holistic vision of human geography and challenges us that our studies should be no less holistic than his. This does not mean the abstracted holism of systems theory. Rather, the synthesis is not functional but *dialectical*, not abstract but *contextual*. Both the *pays* monographs of the French school and the social world studies of Robert Park's school of urban sociology emphasized the active, reciprocal, and emergent relations of man and environment, the



place of both charism and context. Thus while the city is “a product of nature, and particularly of human nature,” at the same time Park would write that “in making the city, man has remade himself.”<sup>10</sup> Most tangibly in an urbanizing society, reality is a social construction but one that acts back upon its subjects, sometimes in ways that may remain unseen and taken for granted. As man and environment engage each other dialectically, there is no room in a humanistic perspective for a passive concept of man dutifully acquiescing to an overbearing environment. But neither is man fully free, for he inherits given structural conditions and, indeed, may be unaware of the full extent of his bondage. There is, then, as several essays suggest (e.g., chapters 2, 3, 4), need for a carefully balanced treatment of both consciousness and environment, an avoidance of both an excessive idealism and also an equally excessive materialism.

Durkheim rather than Weber has been the model for much human geography, and nowhere has this been truer than in economic geography. Wallace (chapter 6) is critical of the abstractions and inflexible categories of positivist social science that have typified the research of economic geographers over the past twenty years. Here, particularly, the mystique of technique has been most pervasive, and yet it cannot answer the most pressing questions of man-environment relations, which assume their distinctive character precisely because of the circumstances of *context*, which positivism so carefully removes. Policy decisions made according to a technocratic rationality are ideological, as they conceal questions of plural and often competing values beneath a mantle of technique. In social geography, too (see chapter 3), attention to the realities of context is necessary to attain an understanding or explanation of phenomena that, as has been shown for the geography of crime and poverty, cannot be understood by positivist-abstracted empiricism alone.

In his unorthodox essay, Olsson suggests a *contingency* to action that challenges the abstractions and firm categories of both theory and practice in a more strictly epistemological manner (chapter 7). The firm categories that describe the social world are simply the fabrication of the detached observer, for a closer examination would reveal not only certainty but also ambiguity; not only necessity but also contingency; not only fixed form but also emergence and transformation. Olsson argues that our firm mental and linguistic categories are themselves dehumanizing, and he experimentally joins the surrealist attack on form (in this case, language) in order to liberate meaning. The unresolved tension, of course, is that in attacking form one endangers communication, for meaning itself is only articulated and communicable through formal expression.

Olsson's essay is unorthodox in part because it aims to be *reflexive*,

moving self-consciously from experience to theory and back again. As everyday life informs his argument, so too the mundane task of presenting the argument is achieved in a language consistent with the theory it describes. Such self-consciousness on the part of the researcher is also advocated by Buttimer as an aid to disentanglement from the shibboleths of our own contexts. In other words, the humanist venture to uncover *values*, the intentions of a subject, should also be applied reflexively to the researcher himself. The revelation of values does not in existentialism or phenomenology necessarily provide a calculus for decision making, but it does assert the existential necessity for responsibility, choice, and commitment. If such a mandate is integral to existence, one has to look elsewhere for a guiding ethic. Here the diverse traditions of humanism provide varied answers; among these Wallace identifies the biblical Judaeo-Christian ethic to meet the moral confusion of contemporary society. Such reference to divine revelation, both implausible and unfashionable in other epistemologies, is evidence of the breadth and fullness of a humanist epistemology in encountering man's experience of his world.

### **The Methodology of Humanistic Geography**

Inevitably, epistemological themes influence methodological strategies. The quest for subjective meanings implies an empiricism well illustrated by the voluminous monographs of the French and Chicago schools, epitomized by research such as Thomas and Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, a definitive study of over 2,200 pages on the immigrant experience and a project that lasted over a decade from the initial collection of source materials to final publication. Not that narrow empiricism, however massive, is sufficient for interpretation, for research that emphasizes only the "definition of the situation" may well overlook hidden and overarching factors of social structures and ideology.

The importance of empiricism nevertheless often makes some form of measurement useful if only in the form of a simple item count. In this manner there is not, as Harris indicates (chapter 8), any necessary disharmony between humanist approaches and quantification. The humanist approach to quantification is pragmatic; while rejecting any mystique about measurement, one is free to make use of technique selectively and where appropriate. The concern with understanding rather than prediction leads to an immersion with a problem and its contexts, which, in the traditions of Vidal and Sauer, implied immersion

in a region and a particular historical sensitivity. Only through such apprenticeship, argues Harris, will there be true learning and sufficient judgment gained for credible interpretation.

An important clue in such interpretation may be landscape itself. While humanistic methodology is eclectic and the sources for interpretation are numerous, ranging from archival research to participant observation, for the geographer the methods converge upon a group in a place and the landscape they occupy. Gibson (chapter 9) discusses the role of Weber's *verstehen* (interpretative understanding) in aiding in the recovery of the dominant values and beliefs of a society as revealed in the symbolism of their landscapes. Geipel (chapter 10) emphasizes the centrality of field work and mapping in such an endeavor as it was practiced by the recent German school of human geography under Hartke. He reveals also some of the weaknesses of an overdependence on landscape as an indicator, thus reinforcing the argument for a catholic approach to method.

Significantly, as Gibson's illustrations pass from historic to contemporary landscapes, so his chosen methodology shifts from the use of documentary sources to participant observation. In his discussion of experiential field work, Rowles (chapter 11) carries the argument a stage beyond conventional participant observation, suggesting that the role of detached scholar will continue to be a research obstacle until the researcher establishes himself as a concerned insider; only as his own subjectivity is bared will he gain access to the subjective meaning contexts of the lifeworld of others. To claim such a research relationship with others as an explicit objective is in some ways controversial; certainly it might prove ethically taxing, as Rowles found in his own empirical study.

Part of Rowles' argument is that it requires special care to gain access to the spontaneous everyday world of others. Such access provides immense depth of experiential insight; but, as he comments, it does so at the cost of breadth. Such a query is not simply one of sample size but of representativeness, and the answer can be provided only by informed judgment. Similarly, Tuan (chapter 12) claims that an even more particular source, the artist, permits a probing in depth and detail of the subjective meanings of everyday life and the experience of place. What is lost in representativeness is gained in insight, though again it is only through the measured judgment of the researcher that the fit between art and experience may be gauged. While the fit between experience and art may be close, that between spatial experience and conventional cartography is less satisfactory. In the final essay of the section (chapter 13), Wood reviews this problem and presents some tentative proposals for mapping that may be more faithful to anthropocentric notions of space.

## Research Directions for Humanistic Geography

Both from the above discussion and from previous commentaries there are two criticisms that might be anticipated against humanistic research. From the emphasis on field work, "the things themselves," might emerge the criticism of a naive empiricism, of a fact-finding inventory bereft of further integration. From the insistence on context and the skepticism concerning abstraction might develop a critique of idiosyncrasy, of a preoccupation with the unique and the esoteric. The charge of nonincremental empiricism is easily answered by the commitment to generalization, of however limited a nature, by humanistically oriented geographers. As Buttner observes, for Vidal *pays* studies were a prelude to a later integration in a systematic work; in experiential field work involving literary sources or a few participants there is often the expectation that the depth of knowledge gained will permit the construction of an ideal type that might be extended beyond the immediate case study, at least as an hypothesis. It is nevertheless true that while the humanist may seek generalization and even theory, he will not be sanguine concerning the discovery of more-or-less immutable laws. To the second charge, that of idiosyncrasy, an answer (unacceptable, no doubt, to some) might be that the stature of a research problem may be gauged according to its immanence in the concerns of everyday life. By this yardstick more than some humanistic research alone would be challenged.

The substantive essays in the final section of the book can be illustrative only of the wide range of problems falling within a humanist paradigm. Houston (chapter 14) addresses the timeless issue of the man-environment relation as mediated through the idea of the land in the Judaeo-Christian ethic. As is true in many such areas the original idea has been submerged in an ongoing dialectic of consciousness and action and has now been transformed into an aggressive ideology antithetical to the stewardship motif of the original mandate. In a narrower study, Seamon (chapter 15) discusses Goethe's method for encountering nature with greater respect and a deeper, more holistic, consciousness, as perhaps appropriate for a stewardship model in contemporary environmental education.

In a more conventional empirical study of a type that was characteristic of Sauer's Berkeley school, Sopher (chapter 16) examines the naming of places and reviews how the act of naming may throw light on the anthropocentric world of our predecessors and highlight contrasting environmental experiences among cultures. The differential perception of place is also a theme of Duncan's paper (chapter 17), as he juxtaposes the view of the tourist with that of the native. Conceptually, the status

of stranger is of interest, for it raises the prospect of greater self-consciousness; however, the tourist invariably seeks to preserve his myths and makes over reality in his own image. Place is a partner in this conspiracy because tourist places and tourist identity reinforce one another in constructing a reality where the tourist's sacred myths will be preserved.

Samuels (chapter 18) carries the argument a step further. The asymmetry of social relations intimated in Duncan's paper is sharpened in the example of Chairman Mao and the Chinese landscape. The possession of authority and power achieves the transition from ideas to action to a landscape. The articulation of values in form requires a competence that is most easily held by those in positions of power. Western's essay on the social geography of Cape Town reinforces this theme (chapter 19). The legitimization and institutionalization of the beliefs of a ruling elite are reflected in the forced relocation of social groups in Cape Town. In a hierarchical society, space takes on an ideological character conferring an identity upon residents. Western examines some of the costs of relocation and a now-stigmatized identity for a group of Cape Coloured residents.

In the final essay, Lemon (chapter 20) reviews another perennial dilemma of man in context: the tension between individualistic and communal claims. Although contemporary intellectuals are asserting the necessity for a concept of the public household, Lemon finds in his assessment of Toronto many examples of communal groups but relatively limited evidence that they have in practice successfully transcended the ambivalence of traditional individualism. As Houston's essay underscores man's alienation from his physical environment, Lemon shows how, in the unfulfilled search for urban community, neither has man overcome alienation of separation from his neighbor.

## Notes

1. James Parsons, "Toward a More Humane Geography," *Economic Geography* 45 (1969): facing 189.
2. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), p. xvi.
3. William Alonso, *Location and Land Use* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964); W. H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1956).
4. Studies on the origins and development of Western humanism abound. Among the most important see: Wallace K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1948); Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961); Ernst Cassirer, *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963). Other useful texts by Cassirer include *The Logic of the Humanities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961) and *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New York: Double-

- day, 1953). For a recent review of literature on Renaissance humanism see D. Weinstein, "In Whose Image and Likeness? Interpretations of Renaissance Humanism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 33, no. 1 (January/March 1972): 165-76.
5. Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art* (London: John Murray, 1949), pp. 6-7.
  6. *Ibid.*
  7. Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (New York: Viking Press, 1961), pp. 265-80.
  - A. D. White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, vol. 1 (1896; New York: Dover, 1960), pp. 114-70.
  8. Max Planck, *The Universe in the Light of Modern Physics* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1937); quoted in Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 269.
  9. Andrew H. Clark, "The Whole Is Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts: A Humanistic Element in Human Geography," in D. R. Deskins, G. Kish, J. D. Nystuen, and G. Olsson, eds., *Geographic Humanism, Analysis and Social Action* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977), pp. 3-26.
  10. Robert Park, "The City: Suggestions for a Study of Human Behavior," *American Journal of Sociology* 20 (1916): 577-612; *idem*, "The City as a Social Laboratory," in T. Smith and L. White, eds., *Chicago: An Experiment in Social Science Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), pp. 1-19.

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**OVERVIEW.** Less than a century ago much respectable scientific opinion claimed that the essential criteria for an understanding of the human condition were race and climate. Human intelligence, creativity, productivity, behavior, culture, and especially power were variously understood to be assignments of nature expressed in race and environment as made evident by reason. At least as early as the “shocking” victory of Japan in the now virtually forgotten Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5, however, confidence in the racial and environmental categories of enlightened Western thought began to suffer fatal, if slow, erosion. By the mid-twentieth century, after two world wars, after the racial onslaught of the Third Reich, and in the wake of successful national liberation movements in the none-too-temperate colonial world, once seemingly reasonable racial and environmental categories lost all serious credibility. Though obviously still potent in the form of racism or environmentalism, race and climate as central criteria for an understanding of mankind have been declared outré by history and in large measure by reason.

Several lessons are implicit here. The rise and the decline of racial and environmental criteria for an “explanation” of the human condition, whatever their logical or empirical “verifiability,” remind us that an “understanding” of the human condition is finally a function of cognitive categories, the validity and credibility of which may change with changing social, economic, political, intellectual, and broadly historical circumstances. If such mutability is not unique to an understanding of mankind, it is at least sufficient to remind us further that one peculiarity of knowledge about mankind is its reflexivity; i.e., the capacity whereby man-the-phenomenon or object of understanding acts upon or reacts to the cognitive categories of man-the-knowing-subject. Reflexivity, a capacity that has no exact parallel elsewhere in nature, means that all of our cognitive categories are relative. But how relative? and relative to what?

It goes almost without saying that therein lies the central issue for an understanding of anything known to man and especially for an understanding of the human—our own—condition. To what are our cognitive categories relative? On what empirical or logical grounds and by what criteria are our conceptions, perceptions, ideas, statements, propositions, arguments, or, simply, our notions about the



human condition (or anything else) to be judged correct, valid, reasonable, credible, and acceptable? How are those grounds and criteria established? From what do they derive? Are the principles according to which we determine the validity or truth-value of our cognition immutable, or do they too change with changing subject matter, historical context, social fashion, personal bias, or even mood? To what extent do experience, apperception, imagination, or even intuition affect our understanding? Is logical consistency a measure of truth? And, for that matter, who is to judge?

Whatever their answers, all such queries share an epistemological bent, for they all incite speculation about the origins, structure, methods, and validity of knowledge and understanding. They are, furthermore, primary questions, or questions whose resolution necessarily conditions all subsequent judgment. Strictly speaking, such epistemological questions represent but one branch of speculative philosophy, the other branch having to do with ontological issues, or questions about the nature and origin of being. The issue of the primacy of epistemology vis à vis ontology has occasioned no little controversy in the history of Western philosophy, but in practice the distinction frequently blurs into the view that they are, after all, interdependent, and it is in this sense that the term is employed here.

All too frequently, no doubt, in the rush to discover solutions for substantive problems, elemental epistemic issues are left implicit, taken for granted, or merely ignored. Yet, it is virtually an axiom of modern, scientific rationality that epistemological positions demand early clarification if only because they set the requirements for all explanatory methods and ultimately define the limits of understanding and knowledge. In more common parlance, all this suggests that, in the final analysis, one's "philosophy" of man, nature, life, and so on is the prime determinant of understanding and knowledge. How the "philosophy" is acquired, its intellectual, social, and cultural roots, its logical structure or system, its verifiability and validity, its intentions—all are the subjects for an epistemological inquiry.

What follows in part one of this volume is just such an inquiry. The essays included here have as their principal aim an examination of the philosophical foundations for a humanistic geography. They are not necessarily exhaustive in that regard, nor are they altogether mutually consistent. Humanism, as suggested earlier, is perhaps too broad a conceptual category for any single epistemological position. Rather, several different if invariably related epistemologies, especially those derived from existentialism and phenomenology, here converge toward what we, the editors and contributors, conceive to be philosophies of man appropriate to geography. They are appropriate to geography on at least three counts: First, they address issues that, having already arisen in the history of geographic thought, have the merit of traditional concerns. This is especially the case where they elucidate man's perception of, attachment to, and manipulation of place and environment. Similarly, where they engage the meaning of space and place, they are obviously appropriate, perhaps exclusively, to geography. Second, they are appropriate too in that they cast new light on the intellectual origins of much geographical thought, especially that of the Vidalian variety.

There is, finally, at least one other measure of the appropriateness of the epistemological positions put forth in the ensuing essays. Whatever their ostensible geographic content, each serves to establish the minimum criteria for any geography concerned with the human condition. These criteria may be summarized by the slogan of "Making Man the Measure," an emphasis asserting that neither the construction of places nor the development of knowledge can be regarded as independent of human purposes and values. Thus at an epistemological level, a humanistic geography is concerned to restore and make explicit the relation between knowledge and human interests. All social constructions, be they cities or geographic knowledge, reflect the values of a society and an epoch, so that humanistic philosophies reject out of hand any false claim to objectivity and pure theory in the study of man. Such claims, most notably those of contemporary positivism, negate themselves through their lack of reflexivity, their unself-conscious espousal of value positions. Indeed, the irony is that positivism *cultivates* unself-consciousness, rejecting the self-understanding that is at the core of being human. As Habermas has put it, "That we disavow reflection *is* positivism."<sup>\*</sup>

Consequently, humanist philosophies have commonly been cast in an adversary role, contesting critically the epistemological assumptions of contemporary positivist rationalism. But if critique provides humanism's entry to the debate over geographic epistemology, it is far from its only contribution. The essays in this section are concerned only secondarily with criticism of the positivist influences that have so thoroughly pervaded human geography since 1960, though in our own disciplinary milieu to ignore the positivist context completely would be impossible. More importantly, the essays demonstrate some of the characteristics and illustrate some of the emphases of a humanist position. The reader will note in the following chapters a continuous reinforcement of some common themes: the centrality of meaning and experience; the conjunction of facts and values, object and subject, material form and ideas, in geographic interpretation; the importance of context, synthesis, and therefore holism in geographic understanding; the commitment to logics that do not impose a false precision and static form on geographic relationships; a view of man that is contextual and not abstracted, particular rather than aggregate; and a perspective where human initiative and activity is not suppressed beneath the weight of a determining environment, whether that environment be physical or, as recent geographic determinists have suggested, whether it be economic.

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<sup>\*</sup>Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. vii.

## CHAPTER 2

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# EXISTENTIALISM AND HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

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MARWYN S. SAMUELS

Some twenty-five years ago George Tatham opined that “perhaps the most interesting aspect of the whole story [of the history of geographic thought] is the sensitive way in which geographical ideas at all periods have reflected contemporary trends in philosophical thinking.”<sup>1</sup> If that statement was accurate then, how much more so now! Almost everywhere one looks, geography is ripe with philosophical speculation. Much of the latter has, of course, centered around the issue of appropriate alternatives to the modes and ideals of the philosophy of science and especially analytical philosophy in geography. Disaffection with positivist methods and ethics, not to mention distrust of “bourgeois scientism,” has, as it were, raised the specter of variously more “humanistic” new frontiers in geographic thought. In the name of phenomenology, existentialism, marxism, and even a refashioned idealism, not to mention a resurgent transcendentalism, geographers—like their counterparts in other sciences—have been drawn into a vast intellectual debate over the goals both of the age of analysis and of understanding itself.

It is tempting to suggest that such speculation reflects differences in intellectual sensitivity, differences between what William James called “tough-mindedness” and “tender-mindedness.”<sup>2</sup> For that matter, in a society and age given to pluralism, the pragmatic ethic virtually demands “open-mindedness” in the face of these differences. Yet, it would be mistaken to assume that, as “a hundred flowers blossom,” there is no competition for space or that ideas do not compete. The ostensibly new frontiers of geographic thought have arisen to challenge, though not necessarily to abandon, the spirit of an objective, value-free, and rigorously quantitative science, at least insofar as that science deals with man.

For some, as in the case of Wilbur Zelinsky, that challenge is but part of a larger “crisis of faith” in the domain of scientific rationality, technological advance, and the very idea of progress. For others, such as Leslie

King, the challenge comes more directly to threaten the integrity of that earlier "research frontier" identified by Edward Ackerman and fulfilled in the work of the spatial analytical school of Berry, Isard, Haggett, Gould, the original Olsson, and others, including the Harvey of 1969. Though yet to be documented, rumor seems to have it that the latter is (as paradigms go) on the wane, to be replaced by these more "humanistic" approaches. Be that as it may, the intellectual ferment in geography is not simply a function of the merits of a paradigm, and Zelinsky was close to the truth when he emphasized the larger context of concern.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps best defined as neo-humanism, that larger context is itself, however, in only partial agreement. Insofar as they emphasize value-loaded research and pursue subjective meanings, the new frontiers often appear idealistic and, especially in the case of phenomenology and existentialism, solipsistic.<sup>4</sup> One might also conclude that a large segment of neo-humanism in geography is overwrought with sentimentality ("tender-mindedness") in its concern for attachments to place and the meanings of places.<sup>5</sup> In short, neo-humanism in geography seems to mean insurgent subjectivity, idealism, and even sentimentalism.

That the humanist tradition in geography is more complex than any of these categories, however, has already been demonstrated in the introduction to this volume. One need only recall Andrew Clark's wide-ranging exposition on humanism and historical geography to be convinced that no single method suffices to delimit the "humanist" endeavor.<sup>6</sup> What is more, the methods and goals of phenomenology, existentialism, and marxism do not themselves concur on a single *mode* of thought or action, even as they may overlap on the note of a common anthropocentrism. For that matter, the accusation of idealism and subjectivity is inappropriate, if only because each of these shares what Georg Lukacs once attacked as the attempt to discover a "philosophical third way" between idealism and materialism.<sup>7</sup>

If Lukacs was mistaken in the belief that marxism avoided the endeavor to find that "philosophical third way," he was at least correct in the assertion that phenomenology and existentialism both seek to define the relationship between *being* (existence, reality, and material condition) and *consciousness* (mind, idea, and image). Their common formulation, "no being without consciousness and no consciousness without being," however, is not merely, as he called it, a "variant of idealism: the acknowledgement of the dependence of being on consciousness."<sup>8</sup> It is equally a variant of materialism: the acknowledgment of the dependence of consciousness on being. The epistemological formula is aimed to overcome the historic dualism of much Western thought fully articulate at least since Immanuel Kant.

To be sure, the phenomenological method defined by Husserl ulti-

mately seeks the “intuition of essence” and, in addition to emphasizing introspection, eventually defends transcendental idealism.<sup>9</sup> But to suggest that phenomenology is alone in its insistence on the “bracketing off” of the question of the reality of objects (being) is to ignore the idealism of analytical philosophy and the whole scientific tradition.<sup>10</sup> What is more, the suggestion that phenomenology and existentialism merely represent a variant of idealism ignores both the existential insistence that “existence comes before essence” and the fact that no few existentialists, as in the cases of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Paul Sartre, sought union with materialist-minded marxism.<sup>11</sup> Tough-minded marxists and their counterparts in liberal analytical circles may not like phenomenology or existentialism for what John Passmore once described as the latter’s “continental excess,”<sup>12</sup> but the suggestion that they represent merely a variant of idealism, romanticism, or the like is simply wrong.

Historically, as I have argued elsewhere, existentialism arose as an *attack* on idealism, including subjective idealism.<sup>13</sup> It is partly for this reason that idealists, including the neo-Kantian variety of Entrikin, find phenomenology and existentialism unsatisfactory.<sup>14</sup> That Karl Jaspers and Jean-Paul Sartre emphasize concrete being as the source of consciousness, however, is testified to by their arguments on behalf of historicity. The label “existentialism” itself may offer equally good testimony. Similarly, insistence on a method closely allied with William James’ radical empiricism means, most simply, a preoccupation with minute, particular, concrete “facts” over and above the generalizations of mind.<sup>15</sup> Here too, in Sartre’s existential psychoanalysis and his “search for a method” in marxism, mind or consciousness is never divorced from, but is always firmly rooted in, physical, social, economic, and political “reality”; i.e., the reality of being itself and of history.<sup>16</sup> Finally, and most importantly, existentialism does not deny the truths of science as applied to nature or man. On the contrary, it accepts those truths as given. What it does not accept, however, is that those truths—the conceptions of nature and the human condition founded on the sciences—suffice to explain nature and man or go far enough in their explanations.

Caught in the midst of this frequently intense intellectual debate, geographers might rightly ask why any of this is particularly relevant to them. Positivists, phenomenologists, existentialists, and marxists may argue incessantly over the finer points of materialism and idealism, the nature of being and the role of mind, and the value of being value free, but rarely do they address matters of geographic theory. To be sure, the debate is “interesting” insofar as geographers become outspoken advocates for one or another of these schools of thought; but, for all appear-

ances, the debate itself is not hinged on any geographical issue. Even as they confront questions of man's relationship to nature or address the role of conceptual vis à vis perceptual space, they only indirectly engage a philosophy of geography. Indeed, as Entrikin recently complained, phenomenology and existentialism (as well as marxism) are much about a philosophy of history but not a philosophy of geography.<sup>17</sup> Or, at least, so it would seem.

The relevance to geographic thought of these "neo-humanist" schools, in short, demands clarification. It is my intention here to demonstrate that relevance in terms of existentialism. Whatever the merits of marxist humanism, human geography and phenomenological existentialism are, I submit, linked by a common intellectual thread. Both are engrossed in discovering man's relationship to nature and society; but, more importantly, both discern that relationship in terms of spatiality. And, in this connection, permit me the opportunity to avoid obfuscation. The argument that "phenomenology and existentialism are . . . inadequate for providing a philosophical framework for geography's spatial perspective" because they are too concerned with time vis à vis space and because they fail to "incorporate traditionally important concepts of scientific geography's spatial perspective" is, in a word, wrong.<sup>18</sup> At the outset, it is wrong because time and space are synonymous in the existential perspective and because all spatial concepts, whether abstract and quantitative or subjective and perceptual, are legitimately "existential." But, more importantly, the argument is mistaken because existentialism presents itself as a philosophy with a spatial ontology of man. To be human, in existential terms, is to create space.

### **A Spatial Ontology of Man**

Philosophers and geographers have long argued about the nature of space. We need not here elaborate on the familiar definitions of absolute and relative, abstract and perceptual space. Following Ernst Cassirer, abstract space is that "true mathematical space," the space of geometry and geometric symbols the "points and lines of which are neither physical nor psychological objects [but rather] symbols for abstract relations." Perceptual space is the space of psychology, the spaces of behavior and perception, the points and lines of which are symbols for or translations of concrete relations.<sup>19</sup> Man, we understand, indulges in both.

There is little of the revolutionary or controversial here. The sciences have their origins in the pursuit of abstract space. Modern psychology has followed in pursuit of the structures of perceptual space. Absolute space was and remains the purely mathematical space of Newtonian mechanics and Euclidean geometry, while relative space-time is the mathematical translation of post-Newtonian mechanics and non-Euclidean geometry. Geographers have, furthermore, adapted all four modes of spatiality in their own pursuit of spatial meaning.<sup>20</sup>

Be that as it may, why is space important, anyway? Even if we understand the nature of space in Euclidean or non-Euclidean terms and accept two different models of spatiality, the meaning of space remains perplexing. Familiarity with Kantian idealism has bred the notion that space, along with time, is somehow a necessary, an a priori condition of thought. But this only begs the question further. Why, after all, is space “necessary”? If it is necessary, why is space necessarily a priori? If space is anything like an ideal construct, from what (or whom) does that construct arise and on what (or whom) does it depend? If it is independent of man, why is it so important to him?

Though we cannot hope to answer all these questions here, we can suggest that the answers depend in large measure on one’s ontological position. *They depend on how one defines man and the extent to which that definition is linked to an understanding of spatiality.* It is at this point that an existentialist argument becomes clearly appropriate. As articulated by Jean-Paul Sartre, Karl Jaspers, Martin Buber, Max Scheler, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the collection of ideas identified with existentialism provides a spatial ontology of man.<sup>21</sup>

That spatial ontology was most clearly defined by Martin Buber’s “Distance and Relation.”<sup>22</sup> Spatiality, he argued, is “the first principle of human life,” involving (1) “the primal setting at a distance” from the world (*objectification*) in order to (2) “enter into relations” with the world. Buber maintained:

It is the peculiarity of human life that here and here alone a being has arisen from the whole endowed and entitled to detach the whole from himself as a world and to make it opposite to himself.<sup>23</sup>

That ability, “the primal setting at a distance,” constitutes the ontological ground of any human existence, for the sine qua non of humanness is objectivity (i.e., detachment or estrangement), which is nothing other than the act of making things (the world) distant from one-

self.\* As Buber argues, however, such detachment alone will not suffice to explain human consciousness. Rather, detachment has a purpose, which is to say, "an entering into relations." Relationship is not the opposite of distance but rather the goal of the "primal setting apart," the aim or end of estrangement.

Spatiality is more than a necessary condition of human consciousness. It is the beginning of human consciousness. Spatiality is meaningful here precisely because it constitutes a minimum definition of man as the only historic life form to emerge with a capacity for detachment. For this reason, too, the human situation is defined in existential terms as one predicated on distance. *Estrangement*—"the primal setting at a distance"—is understood to be the human situation par excellence.<sup>24</sup> Space is "existential" precisely because it reveals the condition of alienation; i.e., the existential condition of man's distancing.

At the same time, however, it is the goal of existential elucidation to clarify the potential for "relation" implicit in the human condition. On the one hand, distance, or estrangement, alone appears to have no purpose other than itself. In this sense, man is confronted with an elemental dilemma of meaninglessness wrought by alienation. On the other hand, the situation of estrangement is fraught with the potential for relation, for only by means of distancing is relation feasible.

The dilemma of meaninglessness here refers to the existential "fact" that

Man can set at a distance without coming into real relations  
with what has been set at a distance. He can fill the act of

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\*Several key terms employed in this essay have closely linked connotations. For easier reference throughout, they may be briefly defined in the following paired fashion:

1. *Space and human consciousness.* Space is, at minimum, physical, psychological, and logical extension; i.e., not an ideal construct of mind but the empirical condition of a human consciousness. To be conscious is to begin with the recognition that the world (i.e., the environment, other people, and one's own social and historical context) is outside or at a distance from oneself. Spatiality is the beginning of a human consciousness, which is to say that, in existential terms, a human consciousness begins by being "objective."
2. *Objectivity and alienation.* Objectivity refers to the act of setting the world at a distance from or extension beyond oneself. Alienation is, properly speaking, the consequence of objectivity. To be conscious is to be objective, which, in turn, is to identify some space between oneself and the world. In common parlance, to be objective is to "remove" one's own bias from the world; i.e., to set oneself apart from the world. That "setting apart" is the sine qua non of alienation; i.e., the condition of being detached or estranged from the world which, in existential terms, is the condition of a human consciousness.
3. *Subjectivity and relationship.* Subjectivity refers to two processes: on the one hand, it means the lack of objectivity and alienation (hence the lack of consciousness); and, on the other, it means the search to fulfill objectivity and overcome alienation. In existential terms, man is "subjective" only in the second sense, and his means of becoming subjective is the way in which he engenders relationships. The latter refers to the act of eliminating or reducing the distances between man and the world. Relationship is the goal of objectification. To be human is to be objective in order to become subjective; i.e., to set the world apart in order to enter into relations with the world. This, in turn, reveals the special irony, or "existential dilemma," of the human condition; i.e., man's search to overcome alienation is tantamount to a search for the elimination of his own alienated being (figuratively, a desire for self-destruction); and his history is filled with tension between the reality of alienation and the desire to overcome it.

Left unmentioned in the present discussion is the existential association of objectivity-alienation with human freedom. Man is "free," in existential terms, not because of an endowed, absolute "free will" but because he is conscious by virtue of being estranged.



setting at a distance with the *will to relation*, relation having been made possible only by that act . . . but the two movements can also contend with one another, each seeing in the other the obstacle to its own realization<sup>25</sup> (emphasis added).

In short, distance is the precondition of relationship, but the obverse does not follow. Relation is not a logical consequence of the act of setting at a distance but is rather an existential necessity made possible only by man's will to relate. In existential terms, that will to relate is necessary because it is the only means whereby man can confirm his own existence in the world.

To put the matter more simply, an animal *needs* no confirmation—no logic of justification—to proclaim either itself or existence per se, for its mental life is one of pure subjectivity or total involvement in its environment.<sup>26</sup> Only man requires confirmation, for only he begins in the world by defining the environment as opposite to and separate from himself. The need to confirm arises because without such confirmation, there could be no assurance that there was a someone detached, let alone any assurance that he who detaches himself has any relationship whatsoever to the world. Effectively, confirmation comes precisely to the extent that man exercises his will to relate or, in other words, *endeavors to mitigate distance through relationships with his environment*.

Though not often emphasized in critiques of existentialism, the "will to relate" is the core of an existential ethic. Summarized by Martin Heidegger, that ethic proclaims that

The world itself in the light of its intentional reference [the subject in relation] is understood not as a sum of objects or matter—a brute physical reality—but as a net of relations between man . . . and the realities of his surroundings, as *objects of his concern*<sup>27</sup> (emphasis added).

Man, in short, either chooses to relate or does not, and the only existential compulsion is concern. Concern is the energizing force behind man's relationships and the means whereby detachment (distance) is either overcome or mitigated.

At this juncture, existentialism takes an intriguing but for us somewhat tangential turn toward an analysis of the logic of concern.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps it will suffice here to note that existential writers have variously sought a logical as well as an ethical means to accept, overcome, or avoid the reinforcement of estrangement in the human condition. For some,

like Albert Camus, since the primal setting at a distance is the ontological condition of humanness the only appropriate response is either acceptance à la Sisyphus (making human existence absurd) or revolt in the face of alienation. For others, like Sartre, Jaspers, Buber, or Tillich, though estrangement is the human condition, it is an historic situation about which something must be done, especially insofar as it becomes a prominent mode of the modern human condition.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, on this point, existential theologians and atheists concur; i.e. precisely to the extent that estrangement is an historic condition, defined by the rise of a being capable of detachment, its diminution, resolution, or fulfillment becomes possible.

Just as the existential ontology begins with the emergence of a life form endowed with the capacity for estrangement, so too is the potential resolution of the dilemma associated with that capacity realized through human history. If the history of man is a history of detachment (spatiality), so too is it a history of human efforts to overcome or eliminate detachment, which is to say, to eliminate distance. Whether logically correct or absurd, man continually endeavors to bridge or fill his distances with relationships, even as in the doing he necessarily engenders other distances. The existential "fact" of spatiality means that man pursues relationships with a vengeance, even though all the distances—by definition—cannot be crossed. If all the distances were crossed, as Walt Whitman once hoped,<sup>30</sup> or if relationship won out over distance, man would cease to be man. If none of the distances were crossed, the human situation would be meaningless. Phrased differently, man *qua* man necessarily objectifies the world in order to enter into relations with the world and make it his own. The world per se is neither subjective nor objective, but anthropocentric.

And here, the existential ontology begins to bear directly on modern human geography. At the outset, that ontology means that all men are conditioned by distance and are—by definition—alienated. This connection between distance and alienation renders notions about animal "territoriality" wholly inappropriate to a discussion of human space.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, the common notion promulgated by neo-Kantian thinkers like Ernst Cassirer to the effect that "primitive" men do not indulge "conceptual space" because they are overwhelmed by "perceptual space" is also rendered inappropriate.<sup>32</sup> To suggest that "primitive" or "traditional" or non-Western man was or is less subject to objectification—the primal setting at a distance—is to demean him as being subhuman. All men, insofar as they are human, whether "primitive" or "modern," are ontologically alienated. The differences among men (culturally and historically), in this regard, are a function of their success in overcoming, accepting, reinforcing, or revolting against their alienation. In existential terms, that struggle constitutes human history. More to the point of

this essay, in existential terms, human history is a geography of distances made to be overcome. For this reason, too, all space and all distance, however measured and whether conceptual or perceptual, is “existential space.”

### Existential Space

For reasons still unclear to me, a strange mystique seems to pervade the idea of “existential space.” To be sure, the jargon of phenomenological existentialism does not help. Notions like *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld) or the “poetics of space” à la Gaston Bachelard seem to defy analytical clarity.<sup>33</sup> Technical terms related to the phenomenological method, especially *verstehen*, intersubjectivity, and Sartre’s existential psychoanalysis, are perhaps oblique. Yet, there is little mysterious, uncommonly romantic, or hopelessly subjective about the idea of existential space. As may already be clear from the preceding discussion, existential space involves the making of distances. Any spatial projection, including the projections of geometric analysis, is an example of existential space. But, what the latter takes for granted (i.e., the fact of projection from someone), existential analysis elucidates. At root, existential space (meaning any spatial projection) is nothing more than the *assignment of place*. What could be more ordinary! And yet, as geographers ought to be especially aware, the assignment of place is, after all, an extraordinary business.

The assignment of place is extraordinary because, as Sartre restated the existential ontology, “human reality is the being which causes place to come to objects.”<sup>34</sup> This means that “to come into existence . . . is to unfold my distances from things and thereby cause things ‘to be there.’”

The place of an object or instrument, even if sometimes precisely assigned [i.e., objectively through agreement with others] does not derive from the nature of the object itself, but it is through me that place . . . is realized.<sup>35</sup>

For this reason emplacement, or the assignment of place, is always a reference *to* something *from* someone. The reality (existence) of things-in-their-place is confirmed by and contingent upon the reality (existence) of someone’s projection. This reference to and from is the link between object and subject, distance and relation. “Place” is always an

act of referencing, and “places” are nothing more or less than reference points in someone’s projection.

On the surface, the idea of existential space *qua* the assignment of place is highly subjective. Since that assignment is an act of reference from someone, the places of objects and all spatial configurations are contingent upon whoever makes the assignment. But existential space is no more or less subjective here than the space of modern physics. It is subjective in the sense that the world or the universe as a whole lacks an objective center but not an objective content. In the words of Karl Jaspers:

The world now without an objective center centers everywhere; and I am once more in the middle of it, though no longer objective in the sense that applies identically to everyone. The only center is the one I occupy as an existing individual. My situation is what I start from and what I return to, because nothing else is real and present, but the situation itself becomes clear to me only when I think with reference to the objective being of the world . . . I can neither grasp my situation without proceeding to conceive the world nor grasp the world without a constant return to my situation, the only testing ground for the reality of my thoughts.<sup>36</sup>

That statement might just as easily have come from Einstein or Heisenberg. Indeed, it is made partly in response to the discoveries of modern physics. The shift from a heliocentric universe to a centerless universe meant, among other things, a shift in understanding about the nature of the universe from certainty to uncertainty in its configuration and design. Where astrophysics is content to define that configuration or design, existentialism merely brings the issue of relativity and uncertainty back to the situation of the physicist. The physicist, whether correctly or incorrectly, defines the universe by means of his paradigms. The physicist, not nature or the universe itself, is responsible for those paradigms. His “infinite universe” is “infinite” only to the extent that his projection of the universe is made up of any number of reference points with which he relates. The universe is “relative” not only from one star system to the next, or the way light bends, but also from one physicist to the next, and the way paradigms bend.<sup>37</sup>

Just as there are two components of spatiality (distance and relation), so too are there two components of “existential space.” The first of these is subjective insofar as it emphasizes the *assignment* of place. The second is objective insofar as it emphasizes the *situation* of that assignment. For the sake of brevity, these two components may be defined

in terms of what I shall call “partial space” vis à vis “situations of reference.” They may be defined as follows:

1. *Partial space* is that net of relationships between man and the world where the latter is an object of his concern. It is “partial” both in the sense of bias or subjectivity, and incompleteness.
2. *Situations of reference* are the historic conditions within which assignments arise. Partial spaces are rooted in and refer to situations not solely dependent on us but which we make our own through relationships of concern. Without such roots we have nothing with which to relate or about which to be concerned.

Though they employ other terms, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Jaspers each discuss in great detail problems associated with partial space and situations of reference. The former, as Merleau-Ponty inferred, is distinct from “clear space, that impartial space in which all objects are equally important and enjoy the same right to existence.”<sup>38</sup> Rather, it constitutes a second space that “cuts across visible space [and] which is ceaselessly composed by our way of projecting the world.”<sup>39</sup> In terms of spatial perception, partial space is accomplished by focusing or noticing. In terms of spatial conceptions, partial space is the way we order the world. Our partiality, which is to say the way in which we notice (perceive) and conceptualize the world, intervenes to prevent chaos, for a world in which all objects are equally important is anarchical. Effectively, partial space is the assignment of meanings to places and systems of places.

The assignment of meanings to places and projections of place is here never an indulgence in pure subjectivity. Rather, it is always contingent on situations into which men are thrust, over which they may have little or no control, and about which they may be imperfectly aware, even as they become concerned. Existence comes before essence in the existential formulation because we are born, as it were, into a world already given and only then experience it and give it meaning. The implication is, as Karl Jaspers warned, that:

My place is . . . determined by coordinates; what I am is a function of this place; existence is integral and I myself am but a modification or a consequence or a link in the chain.<sup>40</sup>

Our partial spaces, in short, are rooted in and dependent upon historical and sociological situations. Though the world is always *my* place, my place has its foundations in a world apart, separate, or distant from me.

What I bring to the world and this place is my concern, and my concern is always contingent upon my alienation from the world. Existential space, as such, is always made in light of a correlation between my alienation from the world (objectivity) and my concern for that alienation (subjectivity). An existential geography is nothing more or less than a reflection of that correlation.

### An Existential Geography

The reality, impact, or value of subjective space does not alone suffice to explain the nature or intent of an existential geography. Were that the sole contribution of phenomenological existentialism, we would be content to conclude with J. K. Wright's "geosophy."<sup>41</sup> An existential geography, however, goes far beyond Wright's geosophical idealism in several important respects, both in principle and in method.

Wright's "geographical ideas, both true and false," reflect the partiality of existential space insofar as they reveal someone's endeavor to fill distance with relationship. No general discussion of these "geographical ideas," however, will suffice to explain their existential content. Existential space is always an authored space and, in methodological terms, always has a biography as well as an intellectual history.<sup>42</sup> The method of an existential geography is to "begin with the subjective," which is to say with some author rooted in some situation. But, more importantly, "to begin with the subjective" is not to end there. Rather, the fact of authorship reveals the *need for* relationship, which, in turn, reveals the second and most important dimension of existential space, the *reality of alienation*. Existentialism parts company with the idealism of geosophy to reveal a "tough-minded" recognition of man's situational contingency; i.e., *all the distances cannot be filled with relationship because man is, by definition, alienated or estranged—at a distance from—the world*.

Strangely enough, though existentialism is almost universally decried as the philosophy of alienation, this dimension of an existential geography has gone almost unnoticed in the *au courant* geographic literature. Yet it is clearly central to the whole argument. The "primal setting at a distance" is the existential explanation for man's alienation from God, nature, and his fellow man. Man *seeks* a relation with these others because he is at a distance from them. But by exposing that quest existentialism defends alienation. Other persons, God, and nature must be separate from man (the generic being and individuals) if there is to be any *human* relationship. For this reason, existentialism presents

itself as a philosophy of alienation. For this reason, too, an existential geography is necessarily a geography of alienation.

That geography has both positive and negative connotations. Most succinctly defined, the geography of alienation is a history of the search for roots; i.e., for places that bind and with which one can relate. Rootedness—the attachment to place, belonging—and the identification with places serve to illustrate that search. Localism, regionalism, nationalism, globalism, or any concrete expression of relationships at whatever scale is a “positive” example of the search. The history of mankind is here always a geography of man’s search for roots. The first man is, as it were, the man who invented a boundary to delimit *his* place, and human history is thereafter a history of boundary making, maintaining, and changing.

Confusion sometimes arises here by mixing animal territoriality with the search for roots. The two are, as suggested earlier, fundamentally different, and their difference points to the negative connotation of the latter. Simply stated, animals are not alienated from their environment. They are totally engrossed in their “territories,” and their need to defend those territories is a biological drive. To the extent that man also is an animal, he too is engrossed in his territories; and he too has a biological drive to defend them. But, by definition, man is never totally engrossed in his environment. He merely *seeks* roots, and the spaces he defines and defends are *always* threatened by his uprootedness. The animal defends its territories because it is thoroughly dependent upon and attached to its environment. Man defends his territory because he is detached from his environment. The paradox or dilemma of human existence is that search for roots always reveals lack of rootedness.<sup>43</sup>

In the light of this dilemma, human history is a geography of movement, of uprootedness, of collapsing or changing reference points in the lives of men. The immigrant who grasps a new place as his own was first an emigrant. And the situation of the uprooted emigrant in search of a place is, in existential terms, the *sine qua non* of the human condition as a whole. The classic model of existential man is the one who is always in search of a place—the Wandering Jew, the gypsy, the nomad, the alien, and, for that matter, the “objective” scholar. They are more human than we who have a place; or, more properly, our humanness can be discerned only insofar as we see ourselves in their condition.

Alienation is, in existential terms, neither good nor bad but rather the minimum definition of the human condition. To be sure, by exposing that condition, existential writers argue both for and against alienation. Some, like Simone Weil, emphasize the need for roots and, in the process, proclaim rootedness as the goal of alienation. Just as Buber proclaimed relation as the goal of distance, the lack of roots is for existential nationalists like Weil synonymous with meaninglessness.<sup>44</sup> The place of the nation helps fill the distances with a meaningful rela-

tionship; and nationalism, like any other identification with or attachment to place, serves as a secular resolution to the problem of rootlessness. Others, like Sartre, however, tend to reject that solution and almost proclaim rootlessness itself as the goal of a human existence.

Where existentialism does proclaim rootlessness as the goal of a human existence, it leaves the human condition without resolution, hanging on the edges of hopelessness. The landscape of the geography of alienation here becomes a wasteland—a geography of emigrants who never find a place. As may be already evident, rootlessness as a goal is only one step removed from the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim condemnation of paganism (i.e., the belief in and attachment to sacred places<sup>45</sup>). So too is it only one step removed from the scientific ethic that demands universal objectivity. The “one step removed” is not toward greater subjectivity but toward a more intense, a more demanding objectivity in recognizing the “reality” of alienation.

For this reason, existential philosophers disagree among themselves about possible resolutions, though all agree that any resolution involves a “leap” away from the existential trap. Some, like Jaspers, Buber, and Tillich, follow in the footsteps of Soren Kierkegaard to proclaim a “leap” into a faith that existence is, after all, meaningful. Others, like Heidegger, fall back into a stronger idealism and leap away from existentialism, proclaiming themselves to be liberated. Still others, notably Sartre and a host of so-called “existential-marxists,” seek resolution in human history and geography.<sup>46</sup> The point remains, however, that existentialism does not itself offer a resolution to the dilemma of alienation; it merely explains that dilemma. In the process of that explanation it demands only that human reality is charged with spatial relations and that a history of man is a geography of men in search of their places, articulating their alienation and their concern for relationship.

## Conclusion

What could be more appropriate to a human “science of spatial relations” than a philosophy of man and of history that defines the latter in terms of spatial relations? By now it should be clear that the spatial relations of the existential argument are broad enough to encompass not only the “geosophy” of a J. K. Wright or the “topophilia” of an Yi-Fu Tuan but also the geometric modeling and distance measures of a Walter Isard, a Brian Berry, or a Peter Gould. Where the one emphasizes human attachments to place and the filling in of distance with relationships of concern, the other emphasizes movements about and through places. What for the former is a “home” is, for the latter, an “intervening



opportunity." Where the one is an exercise in rootedness, the other is an exercise in rootlessness. They are not opposites but correlates; and, in existential terms, the one (a finding of roots) is but the outcome of the other (a loss of roots).

Yet in all of this there is a special irony for human geography, an irony not unfamiliar to either old-fashioned regional or new-fashioned systematic modes of geographic thought. It is simply this: by emphasizing relationships with and attachments in space, regional geography concludes by differentiating—making distances between—places; whereas by emphasizing the distances between places or the impact of distance on man, systematic (spatial analytical) geography concludes by proclaiming relationships among places. Which is the more meaningful?

Strictly speaking, the answer is that the meaningfulness of the one is dependent on that of the other. We can, however, go one step further in the light of the existential argument that distance is the beginning but not the end or goal of a human consciousness. Simply stated, the irony of much modern spatial analysis in geography is that, in the name of measuring relationships among places, a more intense, more obvious, and a more revealing separation between places results. In its turn, the "meaning" (goal) of the latter is also made more obvious, more revealing.

As Edward Ullman once put the matter to the present writer, "The paradox of the °geography of spatial interaction is that, by seeking similarities in the name of nomothetic science [i.e., the comparative method], what it finds and ends up emphasizing are regional differences [contrasts]."<sup>47</sup> Those new-found regional differences are everywhere evident in the research frontier of the 1960s but nowhere more so than in the models of spatial integration themselves. Hence, for example, as is clear in the theory of regional development, what was intended to overcome the sectoral dualism of an older economic geography (central place theory, growth pole theory, the idea of center-periphery convergence) has become an even more intense dualism in the form of metropolitan dominance over peripheries. The geography of modernization, as Friedmann and other regional development theorists now insist, entails higher order regional inequity.<sup>48</sup> The gap—distance—between places, as it were, has intensified.

Indeed, the irony, paradox, or dilemma of modern geography—the science as well as the reality—is that having now more successfully bridged the distances between man and man, man and nature, and place and place, new, more intense distances have been generated. The problem of alienation is, as it were, more complex than ever before, a function not only of the loss and search for roots but also of a modern history of burgeoning self-consciousness made by the sciences of nature and man.<sup>49</sup> For that reason, the urge to find some resolution is all the more strongly felt and all the more obviously needed. In geography, the

search for the meanings persons give their places—the desire to seek out the “subjective,” value-loaded reference points in the lives of individuals and specific groups as well as the “tender-minded” pursuit of landscape meanings in literature, art, language, and human experience and of a stronger social-cultural geography emphasizing man’s search for roots—are each a necessary, logical, and historical concomitant to the recognition of a more demanding twentieth-century history of alienation. That search is not a denial of the “science of spatial analysis,” but it is an endeavor to fulfill the latter by linking the logic of alienation with the existential need for relationship. In the process, man’s being-in-the-world (the primal setting at a distance) is aimed at his becoming-in-the-world (an entering into relations). In the process, too, human geography becomes a history of man’s encounter with himself in an anthropocentric world order.

## Notes

1. George Tatham, “Geography in the Nineteenth Century,” in G. Taylor, ed., *Geography in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), p. 69.
2. William James, “Pragmatism and Humanism,” in J. K. Roth, ed., *The Moral Philosophy of William James* (New York: T. Y. Crowell, 1969), pp. 312–26.
3. Wilbur Zelinsky, “The Demigod’s Dilemma,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 65 (1975): 123–43; Leslie King, “Alternatives to a Positive Economic Geography,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66 (1976): 293–318; David Harvey, “Revolutionary and Counter-revolutionary Theory in Geography and the Problem of Ghetto Formation,” *Antipode* 4 (1972): 8. For the broader context as it relates to modern humanism see Eric Weil, “Science in Modern Culture, or the Meaning of Meaninglessness,” *Daedalus* 94 (winter 1965): 171–89; and note 49, below.
4. J. N. Entrikin, “Contemporary Humanism in Geography,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66 (1976): 615–32; idem, “Geography’s Spatial Perspective and the Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer,” *Canadian Geographer* 21 (1977): 209–22; Mark Billinge, “In Search of Negativism: Phenomenology and Historical Geography,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 3 (1977): 55–67; Leonard Guelke, “An Idealist Alternative in Human Geography,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 64 (1974): 193–202.
5. Examples of “tender-mindedness” abound. See, for example, the following: Yi-Fu Tuan, “Place: An Experiential Perspective,” *Geographical Review* 65 (1975): 151–65; idem, “Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective,” in *Progress in Geography*, vol. 6 (London: Edward Arnold, 1974), pp. 213–52; Anne Buttner, *Values in Geography*, Association of American Geographers Committee on College Geography Resource Paper no. 24 (1974).
6. A. H. Clark, “The Whole Is Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts: A Humanistic Element in Human Geography,” in D. R. Deskins, Jr., G. Kish, J. D. Nystuen, and G. Olsson, eds., *Geographic Humanism, Analysis and Social Action: Proceedings of Symposia Celebrating a Half Century of Geography at Michigan*, University of Michigan Department of Geography Publication no. 17 (Ann Arbor, 1977), pp. 3–26.
7. Georg Lukacs, *Marxism and Human Liberation* (New York: Dell, 1973), pp. 244–45.
8. Ibid. Idealism is defined more fully in the present volume by David Ley, “Social Geography and Social Action,” chapter 3.
9. This, in part, accounts for the distinction between phenomenology and existentialism.

The issue is discussed at length by J. J. Kockelmans, "Husserl's Transcendental Idealism," in Kockelmans, ed., *Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Its Interpretation* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), pp. 183-93. In the same volume also see the following: J. M. Edie, "Transcendental Phenomenology and Existentialism," pp. 237-51; and Alfred Schutz, "Phenomenology and the Social Sciences," pp. 450-72. Also see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Phenomenology and the Sciences of Man" and "The Crisis of Understanding," in *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays*, ed. J. M. Edie (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1964), pp. 43-95; 193-210.

10. A "bracketing-off" of "reality" for analytical purposes is equally accomplished by semiotic logic. See, for example, Rudolf Carnap's positivist definition of "meaning" in R. D. Runes, ed., *Dictionary of Philosophy* (Paterson, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams, 1962), p. 194. Also see Charles Morris, *Signification and Significance* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1964), pp. 49-80; R. B. Braithwaite, *Scientific Explanation: A Study of the Function of Theory, Probability and Law in Science* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), pp. 21; 383.

11. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Between Existentialism and Marxism* (London: Methuen, 1974); Merleau-Ponty, "The Crisis of Understanding" and "The Yogi and the Proletariat," in *The Primacy of Perception*, pp. 193-228. Also see note 46, below.

12. John Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1966), pp. 466-503.

13. M. S. Samuels, "Science and Geography: An Existential Appraisal" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1971), pp. 40-51; 130-65.

14. Entrikin, "Contemporary Humanism in Geography."

15. John Wild, *Existence and the World of Freedom* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), pp. 19-38; idem, *The Radical Empiricism of William James* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969).

16. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963). His alternative method, "existential psychoanalysis," is no less firmly grounded in the "situational." See idem, *Being and Nothingness* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), pp. 712-34.

17. Entrikin, "Contemporary Humanism in Geography," p. 214.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man* (New York: Bantam Books, 1970), pp. 48-49. On the relations between abstract and perceptual space, see idem, *The Problem of Knowledge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), pp. 21-36; Karl Pearson, *The Grammar of Science* (New York: Everyman's Library, 1911), pp. 191-208. Left unattended in these and similar treatments is the close tie between Berkeleyan views of perceptual space as noted in his *Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision* and relativity theory in modern physics. See W. A. Suchting, "Berkeley's Criticism of Newton on Space and Time," *Isis* 58 (summer 1967): 186-97. Similarly, the issue of "perspective"—i.e., the means whereby, as John Ogden noted, "perception through distance came to be considered a stage in the process that leads to moral or aesthetic judgement"—is left either to the realm of art history or historicism. See John Ogden, "From Spatial to Aesthetic Distance," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35 (January/February 1974): 64-65.

20. David Harvey, *Explanation in Geography* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), pp. 191-229.

21. A note of clarification is requisite here. This essay presents an interpretation of existentialism which, if culled from the literature (see notes 22, 26, 33, 34, and 36, below), purposefully emphasizes the importance of spatiality. Though brought to the fore by Sartre, Buber, and Merleau-Ponty, the issue of spatiality is largely implicit in the existential argument and for the most part represents a refinement of existential premises regarding human consciousness and freedom. The ontological argument is nevertheless made clear by Sartre's definition of man as the being who causes place to come to objects in Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 730; and by Martin Buber, "Distance and Relation," *Psychiatry* 20 (May 1957): 97-104 (reprinted from an original lecture translated by R. G. Smith, 1951).

22. *Ibid.* Pursuant to the comments in note 21, above, it should be noted that this was one of Buber's last and remains one of his least well-known essays, though it was perhaps

his most systematic attempt to define the logical and psychological grounds of *Verfremdung* (alienation).

23. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 97–99. F. H. Heinemann, *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), pp. 1–13; 165–80.

25. Buber, "Distance and Relation," p. 100.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 98. Max Scheler, *Man's Place in Nature* (New York: Noonday Press, 1970), pp. 43–48.

27. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *Phenomenology and Science in Contemporary European Thought* (New York: Noonday Press, 1962), p. 127.

28. Hazel E. Barnes, *Humanistic Existentialism, The Literature of Possibility* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1959). Also see Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism Is a Humanism," in Walter Kaufman, ed., *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), pp. 287–311.

29. Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), pp. 88–91; *idem*, *The Rebel* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), pp. 13–22; Karl Jaspers, *Man in the Modern Age* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957); R. Schacht, *Alienation* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), pp. 205–44; Heinemann, *Existentialism*, pp. 165–99.

30. Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself" and "Passage to India." Whitman's idealization of the American frontier ethic and his emphatic individualism are, in existential terms, further evidence of human alienation. The paradox is discussed in the conclusion of this paper. See note 47, below.

31. Robert Ardrey, *The Territorial Imperative* (New York: Dell, 1966).

32. Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, pp. 49–54. The anthropogeographic evidence against Cassirer's argument abounds, but perhaps nowhere more clearly than in the case of archaic Chinese conceptions of space as treated by Paul Wheatley, *The Pivot of Four Quarters* (Chicago: Aldine, 1971) and Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, At the University Press, 1956), pp. 497–590. For some refinement of the latter, see Paul Wheatley, "The Suspended Pelt: Reflections on a Discarded Model of Spatial Structure," in Deskins, *Geographic Humanism*, pp. 47–108. Also see note 43, below.

33. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception* (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), pp. 283–93; Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969); Georges Matoré, "Existential Space," *Landscape* 15 (spring 1966): 5–6.

34. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 730. Also see Merleau-Ponty's argument about the need to "catch space at its source": Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 243. The relationship between the "abstraction" of *space* and the "reality" of *place* is here the existential relationship between "conception" and "perception." The idea that in human terms "space is place" is, of course, not unknown in geographical circles. For one discussion see Fred Lukermann, "Geography as a Formal Intellectual Discipline and the Way It Contributes to Human Knowledge," *Canadian Geographer* 2 (1964): 167–72. Also see J. May, *Kant's Conception of Geography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), pp. 210–13.

35. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 370–407.

36. Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 106. Also see his discussion of historicity in *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 104–29; 342–59.

37. A. Koyre, *From Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957); M. B. Hesse, *Forces and Fields: A Study of Action at a Distance in the History of Physics* (Totowa, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams, 1965); Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (New York: Viking Press, 1968), pp. 265–80; Werner Heisenberg, *Across the Frontier* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

38. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 287.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Jaspers, *Man in the Modern Age*, p. 27.

41. J. K. Wright, *Human Nature in Geography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 83.

42. The methodological emphasis on the individual and its philosophical basis are dis-

cussed at length by M. S. Samuels, "The Biography of Landscape," in Donald Meinig, ed., *The Cultural Meaning of Ordinary Landscapes* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming). As the latter is somewhat tangential to the central concerns of this paper, it may suffice here to note only that the emphasis on the individual is a function of the existential argument regarding human freedom (see comments, footnote p. 27, the present paper).

43. Such "rootlessness" applies equally to "primitive," "traditional," preindustrial and non-Western man and is, of course, the concomitant of the view that man—all men—are ontologically alienated. Here too, the anthropogeographic evidence supports the argument, as in the idea and history of *Völkerwanderungen*. See, for example, Keightley's insightful discussion of wandering peasants in preimperial China. David Keightley, "Peasant Migrations, Politics, and Philosophical Response in Chou and Ch'in China" (Paper delivered at the Berkeley Regional Seminar in Confucian Studies, Berkeley, Calif., November 1977).

44. Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971). Weil was no "simpleminded" French nationalist but rather sought ultimate resolution in a *Waiting for God* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1959). The issue of a nationalist resolution, or any resolution in terms of identity *with* place, is far too complex for treatment in this paper. The dangers of the latter nevertheless are sufficiently clear, as in the case of that *Lebenswelt* that became *Lebensraum* under the Third Reich. As a secular resolution, the existential tension is between nationalist and internationalist positions; alternatives that are perhaps most clearly defined in the feud between Rosa Luxembourg and V. I. Lenin, or between Trotsky and Stalin.

45. Far too much has been made of "sacred space" in the geography of religion, especially as regards the three Asian faiths that came to dominate the West. A great battle between particularistic paganism and universalistic monotheism rages through the history of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—all of which proclaim alienation (the Fall) as the beginning of a truly human existence and all of which condemn the idolatry of place as an indulgence in false consciousness. Yet here too the "existential tension" between rootlessness and the search for roots is revealed in the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim attachment to sacred places (i.e., pilgrimage sites) and especially in the attachment to the Holy Land. See especially W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974).

46. Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

47. Edward Ullman, personal communication, 1971. The latter arose in the context of a discussion on modern transportation theory and the American frontier ethic in the writings of Walt Whitman (see note 30, above).

48. John Friedmann, "The Social Organization of Power in the Development of Urban Systems," *Comparative Urban Research* 1 (1972): 5-42. The issue is discussed at some length by Harold Brookfield, *Interdependent Development* (London: Methuen, 1975), pp. 85-123.

49. This, in effect, constitutes the existential critique of modern science and modern social history. By revealing man's total dependency on his environment, the natural and social sciences successfully reveal man's estrangement from himself; i.e., they proclaim his total subjectivity, denying man's inherent alienation (see footnote, p. 27, the present paper) and, not incidentally, his "freedom." That most successful revelation and its employment in social management engineering, in turn, sparks the "crisis" in modern philosophy, ethics, and politics. On the philosophical issues see, for example, Stanley Cavell, "Existentialism and Analytical Philosophy," *Daedalus* (summer 1964): 946-73. On the social ramifications see, for example, J. R. Ravetz, *Scientific Knowledge and Its Social Problems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). On the ethical and political ramifications see, among other popular texts, R. L. Heilbroner, *An Inquiry into the Human Condition* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974).

## CHAPTER 3

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# SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL ACTION

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DAVID LEY

In his book *The Idea of History*, R. G. Collingwood develops the argument that "an action is the unity of the outside and inside of an event."<sup>1</sup> This is a message that has been taken seriously of late by human geographers and has led to considerable criticism of research traditions in geography that have remained at the level of form or pattern, preoccupied with the external expression and neglecting the internal expresser. As a result, the 1970s are rapidly acquiring the reputation of the decade of the debunkers. The confident revolution of the 1960s, which was supposed to bring the subject within the scientific fold, has been assailed over the past five years on many fronts. Surprisingly, few of these are substantive or technical, though such commentaries will no doubt appear. No, the assault is not primarily directed at matters such as a sample design or a query over the constancy of a parameter but at issues altogether more fundamental, issues of epistemology and philosophy that challenge the status of the whole enterprise and its entrepreneurs. These assaults range from the severe, if sincere, polemics of Zelinsky's presidential address, to the careful finesse of Olsson's important and equally devastating argument that has been emerging since 1974. Unfortunately, however, the power of the critique is not yet matched by the power of the reconstruction. Zelinsky, for example, concludes his essay fatalistically with a Micawber-like wistfulness that perhaps something will turn up<sup>2</sup>; Olsson, despite his intellectual dexterity, does not at present have a workable counter-proposal, arguing at the conclusion of his most recent papers that maybe there is inspiration to be found in the surrealist school of literature and painting.<sup>3</sup> But as yet this emerging new phoenix has not escaped from the realm of consciousness to take on concrete form.

The epistemological vacuum is proving particularly frustrating in the area of social geography. The 1960s ended with a plethora of enthusias-

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I am grateful to David Evans for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

tic review papers optimistic that work would finally move beyond the details of morphology and descriptive spatial analysis to the understanding of prior and consequent social action.<sup>4</sup> Now that the necessary groundwork was covered, now that the last metropolitan area had its factorial ecology and its dot map of crime statistics, the *meaning* of these descriptive patterns could be examined and perhaps laid bare. Until this finally happens, however, the intellectual harvest of social geography will remain meager. In the recently published debate over research on the geography of crime, for example, it is tempting to side with parts of Peet's socialist interpretation, despite its excesses, that much current research has been preoccupied with epiphenomena: with symptoms, not causes.<sup>5</sup> Indeed a less charitable view might level a charge of ideological obscurantism, for in its preoccupation with the map and spatial distributions, subsequent analysis, commonly using correlation and factor analysis, always overidentifies local variables at the expense of overarching ones. The demonstrable map correlation between the incidence of crime and the distribution of group *X* is used to make the inferential transition from *r*-value to causal reasoning with distressing ease. But if group *X* "causes" crime here, why is it that they do not "cause" crime in other locations? Why is it that the same urban neighborhoods now occupied by group *X* also tended to be high crime areas a generation ago, when they were occupied by group *Y*? Clearly statistical or cartographic analysis alone is not sufficient to provide an understanding of the social action behind the map of crime, though it may well be a useful first step; such variables, though convenient for the interests of the researcher, are not always as demonstrably salient for the interests of the research.

There is a partiality about such analysis. What is lacking is a sense of history, or at least of biography, and a sense also of the tiers of social context ranging from the innermost and immediate linkages of family and peer group to the outermost but no less pervasive realms of ideology and *Weltanschauung*, the global outlook and dominant ideas of the period.<sup>6</sup> This argument is not entirely new, for prior to the rise of scientism over the past forty years there was considerable sensitivity to at least some of the contexts mentioned above. In the case of juvenile delinquency, for example, it is difficult to see any signal advance in understanding criminal acts since Frederic Thrasher's massive field research in Chicago in the 1920s<sup>7</sup>; certainly much of the research of his successors invites C. Wright Mills' harsh designation of "abstracted empiricism,"<sup>8</sup> research that is so fully withdrawn from a context of human concern that it has little to say to existing social reality.

One preliminary conclusion might therefore be that a socialist critique of present social geography as being preoccupied with epiphenomena is simply not radical enough. In bracketing out the different

tiers of the social context of action from understanding and explanation, surely a quintessential focus, it might be said that social geography at present has a limited claim to any separate existence at all. The present essay builds upon an earlier attempt to establish a more satisfactory foundation.<sup>9</sup>

## Two Candidates

Before being more explicit about the identification and analysis of these social contexts, it is worth looking more closely at the intellectual climate of our day, for it offers both positive and negative lessons from which a new synthesis may emerge. It is not, of course, true to claim that there are no emerging paradigms for contemporary social geography; but it is true that there is none that as yet is preeminent. Two major candidates for this status are a structural marxism with a materialist epistemology that emphasizes functional economic relations, and a so-called humanist posture derived variously from existential, phenomenological, and pragmatist philosophers offering a more anthropocentric view incorporating the creativity of human values and perception. These two positions may be caricatured by quoting from influential writers of each persuasion. Consider again Harvey's famous solution to the ghetto problem:

Our objective is to eliminate ghettos. . . . The mechanism in this case is very simple—competitive bidding for the use of the land. If we eliminate this mechanism, we will presumably eliminate the result. This is immediately suggestive of a policy for eliminating ghettos.<sup>10</sup>

Contrast with it the comment of another observer of the city of the Eastern seaboard, Jean-Paul Sartre: "It was a Sunday in January, 1945, a deserted Sunday. I was looking for New York and couldn't find it."<sup>11</sup>

What a contrast! On the one hand, confidence, certainty, a clear vision, a manifesto at a supra-individual scale tied in to economic relations, the material basis of production. On the other hand, a personal, even solitary, quest for rudimentary understanding, an immanent world where the clarity of material form masks an existential ambiguity. Which epistemology to follow? That of the provocateur or the raconteur, the man of manifestoes or the man of reflection, the way of "materialism" or the way of "ideas"?<sup>12</sup>



## Idealism and Social Geography

For better or for worse, the humanist geographer has become associated by critics with the way of reflection, the way of ideas.<sup>13</sup> In part this is not a surprising association in light of the major preoccupation with perception and the subjective meaning contexts of actors in everyday life. But there are also forces pressing humanist geography to a more extreme position like the recent, premature call for a purely idealist perspective in geography—though it might be added that this argument, following Collingwood, does also make the important separation between natural science and the human sciences and also urges inquiry to proceed beyond events to actions, beyond facts to the intent of an actor behind them.<sup>14</sup> In addition to this explicit association are a series of critiques of humanism in geography that are beginning to appear, all of which mistakenly cast the humanist perspective in an excessively idealist mold.<sup>15</sup> These essays have inappropriately overassociated phenomenology with Husserl's transcendental idealism, not recognizing that contemporary phenomenologists in the social sciences draw their inspiration not from Husserl but rather from philosophers with an eye to social science such as Schutz and Merleau-Ponty, who were not prepared to sacrifice existence for essence, for whom perceptions were always considered in context, in the concrete world of everyday life.<sup>16</sup> But most damaging of all in the gradual identification of humanist geography with an excessive idealism has been the drift of some humanist geographers themselves. There is a risk of passing from the revelation of ambiguity to a celebration of ambiguity. Quoting from Apollinaire, one recent paper concludes: "All is quiet. There are only two of us in the cell: I and my mind."<sup>17</sup> The danger is clear: the ideas being uncovered may no longer be those of men in context but the lonely reflections of the researcher himself.

Perhaps it is necessary to restate the crippling weaknesses of pure idealism. One could scarcely improve on Marx's reaction against Hegelian idealism in *The German Ideology*, where he sarcastically writes:

Once upon a time a valiant fellow had the idea that men were drowned in water only because they were possessed with the idea of gravity. If they were to knock this notion out of their heads, say by stating it to be a superstition, a religious concept, they would be sublimely proof against any danger from water. His whole life long he fought against the illusion of gravity, of whose harmful results all statistics brought him new and manifold evidence.<sup>18</sup>

Ideas do not run free of brute reality. As Jack Wohlwill has reminded psychologists growing overly exclusive in their exuberant claims for research in cognition: the environment is not in the head. Consciousness cannot break loose from a concrete time-space context, from the realities of everyday living; notions of pure consciousness are as much an abstraction from human experience as any isotropic plain.

An overly idealist position is forever in danger of pursuing straws in the wind, vague entities that always just elude the grasp. To the extent that humanist positions in geography have moved toward an extreme idealism, they have been frustrated from discovering real substance, statable empirical problems. One repeated suggestion has been to uncover the ambience of location, the sense of place; but this has too often been cast in obscurantist terms, either parroting the expression of artists or else consisting in loosely connected anecdotes, where the mood is uppermost, but the message is rarely lingering. There is too much concern with cognitive process, too little concern with concrete effects. There is no real content for there is no real problem, and the result is that such work tends to be nonincremental, simply encountering the reader *en passant*, rather than leading to generalization or incipient theory. That may be why Duncan Timms is so impatient with urbanists who are drawn towards Walter Firey's so-called values approach to urban land use, which challenges the economic determinism of the traditional land use models:

Very rarely has it been given a constitutive definition in terms of its connexions with general theory and equally rarely has it been the object of independent investigation. The concept of value seems frequently to have been introduced merely to fill the hiatus which has appeared when economic criteria have been ineffective. . . . By itself, however, it can hardly be said to constitute a systematic theory of differentiation.<sup>19</sup>

Imbedded within the criticism of the noncumulative nature of idealistically oriented research is the added charge that such work is simply a negation of an existing orthodoxy, a critique that does not have a countervailing case of its own to develop. This is a common argument used in the already cited criticisms in geography and also in a polemical essay in sociology that concluded that phenomenology and related positions had only a debunking role to play and, as such, had assumed an essentially parasitic relationship with mainstream sociology.<sup>20</sup>

This is by no means a heartening finale to those of us who have been advocating humanistic perspectives in geography, but I feel it is inevi-

table as long as there might be an overassociation with idealist modes of thought. Both in appearance and in substance such work would abandon the original phenomenological credo of an object for every subject and a subject for every object; the mesh of fact and value would then become simply a starting point for an inquiry pursuing an overly Husserlian or even Hegelian path toward consciousness. The end result of this progression can be whimsy, indulgence, and even solipsism.<sup>21</sup>

### **Structural Marxism and Social Geography**

At first blush the conflicting paradigm of marxist materialism appears attractive. As introduced in geographical writing, it incorporates a central concern with material and structural relationships and the distribution of power, contexts that are more peripheral, though not absent (as is often claimed) in idealist explanation.<sup>22</sup> But the position of values and ideas is now reduced to the stature of epiphenomenon, derivative of a substructure encompassing the mode of production and its consequent power relations. "In direct contrast," Marx writes, "to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. . . . Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life."<sup>23</sup> Ideas then become simply ideology, deliberate weapons of the powerful to protect their privileged status: "The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships."<sup>24</sup> This emphasis is consistently underscored by marxists in the geographical literature. Thus Peet chides liberal social geographers for their disregard of economic, class-based realities in examining both poverty and crime. In his own explication he carefully avoids the introduction of nonmaterial causal variables such as those based on subcultural differences among groups.<sup>25</sup> Castells is even more emphatic in his dismissal of urban subcultures that have real effects.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Harvey makes an interesting intellectual transition in his own status passage from liberalism to marxism. As a liberal he can argue the importance of a social space with symbolic meanings mediated in the imagery of reflection and cognition, but as a marxist he is done with such things and passes in his urban theory from Park to Engels, from cultural to economic perspectives:

It seems a pity that contemporary geographers have looked to Park and Burgess rather than to Engels for their inspiration. The social solidarity which Engels noted was not generated by any superordinate "moral order." Instead, the

miseries of the city were an inevitable concomitant to an evil and avaricious capitalist system.<sup>27</sup>

The non sequitur of the final sentence intimates Harvey's eagerness to move from the cultural to the economic, from the realm of immutable ideas to the realm of (apparently) manipulable material relations.

There are two major attractions that a marxist epistemology might hold for the social geographer. First, its vision is synthetic, not atomistic, holistic rather than piecemeal. It abjures the petty specialisms of bourgeois social science, the division of knowledge that, like the division of labor, it regards as an indicator of fragmented and alienated thought and experience. Its vistas are broad and ambitious, its style optimistic and self-confident. When Harvey claims to solve the ghetto problem in one fell swoop, he is making claims no more brazen than those of Marx himself:

Communism . . . is the definitive resolution of the antagonism between man and nature, and between man and man. It is the true solution of the conflict between existence and essence, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is the solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be this solution.<sup>28</sup>

Within this sweeping vision, the neglected variable of power is properly reinstated. Rather than a society predicated upon harmony and consensus (as the marginal economists and structural functionalists in sociology have long pretended), the reality of conflict, potential and actual, structural as well as temporary, is acknowledged and indeed insisted upon.

The second attraction of marxist analysis to the social geographer is that it deals with questions that matter. In an age where, as Sartre tells us, man is anxiety, a secular religion promising not only the accurate diagnosis of contemporary alienation but also its dissolution in experience cannot help but excite curiosity and commitment. Its manifesto is the more compelling when matched against so much social science that appears to be dutifully playing out its counter-revolutionary role of attending to business that so patently does not matter.

To adopt the marxist epistemology introduced in the geographic literature, furthermore, is not to make as significant an intellectual shift as might at first appear; for Harvey, who as marxist is rejecting cultural and social explanation based on cognition, was no less chary of cognitive variables during his brief involvement as a liberal with geographic behavioralism. Before a 1968 symposium on behavioral geography he

concluded that "Both economic and stochastic approaches to location theory have a distinctive advantage over the cognitive-behavioral approach because the concepts involved are far less ambiguous . . . we will do better to invest our time in furthering normative economic theory and in formulating stochastic theory."<sup>29</sup> From this statement and others it is likely that the break in his thinking was not a conversion to marxism but rather the short-lived interest in social and cultural explanation in the early 1970s.

This continuity in Harvey's thought concerning the primacy of both materialism and economic relations, moreover, has been a cardinal element of the disciplinary *Weltanschauung* for at least half a century. Harlan Barrows in his important presidential address of 1923 clearly foresaw that economic geography would be the subject's leading sector. And what of social geography? Here Barrows was more reticent: because it is "intangible . . . this body of relationships appears to form a potential field for geography rather than an assured one."<sup>30</sup> The history of the past fifty years has amply confirmed Barrows' projection, as economic geography has dominated the discipline and extended the cult of materialism to cultural, historical, and social geographers, who have plied a quiet trade largely limited to questions of pattern and morphology, shying away from relations that were "intangible" or "ambiguous."<sup>31</sup> To insist, as the marxists in geography now do, on an economic materialism in explanation is not to transcend a well-established orthodoxy in the discipline.

Nor does marxist epistemology show any discontinuity with tradition in terms of its reductionism. Here it is worth noting the symbolism of the Escher sketches that embroider the dust jackets of both the essentially positivist *Explanation in Geography* and the essentially marxist *Social Justice and the City*. This coincidence extends beyond the metaphor of decoration, for the rationally ordered elegance of Escher's world is shared both by positivism and marxism. It is demonstrably a world of perspective, but the perspective is not that of any insider but that of an outside engineer rearranging his position, altering his angle, but forever remaining separate from his subject, viewing it, objectifying it, modeling it, but never participating in its existence, never allowing *its* perspective to dominate. Escher's world, like the world of the positivist and the marxist, is a world of reductionism, a world of pallid human profiles where the moves of the faceless and mindless ones are determined according to the system of an outside operator peering in who does not recognize that it is only his own self-confidence that raises the illusion of such easy answers. Materialism, reductionism, determinism—these are the characteristics of an epistemology and an ideology of manipulation that has an inauthentic model of man.

It is here, of course, that a humanist critique reemerges, though now no longer in some vacuous world of consciousness alone but in social and historical context. It emerges first as a protest, a protest against inauthenticity both of thought and of praxis.

Both positivism and marxism are inauthentic as complete epistemologies for the social geographer in part because they bracket the question of their own perspective and thus do not examine their own credibility. Jürgen Habermas has commented how in contemporary social science, positivism has built-in safeguards against epistemological attack: "By making a dogma of the sciences' belief in themselves, positivism assumes the prohibitive function of protecting scientific inquiry from epistemological self-reflection."<sup>32</sup> In the face of dogma one is not encouraged to pose questions, to challenge the gloss of *self*-confidence. And yet the certainty and dogma of marxism is no different.

Let us return for a final time to *The German Ideology*. Here Marx is railing against the idealism of the young Hegelians, arguing that they are fighting only against phrases, not against concrete reality. To debunk their position, he proposes taking a fresh perspective as a detached observer "from a standpoint beyond the frontiers of Germany."<sup>33</sup> But note that marxism too is a standpoint, a theory, an idea, not a self-evident empirical fact "out there." Transcendent materialism is a posture for a mundane idealism, for the dependence of a materialist program upon an intellectual vanguard is, as Gouldner has commented, one of the striking contradictions of marxism; material *ideas* remain, nonetheless, ideas.<sup>34</sup> Whence, then, the self-confident assurance that transforms the idea to a dogma, "the solution of the riddle of history"? It is only a subjective will, the intentionality of consciousness, that through reification makes a self-evident fact out of a hypothesis. Marx is critical of those historians who "take every epoch at its word and believe that everything it says and imagines about itself is true."<sup>35</sup> On what grounds should we be any more confident of Marx's own unreflexive categories, the same subjectivity concealed by dogma? Marx's posture, like the positivist's, is that of the outside operator; but whose categories, whose meanings are, then, being institutionalized? The meanings of the actors in the social context? or the meanings of the unself-conscious observer from his perspective, from his "standpoint beyond"? If the latter, then surely we have arrived at the essence of alienation—when through alienated theory the idea assumes the status of a fact, and through alienating praxis their word becomes our world, their vision our reality, and the details of my existence are reduced to the outworking of your perspective. This, of course, is the seriousness of marxism; while the idealists buffet each other with words, in marxist praxis cognitive categories carry the sentence of annihilation.

## Toward a Reconstruction

The conclusion, of course, is that marxism deals in categories that are only imperfect reflections of the world of everyday life. As such it is an abstraction, and it remains a moot point as to the degree of correspondence between the categories of the marxist engineer and the mundane world that he and we naively know in our natural attitude. As this essay now draws away from critique toward reconstruction, it is time to identify what might be some building blocks for the social geographer in approaching reflexively this world of action, experience, and place.

The first building block, it would seem to me, is the fundamental lesson of humanism, the pervasive presence of anthropocentrism, an anthropocentrism that is purposefully, if often unself-consciously, *for* a subject. The world of everyday life is, as Berger and Luckmann assert, rivoted "around the 'here' of my body and the 'now' of my present."<sup>36</sup> My consciousness of space, time, and society is irrevocably partial, colored by my own biographical situation and interests at hand. Every time I make a phone call or open a book, I am confirming this partiality; I have selected this number from the multitude the phone book offers, I have chosen this book now in order to pursue my present interests. This integration between fact and value, between object and subject, between outside and inside is what recent phenomenologists, among others, see in action; this may seem a self-evident truth, but it is one insisted upon only by a humanist paradigm that gives consciousness, the intent of a subject, a significant position in its theorizing.

The second construct is the inherently social nature of experience. Here social geography begins to discover its distinctive character. Intersubjectivity, the sharing of meaning contexts, intimates our social nature, that we are individuals amid like-minded others to whom we selectively attend and with whom we selectively associate. Social life is a sequence of distancing from certain associations and entering into relationships in others with whom we share aspects of biography and particular interests.<sup>37</sup> Social geographers have for some time documented segregation patterns by residential area, but it is clear that residence is only one form of segregation and that other forms, such as the homogeneity of informal cliques and occupational groupings, may be even more pervasive and significant within the lifeworld. Intersubjective meaning contexts may place greater constraints on our perception than we are conscious of; thus, the black sociologist Andrew Billingsley has made the cryptic assessment that in their research on the black family "[white] American social scientists are much more American than social and much more social than scientific."<sup>38</sup>

Intersubjectivity has not been a well-articulated building block of

the humanist geographer, who seems to have found the lonely wastelands of existential man more genial. Yet neither is this position sufficiently reflexive, for there are few existentialists insensitive in their own writing to the judgments of peers. Perhaps Kierkegaard was one of the few existential men for whom hell really was other people<sup>39</sup>—remember he asked that his epitaph be simply that of “the individual”—and yet who could argue the enormous role that Kierkegaard’s audience in Copenhagen played, immensely hostile though it was, to both the quickening and the publication of his thought?<sup>40</sup>

The circumstances of Kierkegaard’s biography, his temporal, spatial, societal, and intellectual context, including the structures he encountered, such as the lethargic state church and the superficial world of mass culture, provided the template for his thought and action. The accidents of biography, those contextual influences inherited by the individual and beyond his everyday control or even awareness, provide a third building block for the social geographer, identifying as they do the interchange between a subject and a multidimensional environment. Without an environment we have only consciousness, albeit collective consciousness, expressing its will in a flaccid world relieved of the brute reality of material existence. To some extent this building block may be contentious, for it challenges in part the traditional geographic concept of the environment. Merleau-Ponty has stated that history is other people, but as Max Sorre realized, in metropolitan society geography, too, has become other people; increasingly the effective environment for action is interpersonal. We need to add external contingencies, the reactive “because of” motives, to the creative “in order to” motives that together determine the action of the subject.<sup>41</sup> At a social level the environmental contexts of the individual range from the promptings of an immediate reference group to more distant authority groupings, including the influence of the *Weltanschauung* of the given era.<sup>42</sup> There are here a whole range of social contexts, local and overarching, self-conscious and hidden; and all introduce varying degrees of influence and authority relations to the ongoing emergence of action.

Thus any action or the product of an action, such as a landscape, intimates several levels of meaning. Like a work of art, it can be interpreted first at face value, second as an expression of the intent of its creator, and third as an indicator of more overarching themes in society.<sup>43</sup> One of the most revealing artifacts is the map, whose selectivity highlights the concerns of its author and age. Consider, for example, the unself-conscious imperial geographies of the turn of the century with their maps of colonies, maps itemizing export commodities and railways but in the text representing the natives only under the category “miscellaneous.”<sup>44</sup> The objective map is a testimony to both the intersubjective intent and the power relations of imperialism.



To the geographer one of the most interesting constraints on action is place itself. Yi-Fu Tuan and others have shown the human content of place, that it is indeed an object for a subject.<sup>45</sup> But in the same way place acts back on man; in Marcel's apparently outrageous words, a man is his place. This dialectical interchange between place and identity, where both evolve in partnership, might offer some extremely interesting research directions for the social geographer. So too with all social worlds; though they are the product of human creativity and have a certain autonomy, their autonomy is always contingent. They are never context free. It is here that a synthesis may perhaps be forged between divergent positions, a synthesis that appropriately links man and environment, human intentionality and structural factors. Such an integration "requires a systematic accounting of the dialectical relation between the structural realities and the human enterprise of constructing reality—in history."<sup>46</sup>

### **A Parochial Illustration**

This paper has already ranged widely, but before concluding I feel the obligation to at least provide an illustrative sketch of the intertwining of these three constructs of anthropocentrism, intersubjectivity, and the constraints of context in the construction of a social fact.

The illustration is an in-house one to academic geographers; thus the concern may be rather parochial; but for us, at least, it may be significant. I feel moreover that it is an important object lesson in urging the necessity of reflexivity, of being self-conscious about the subjective intent at the heart of what is claimed as objective research—or, rather, the intersubjective intent; for, as Brian Berry has written, "Culture does have effects upon social scientists as well as upon other citizens. It is of the essence of the resulting provincialism that those most provincial are least aware of this fact."<sup>47</sup>

I mention this particular statement because my example shows the operation of unself-conscious intersubjectivity in Berry's own work with the rank-size rule in urban geography. This is not intended as a personal criticism, for to a greater or lesser extent we are all equally guilty of oversocialized concepts; but the rank-size rule does provide a striking example of a lack of reflexivity and, hence, marked subjectivity in a research area that would claim to be scientifically objective.<sup>48</sup>

There are three separate questions that need to be asked of rank-size data: (1) Is there a regularity between city size and city rank? (2) What caused it? (3) What are the implications? Although the first two questions have not been satisfactorily answered, there has been no reluc-

tance to make normative statements concerning the third. A priori categories, ideas, have been erroneously verified through intersubjective peer influence and a *Weltanschauung* promoting, in research, scientism, deductive abstraction, and law seeking.

Let us examine a key statement, Berry's 1961 paper, "City Size Distributions and Economic Development."<sup>49</sup> The paper is important because of its influence; of thirteen subsequent papers by other authors that appeared between 1966 and 1976, nine made approving reference to this 1961 thesis. In it the rank-size distributions of thirty-eight countries are examined, leading to an apparent validation of Berry's hypotheses concerning the relations between economic development and city-size distribution:

The limited data available from the previous discussion seem to bear out several of the sub-hypotheses. Countries with rank-size distributions include urban-industrial economies (Belgium, United States), larger countries (Brazil) and countries with long histories of urbanization (India and China). Primacy characterizes small countries with simple subsistence economies (Thailand) or is associated with the presence of an empire capital (Portugal).<sup>50</sup>

But this is validation of a most anthropocentric order; "facts" have been identified not because they are true but because they are strategic to a subject and his intents. With a different intent one could equally construct a totally opposing interpretation from the same data. For example, countries with rank-size distributions do *not* include urban-industrial economies (Korea, El Salvador), do *not* include larger countries (Switzerland, Finland), and include countries with *short* histories of urbanization (South Africa, Brazil). Yet such an erroneous construction of reality was described by the same author in a 1964 paper as part of the set of "properly formulated and verified scientific theories relating to cities and sets of cities perceived as spatial systems."<sup>51</sup>

Such ideological legitimization has enabled subjectivity to receive intersubjective assent as the rank-size rule has passed into geographic orthodoxy. Aside from the nine articles accepting the conclusions of the 1961 paper, it has become institutionalized into at least six urban and economic textbooks published between 1965 and 1972. For example, even in the 1976 edition of *The North American City* we read "In a more recent study, Berry (1961) noted that the rank-size regularity appeared to be typical only of larger countries that have a long history

of urbanization and that are politically and economically complex.”<sup>52</sup> Apparently, the glosses of an authority are to remain unquestionable.

There is more that could be said on the social construction of reality, which has carried the rank-size rule from fiction to fact, the legitimizing process whereby an opinion leader’s undisciplined thoughts reinforced by a widespread scientist epistemology have become reified into fact and even normative status. For example, a study of changes in the city-size distribution in Israel is used by Berry in a later paper to support his thesis that increasing economic complexity leads to closer approximation to the rank-size rule.<sup>53</sup> The Israeli study plotted the city-size distribution at intervals of a decade between 1922 and 1959 and concluded that:

The 1944 and 1959 curves would then seem to follow the changes suggested in Berry’s developmental model towards a rank size order. During this time, Israel, although a very small nation, has been developing into a highly complex industrial one.<sup>54</sup>

What this information and Berry’s acceptance of it conceal is that this conclusion is nothing but a gloss of the true circumstances. Changing national boundaries meant that five of the thirteen cities in the earlier time periods were no longer within the nation in 1959; a majority of the other eight contained large numbers of displaced Palestinian Arabs. To argue for any normality or generalizing power from such an example is dubious, at best; but once again facts are selected not because they are true but because they are strategic to an intersubjective intent. The gloss is then legitimized from the authority of a double imprimatur; first the endorsement of an acknowledged disciplinary leader and second its stature within a scientific worldview. In this manner a “social fact” is born; is the final stage to be the translation of the fact to a normative status and its adoption as a desirable goal by planners?

## **Conclusion**

Thus implicit within the critique is a reformulation. The illustration of the rank-size rule reveals reflexively the interplay of subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and several tiers of environing social contexts in the construction of a reality. The suggestion, of course, is that such a format will be effective in analyzing the achievement of other social actions, be

they organizational decisions, delinquent behavior, or the products of actions such as landscape forms or map distributions. Metaphorically the direction is neither that of the formlessness of the surrealists nor the severity of Escher's perspectives. A better, though not perfect, metaphor might be the paintings of the New York artist, Ralph Fasanella. In Fasanella's artwork, form has not been lost; nor, however, has the humanity of the city. For Fasanella the city is animated and anthropocentric, as people loom larger than vehicles and the sides of buildings are stripped away to reveal their human content. Individuals are acting together as families, congregations, work groups, and play groups, intimating their intersubjective concerns; and in the environment, billboards, churches, and union halls implicate the play of structural factors. They are persons in context: persons who are larger than life. And so they should be, for our concern should equally be that of humanity but a humanity that is grounded, confronting the realities of existence. As C. Wright Mills put it: "No social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey."<sup>55</sup>

## Notes

1. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 213.
2. Wilbur Zelinsky, "The Demigod's Dilemma," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 65 (1975): 123-43.
3. Gunnar Olsson, *Birds in Egg*, University of Michigan Geographical Publication no. 15 (Ann Arbor, 1975); idem, "Social Science and Human Action: On Hitting Your Head Against the Ceiling of Language" (unpublished paper, University of Michigan Department of Geography, 1976).
4. Ray Pahl, "Trends in Social Geography," in R. Chorley and P. Haggett, eds., *Frontiers in Geographical Teaching* (London: Methuen, 1965), pp. 81-100; Anne Buttimer, "Social Geography," in D. Sills, ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 6 (New York: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 134-45.
5. For Peet's critique and its rejoinders, see *The Professional Geographer* 27 (1975): 277-85; *ibid.*, 28 (1976): 96-103.
6. For a beginning to a geographical study of delinquency in these terms, see David Ley, "The Street Gang in Its Milieu," in G. Gappert and H. Rose, eds., *The Social Economy of Cities* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1975), pp. 247-73; *The Black Inner City as Frontier Outpost: Images and Behavior of a Philadelphia Neighborhood*, Association of American Geographers Monograph Series no. 7 (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 1974); David Herbert, "The Study of Delinquency Areas," *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers*, ns 1 (1976): 472-92.
7. Frederic Thrasher, *The Gang*, reprint ed. (1927; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).
8. C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), ch. 3.
9. David Ley, "Social Geography and the Taken-for-Granted World," *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers*, ns 2, no. 4 (1977): 498-512.
10. David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), p. 137.
11. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Literary and Philosophical Essays* (London: Rider, 1955), p. 118.

12. These terms are qualified, for upon closer scrutiny they may no longer appear as fixed as they first seem. As we will see, structural marxism is largely a debate over *ideae*, whereas existential writers are far more concerned with individual action in *concrete* situations. See also Marwyn Samuels, "Existentialism and Human Geography," chapter 2 of the present volume.
13. The use of generic terms such as *idealism* is fraught with difficulty in light of their diverse and even divergent use in different philosophical traditions. Here I am using idealism in its broadest sense to denote modes of argument ultimately traceable to consciousness. Compare the definition in the *Dictionary of Philosophy*, R. D. Runes, ed. (Totowa, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams, 1975), p. 136: "... any theoretical or practical view emphasizing mind [soul, spirit, life] or what is characteristically of pre-eminent value or significance to it. Negatively, the alternative to Materialism."
14. Leonard Guelke, "An Idealist Alternative in Human Geography," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 64 (1974): 193-202.
15. J. N. Entrikin, "Contemporary Humanism in Geography," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66 (1976): 615-32.
16. Ley, "Social Geography."
17. Olsson, "Social Science and Human Action," p. 35.
18. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. C. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1970), p. 37.
19. Duncan Timms, *The Urban Mosaic* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1971), p. 74.
20. S. G. McNall and J. C. Johnson, "The New Conservatives: Ethnomethodologists, Phenomenologists, and Symbolic Interactionists," *The Insurgent Sociologist* 5 (summer 1975): 49-65.
21. John Rex, *Discovering Sociology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 192.
22. Marxism is capable of as many definitions as idealism. In this essay I will confine my discussion to the structural and even functionalist forms that have been introduced to geography by David Harvey, Manuel Castells, and Richard Peet.
23. Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, p. 47.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
25. Richard Peet, "Inequality and Poverty: A Marxist-Geographic Theory," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 65 (1975): 564-71; also note 5, above.
26. Manuel Castells, *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), especially chs. 5-7.
27. Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, p. 133.
28. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in E. Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man* (New York: Ungar, 1966), p. 127.
29. David Harvey, "Conceptual and Measurement Problems in the Cognitive-Behavioral Approach to Location Theory," in K. R. Cox and R. G. Golledge, eds., *Behavioral Problems in Geography*, Northwestern University Studies in Geography (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1969), pp. 35-67.
30. Harlan Barrows, "Geography as Human Ecology," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 13 (1923): 1-14.
31. Harold Brookfield, "Questions on the Human Frontiers of Geography," *Economic Geography* 40 (1964): 283-303; for a discussion of the reified concept of culture used in cultural geography, see J. Duncan, *The Superorganic in American Cultural Geography: A Critical Commentary* (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1977).
32. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 67.
33. Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, p. 40.
34. Alvin Gouldner, "Marxism and Social Theory," *Theory and Society* 1 (1974): 17-35.
35. Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, p. 67.
36. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Anchor, 1967), p. 22.
37. Martin Buber, "Distance and Relation," *Psychiatry* 20 (May 1957): 97-104.
38. Andrew Billingsley, "Black Families and White Social Science," *Journal of Social Issues* 26 (1970): 127-42.
39. The line occurs in Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit*.

40. Robert Bretall, ed., *A Kierkegaard Anthology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946).
41. Alfred Schutz, *On Phenomenology and Social Relations*, ed. H. Wagner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).
42. Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction of Reality*.
43. Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952).
44. See, for example, Gill's *Imperial Geography* (London, c. 1900). I am grateful to Deryck Holdsworth for this reference.
45. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974); *Space and Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).
46. Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction of Reality*, p. 186; for a similar position see Joseph Scimecca, "Paying Homage to the Father: C. Wright Mills and Radical Sociology," *Sociological Quarterly* 17 (spring 1976): 180-96.
47. Brian Berry, "Introduction: The Logic and Limitations of Comparative Factorial Ecology," *Economic Geography* 47 (1971): 209-19.
48. This section draws upon Paul Bain, *On City-Size Distribution Theory in Geography: An Epistemological Enquiry into Misguided Models* (Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1977).
49. Brian Berry, "City Size Distributions and Economic Development," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 9 (1961): 573-88.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 582.
51. *Idem.*, "Cities as Systems Within Systems of Cities," *Papers and Proceedings, Regional Science Association* 13 (1964): 147-63.
52. Maurice Yeates and Barry Garner, *The North American City* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), p. 47.
53. Berry, "Cities as Systems."
54. Gwen Bell, "Changes in the City Size Distribution of Israel," *Ekistics* 13 (February 1962): 103-4.
55. C. Wright Mills, *Sociological Imagination*.

## CHAPTER 4

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# CHARISM AND CONTEXT: THE CHALLENGE OF LA GÉOGRAPHIE HUMAINE

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ANNE BUTTIMER

One of the resounding melodies in the orchestra of geographic thought over the centuries has been the plea for a sense of wholeness and integration in ways of knowing and living with the earth. Functional specialization of ideas and roles have so transformed our everyday scholarly milieux today that such a refrain is more likely to arouse cynicism than hope. A burgeoning interest in “humanistic” orientations that cuts across generations, strata, and cultures, however, reveals how enduring is the appeal of this melody. Before engaging in conventional tactics for becoming visible as a distinct field and before the creeping paralysis of establishment sets in, it may be wise for the “humanistic geographer” to assess what his essential message may contain and what media might be appropriate for communicating it.

As beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so too is the appeal of particular ideas; in the heroes selected for the humanistic geographer’s pantheon one could find clues of what is essentially being sought. How does one explain the lasting attraction of Le Play’s *Les Ouvriers Européennes*, Kropotkin’s *Mutual Aid*, Granö’s *Reine Géographie*, or Dion’s *Val de Loire*? Perhaps they appeared to vindicate the claim that geography could describe the togetherness of human and natural phenomena within particular places. Perhaps also they exemplified that the search for universal principles did not preclude sensitivity to the uniqueness of particular situations.

There is another dimension to the humanistic appeal that transcends all of these yet somehow undergirds them: it is the *personal* message that emerges from the life and work of great scholars. Beyond all the fascination of method, philosophy, and literary style, it is probably the way in which an author speaks to us and challenges us to become as creative in our contexts as he was in his that has the most enduring appeal. Charism and context—the interplay of personal insight and life milieu—may be the root explanation of great ideas in human history.<sup>1</sup>

Reflection on pioneering works should endeavor to probe the spirit underlying their approaches to knowledge and experience rather than slavishly seek to emulate their methods and practices. To do full justice to their inspiration one has to transcend them and critically filter out what is essential in their message from “accidents” of style or language that may be historically contingent. One technique that could facilitate such an understanding of writers is to imagine them in contexts quite different from those in which they actually lived and worked. The risks of misinterpretation and self-projection are, of course, unavoidable, but the exercise could be an enlightening one.

Vidal de la Blache offers an exciting candidate for such speculation. Despite the diverse and often conflicting interpretations that have been accorded his work, it remains one of the most persistent in its influence.<sup>2</sup> If one were to “walk in his shoes,” as it were, and imagine him as a professor of urban geography in North America today, could one speculate on how he would have directed research on his immediate milieu? This exercise could help probe the *essence* of his thought and the universality of his message. It could also suggest the kinds of ideological or conceptual reorientation that he might have developed during the intervening years. It is certainly difficult to imagine Vidal anywhere outside the confines of agrarian France in the early part of the century. Most of his ideas were born in that milieu and found their most appropriate application there or in milieux quite similar to it. Disciples and followers have also applied his ideas in various urban environments, and their work can also provide valuable clues for the exercise. In many ways Vidal personifies *la géographie humaine* in the uniqueness and universality of his appeal. Consistent efforts to render sensitive and holistic descriptions of local *pays* did not diminish the desire to reach general—even universal—conclusions about mankind and earth.<sup>3</sup>

### Essential Ingredients of Vidalian Thought

How can one capsule the essential elements of Vidal’s thought? Disciples and interpreters have described his contribution in terms of possibilism, terrestrial unity, holistic regional studies, *genres de vie*, *milieu*, *circulation*, *connectivité*, *civilisation*, *contingence*.<sup>4</sup> One hears of his charismatic teaching abilities, his patience and diligence in executing and designing exhaustive regional monographs, his artistic expertise in describing the *paysages humains* of France.<sup>5</sup> His most important contribution ultimately may be philosophical rather than methodological; he will be remembered particularly for the foundations that he laid for *la*



*géographie humaine*. The difficulty of this endeavor can be appreciated only when one considers the complex array of issues that stirred the academic world of his day.<sup>6</sup> *La géographie humaine, style vidalien*, was only one of the many streams of geographic thought that were being developed in France at the turn of the century, and many of these deserve further exploration. The Vidalian one has succeeded in reaching a wider international audience and so provides a more accessible focus for critical reflection.

The latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed a burgeoning of scientific interest in nature and human society.<sup>7</sup> New insights and analytical techniques were appearing within the natural and human sciences. But how could one explore the question of society's relationship to its milieu? To what discipline did such a study belong? Should social differentiation be examined in its environmental context, as Ratzel had suggested, or should one focus exclusively on social phenomena, as Durkheim held?<sup>8</sup> A growing animosity in the debate between advocates of anthropogeography and social morphology raised many questions regarding the division of labor among disciplines and also raised ontological questions regarding the nature of society, the nature of milieu, and the relationships binding them. Meanwhile, social history, philosophy, and regional literature drew attention to the intricacies of society's actual relationship to milieu in concrete living situations.<sup>9</sup> France's mosaic of natural *pays* provided ideal examples illustrating the interpenetration of social and natural influences in the historical development of regions.

On a speculative plane, then, abstract arguments concerning the nature of mankind and milieu had led to several impasses, while on the empirical plane novelists and early social scientists were demonstrating the need to consider social problems within the context of daily life conditions within particular milieux.<sup>10</sup> From each of these perspectives Vidal gleaned an important lesson: the relationships between humanity and milieu that had produced France's variegated landscapes should be studied empirically and from as comprehensive a viewpoint as possible.<sup>11</sup> Analysis of rural landscapes only raised hypotheses concerning society's relationship to milieu; the critical key lay in the *genres de vie* of a people.<sup>12</sup>

*Genres de vie* (styles of living), the products and reflections of a *civilisation*, represented the integrated result of physical, historical, and socio-cultural influences surrounding the human relationship to *milieu* in particular places. It was the dialog of human communities and their environments—the *modus vivendi* established between *civilisations* and *milieux*—that constituted the material object of *la géographie humaine*.<sup>13</sup>

*Milieu* signified the organically integrated physical and biotic in-

frastructure of human life on the earth: "a series of intertwined forces set in motion by general laws."<sup>14</sup> The essential geographical issue was neither the influence of man on the earth nor the influence of the earth on man; methodologically it implied neither analysis of ecological processes per se nor the analysis of socio-cultural and historical forces; rather, its central aim should be to grasp the ongoing dialectic of *milieu* and *civilisation*, the perennial tension between the *milieu externe* (physically observable patterns and processes) and the *milieu interne* (values, habits, beliefs, and ideas) of a civilization. The external milieu provided a range of possibilities, the internal milieu dictated the parameters of choice within that range.

This perspective has been labeled "possibilism" to distinguish it from "environmental determinism," which suggested that the milieu dictated livelihood choice.<sup>15</sup> Defined in this way possibilism is merely a refutation of determinism. It could be argued, however, that the secret of Vidal's approach lay in its existentially grounded character. At the interface between *milieu* and *civilisation* was carved a living landscape—*paysage humanisé*—recording how particular groups, in their experience, had interpreted, valued, and utilized their environments.

Groups were seen to choose lifestyles according to their own insights, traditions, and ambitions. They escaped from the tyranny of physical determinism by means of an idea: the idea they formed of their environment that impelled them to alter it. Within the realm of ideas, however, a tension could be observed between the creative and inventive force of human genius always tending to produce new patterns of work and dwelling, versus the conservative, "sticky" force of habit that tended to resist change. Treatises on the indomitable power of human genius in conquering nature abounded in Enlightenment Germany and in the Anglo-American world during the nineteenth century. It was mankind *in abstracto* or *individual* man about whom such eulogy was written, however, and rarely had sociability been seriously considered as a feature quite as basic as biology or intellect. This was another fundamental innovation of the Vidalian school: to demonstrate that man's relationship to milieu in concrete living situations was eminently a social phenomenon as evidenced in his various *genres de vie*.

The essence of Vidal's approach to geographic study consisted in this dialog of *milieu* and *civilisation*: *milieu*, a variegated mosaic of physically differentiated patterns, each with an appropriate dynamism; *civilisation*, the source of creative and conservative ideas that permeated society's *genres de vie*. Neither *milieu* nor *civilisation* was entirely determined or determining, for ecological processes mediated between them in periods of equilibrium. Changes in the external *milieu* often disrupted old equilibria, and a chain reaction set in until new equilibria were reached. Similarly, changes emanating from *civilisation*, such as

the migrations of people or ideas, new transportation facilities, and technological progress, by redefining the meanings of space and resources were also potential generators of new equilibria.<sup>16</sup> Within each civilization the creative and potentially disruptive forces of circulation interacted with the conservative forces of tradition and habit. Hence every situation could be seen as a “becoming,” or an ongoing tension between establishment and innovation.

To embrace such a comprehensive mandate Vidal suggested two distinct but complementary modes of analysis: the systematic one, which would focus on specific elements of *civilisation* and study their relationships to *milieu*,<sup>17</sup> and the regional one, which would study the intricate connections between *civilisation* and *milieu* within specific places.<sup>18</sup> The systematic approach articulated in 1896 was seen as an important complement to regional study: “An element of generality exists in every local situation,” and, again, “it is precisely this element which gives the local study its peculiar value.”<sup>19</sup> Though most of his examples were taken from physical geography, he did outline a *géographie de la civilisation* whose task it was to unravel the “social implications of different geographic conditions.”<sup>20</sup> This is the field that bears most interest for students concerned with the dynamics of environmental behavior.

### **Vidalian Principles and Urban Geography**

How would Vidal have directed a study in contemporary urban geography? How would he have conceptualized particularly the social fabric of an industrial city? What elements of existing disciplinary approaches to urban study would he have found useful, and how might he have integrated them into a unified conceptual structure?

From Vidal’s own writings there are only a few guidelines for speculation on the answers to these questions. His scattered remarks on urban phenomena are provocative but often contradictory. In general, he admits that cities are different from rural settlements “in kind rather than degree.”<sup>21</sup> Urbanization appears as the symbol and the evidence of a “superior” civilization. Despite his natural penchant for the analysis of rural landscapes and the anti-industrial, anti-urban tone implicit in his regional studies, he recognizes the technological superiority of an urban form of spatial organization. He studied the various circumstances that have historically proved favorable for the growth of cities and commented on the blending of social groups and the progressive expansion of social horizons in Western Europe.<sup>22</sup> But the American

city reveals an entirely new set of circumstances, "a riot of urban life."<sup>23</sup> The American city was a product of technological invention and rational economic forces, taking a spatial form truly novel in urban history. "It took America to create a new type of city," he comments with guarded enthusiasm.<sup>24</sup> A physical plan, preconceived to insure the dominance of industrial capitalism, scale economies, and transportation technology provided the underlying motif of the American city. Implicitly, Vidal defines its "urban" character in terms of services, physical layout, and the functional allocation of space to specialized services:

The American city has transportation facilities which differentiate the various quarters, separating the place of business from the place of residence, introducing between them immense parks, thus creating its rural districts within . . . the city is the perfect expression of Americanism.<sup>25</sup>

Landscape remains the lens through which urban civilization is analyzed. The American industrial city is placed within the context of world urbanization patterns only to emphasize the uniqueness of its physiognomy and internal dynamics. How a course on urban geography would have been instructed can be inferred only from his general approach to the discipline and the theoretical foundations for his study of groups and their milieux. Disciples too must be consulted in order to see how the original structure may have been modified in the course of empirical implementation.

### ***Milieu and Civilisation in the Industrial City***

The cornerstones of Vidalian urban geography, like any other systematic subdiscipline within the field, would be *civilisation* and *milieu*. *Civilisation* would incorporate the nature and dynamics of social groups, and *milieu* would be seen still as "a composite whole capable of holding heterogeneous elements in vital mutual relationships."<sup>26</sup> In the urban context, however, he would undoubtedly have made the conceptual distinction between the "natural" and man-made components of this external milieu. The *paysage urbain* would include both the *milieu naturel* and the *milieu urbain*, and its unifying forces would probably be seen as technological innovation and economic organization. The physical layout of land uses and service facilities would be

seen as providing self-generating and mutually reinforcing conditions for advancing the *civilisation* that created it; viz., industrial capitalism. In this way the original character of the industrial city in America could also be regarded as a “medal struck in the image of a people.”

As with all cities in history, its accumulated advantages could be seen as offering an attractive force for successive waves of migrants, each characterized by its own *civilisation*, each differently capable of adapting to the physical milieu created by the original industrial society. Each migrant group should be considered not only in terms of whether the city could satisfy their material expectations—e.g., jobs, houses, services—but how their traditional *genres de vie* could survive or develop when juxtaposed with contrasting lifestyles. Each *genre de vie*, Vidal had so often repeated, is a product of history, of habits and traditional social forms born within the context of specific livelihoods.<sup>27</sup> Habits so deeply engrained, social networks, roles and relationships characterizing life in their original milieux could not be discarded entirely upon entry to a new one. Adaptation and change in traditional lifestyles was a slow and often painful process:

Never has there been better opportunity than now to observe the transplanting of human groups into different environments. Colonisation and immigration are revealing countries, not new as is mistakenly thought, but differently organised, under the influence of other physical conditions. Newcomers have succeeded in establishing themselves in such places only after a process of more or less slow and difficult adjustment. When this transition has been accomplished and new habits formed, which, after a generation or two become fixed, we find ourselves face to face with new human types. Slips from the parent trunk have become modified in a different atmosphere.<sup>28</sup>

Being rather optimistic about the processes of colonization and the general increase in geographical mobility, Vidal would have eventually expected complete assimilation of different social groups within the American city. To suggest that social integration was impossible would raise questions about his faith in progress and colonialism, “the crowning glory of our age.” His perspective on social integration might have been quite close to that of Robert Park in that both expected assimilation to follow from the physical juxtaposition of different groups.<sup>29</sup> While Park conceptualized the process in terms of social disorganization and reorganization, however, Vidal may have looked to the “sovereign influence of environment which historically had forced all into similar occupations and customs”:

Such is the coalescing power which blots out original differences and blends them in a common type of adaptation. Human societies, like those of the vegetable and animal world, are composed of different elements subject to the influence of environment. No one knows what winds brought them together, nor whence, nor when; but they are living side by side in a region which has gradually put its stamp upon them.<sup>30</sup>

No doubt Vidal would have found differences "in kind rather than degree" between the kind of social integration that would eventually occur in an American city and the kind of regional integration experienced by rural migrants within Europe. He might have expected similar processes to operate in each case, however; e.g., that groups whose *genres de vie* were more diversified and reflective of various kinds of environmental experience would be better able to cope with the challenge of new adaptation.<sup>31</sup>

He might also have speculated on the adaptability of the city-creating elites themselves and the homogeneity of their artificially created environments. He may, in fact, have predicted (even condoned) their impermeability to influences from immigrant civilizations and warned about the eventual tension between *genres de vie* living in close physical juxtaposition but social isolation "like two streams which remain distinct within the same river bed."<sup>32</sup> The harmonization of culturally diverse groups within the same milieu was ultimately a challenge for social organization; what was needed was a "social state" capable of encompassing cultural differences.<sup>33</sup>

### **Vidalian Principles and the Twentieth-Century City**

It is difficult to speculate further on Vidal's own potential approach to urban geography. Valuable clues can, however, be derived from the ways in which disciples and others have actually implemented his ideas in various contexts. As Jean Brunhes and Pierre Deffontaines operationalized many fertile ideas in rural and regional contexts, so did Edgar Kant, Maximilien Sorre, and later Chombart de Lauwe in the urban context. For a variety of sociological reasons these scholars have never been accorded adequate credit for the brilliance with which they articulated the Vidalian approach and also transcended it. In Edgar Kant's work, for example, one finds ways in which the seemingly intractable issue of human geography versus social morphology could be overcome.<sup>34</sup> In Sorre's work one finds guidelines to direct a study of

“subjective” features of *civilisation* that Vidal himself might not have touched.<sup>35</sup> Kant’s Estonian studies offer useful illustration of the former, while Chombart de Lauwe’s Parisian study provides perhaps the best link with more contemporary urban interests.<sup>36</sup> While Kant’s approach focused primarily on the morphology and activity networks of urban populations, Chombart de Lauwe (explicitly crediting Sorre) took the further step of attempting to explore the “subjective social space” of citizens and the “sense of place” within particular neighborhoods of the city. From these two studies one could speculate on the application of Vidalian principles in the geography of twentieth-century urban life.

Study of urban *civilisation* would have involved three basic steps. First the ecology of the urban population would be examined, second its external activity patterns (*genres de vie*), and third a study of the values, attitudes, and cognitions of various individuals and groups.

From Kant’s work we might expect that urban population would be studied in terms of its socio-demographic characteristics, differential density patterns, ethnic or other socio-cultural segregation, and residential mobility. The study of external activity patterns would involve observations of lifestyles, family budgets, uses of time and space, and patterns of social and commercial interaction. From the shape and dynamic of these basic activity networks, clues would be derived as to how extensively groups participated in urban life: whether their orbits of spatial movement were localized or diffuse; whether preferences for particular types of urban services or particular regions within the city could be discerned from actual observation of behavior. The key to several enigmas in the spatial distribution and range of interaction patterns characteristic of the industrial city could not be found in “ecology” or “physiology” alone. Eventually a Vidalian approach would seek to explore the “social worlds” of citizen groups, their attitudes, habits, and values.

This was the primary rationale for Sorre’s notion of social space: to explore the daily life patterns of individuals and groups within the city, how they perceived and evaluated their surroundings, whether “housing” had become “home” for them, whether the physical arrangement of buildings and streets impeded or facilitated the kind of social interaction to which they had traditionally been accustomed. Such a study would involve an investigation of images formed of the city as a whole, of neighborhoods, of service locations and transport facilities. The strong penchant for “objectivity,” however, and a firm belief in rationality would have made Vidal skeptical about overly “subjective” evaluations in his assessment of social life within the city. More convincing than overtly articulated opinions and attitudes would be externally manifest indicators of stress and strain.

Disharmonies and stress within the urban industrial world would

probably be approached in terms analogous to those used in the study of "*complexes pathogènes*" in plant and animal worlds.<sup>37</sup> The destructive influence of human activities in tropical environments had long been a source of concern to Vidal. He remained optimistic, however, that the disruption of one kind of ecological equilibrium would be succeeded by a superior form of dynamic equilibrium.<sup>38</sup>

Viewing the conditions in contemporary industrial cities, this kind of optimism about the capacity of men to restore order in an ecologically disrupted milieu might have been tempered. Crime rates, mental and physical illnesses, air and water pollution, traffic congestion, political malaise, and the crises of urban social services would be regarded as indicators of pathology within the urban ecosystem. Such phenomena would provide "objective" evidence of inconsistencies between *milieu* and *civilisation*, evidence stamped on the urban landscape.

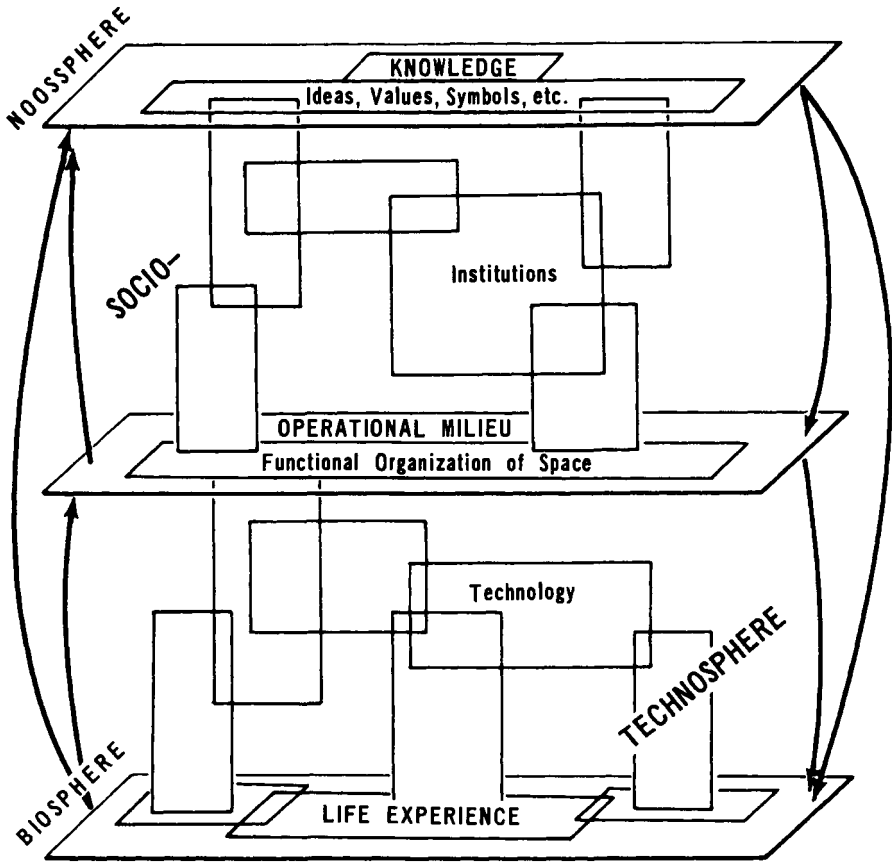
### Transcending "*La Géographie Humaine*"

The foregoing exercise stems from only one of the many "subjective" interpretations that could be derived from so rich and varied a record as Vidal de la Blache has bequeathed. The assessment of its relevance, strengths, and limitations will also be subjective. Messages and media are so culture bound that indeed much of the scholar's immediate success depends on how well his ideas can resonate to the *Zeitgeist*, ideology, and taken-for-granted language of his day. The long-term resonance of those ideas, however, depends on how well they can "escape" such historically contingent media and become rearticulated in terms understandable by succeeding generations. What the contemporary scholar needs is to discern the enduring quality of Vidal's insight and to transcend those culturally related features of language and application that may be inappropriate today. To do this one must also question some of the assumptions concerning knowledge and life on which these ideas were based and that for a variety of ideological and logical reasons may now be controversial.

Reflection of Vidal's own work and on ways in which his successors implemented his ideas suggest two fundamental reformulations of the basic framework: First, there seems to be adequate foundation for proposing a threefold, rather than twofold, structure for the field as a whole (figure 4-1). Second, one could argue for a metaphor of *polyphony* rather than *dialectic* in approaching the study of *milieu* and *civilisation*. Semantic clarification is needed also, as both of these terms come to embrace so many diverse components; one may now be in a position



Figure 4-1. A Geographic Perspective



to identify the ordering principles within particular “parts” before attempting a synthesis of the whole. Instead of the term *civilisation*, I suggest the term *noosphere* to incorporate all those features of consciousness (ideas, symbols, images, memories, values) that can be said to influence *genres de vie*, some of which could now be analyzed in a more sophisticated manner. Instead of treating milieu initially as a composite whole, I think there can be little doubt about the analytical utility of distinguishing between its “natural” and “artificial” components in dealing with contemporary urban environments. I suggest that the natural milieu be treated within the more comprehensive term *biosphere* and that the operational environment be seen as the landscape expression of the *socio-technosphere* (figure 4-1).

Each of these three levels could be seen as having its own intrinsic “laws of order” (temporal, spatial, structural) and, hence, becoming the subject matter of systematic inquiry, while the geographic question

becomes centered on the interactions among levels. Two obvious foci for geographic inquiry would then be (1) *genres de vie* in their total environmental contexts and (2) the character of place.

This schema not only suggests methodological guidelines for geographic research but also implies a normative perspective on ways of living with the earth. In the classical tradition of “*la géographie humaine*” geography was considered as a meditation on life and a study that should yield a keener sensitivity to one’s own life and milieu. Figure 4-1 suggests ways in which questions of “terrestrial unity,” at whatever scale one wishes to explore it, could be discussed, but its most tangible use may be in exploring contemporary *genres de vie*.

In every *genre de vie* one can find evidence of these three distinct levels of human experience—the cognitive/affective (noosphere), the interactional/intersubjective (socio-technosphere), and the organic/territorial (biosphere). In recent years these lines of research inquiry have become increasingly specialized, and it has become virtually impossible to integrate research results. In contrast, a Vidalian approach might have directed geographic study of *genres de vie* within their milieu. By the logic of its own premises it would inevitably have come to realize the extent to which *genres de vie* have become shaped by institutions and technology. The interesting questions would have centered around the problems of harmonizing contrasting *genres de vie* within the same milieu. Hence, for example, one might expect a strong interest in the tensions between managerial interests of macro-spatial organization in a city as a whole versus the life interests of micro-social worlds among its residents.

A second major reformulation of the Vidalian “worldview” would follow logically from these considerations. Pursuing a perspective that consistently emphasizes *intentionality*, *temporality*, and *ecological harmony*, it seems inevitable that the ultimate metaphor to describe the interplay of *milieu* and *civilisation* would be a polyphony rather than a dialectic. A polyphony of life forms—humans, animals, plants, things—each having a *milieu interne*, demanding that it be understood insofar as possible on its own terms, and a *milieu externe*, constituted by the cumulative expressions of other cohabitants of earth. In a macro-sense, then, one could imagine Vidal speaking about a “dialectic” between the energies of noosphere and those of the biosphere and gradually appreciating the growing dominance of the socio-technosphere in orchestrating that dialectic.

It would be stretching the evidence to seek connections between Vidal de la Blache and phenomenological thought, but there are undoubtedly similarities. Though there is little evidence of interaction between the Vidalians and the students of Husserl, both schools of thought share some of the strengths and limitations of a qualified ideal-

ist stance on knowledge and experience. How aware of his own cultural and logical presuppositions Vidal actually was is an issue not too easily discernible from his published work, but there are some contradictions and inconsistencies that do provoke attention today. Among the most notable are: (1) ambivalence in his conceptions of “human nature”; (2) a dualistic conception of man and nature and an anthropocentric tone in his conceptions of terrestrial unity; and (3) an “imperialist” faith in managerial rationality.

[1.] In his relations with his surroundings he [man] is at once both active and passive, and it is not easy to determine in most instances to what extent he is the one or the other.<sup>39</sup>

Ambivalent and sometimes contradictory assumptions concerning human nature can be found in Vidal's *géographie humaine*. Sometimes he emphasizes the innovative and progressive expressions of human genius, sometimes the conservative and habitual. Given the “shrouded” horizons of life that seemed inimical to social progress or to ecological harmony in many of the situations that he studied, it is not surprising that he tended to promote the active side.

The humanist today might be inclined to seek a reversal of those very trends set in motion by Vidal's “innovative forces.” But he would still, at least implicitly, assume that human action is primarily dictated by ideas; and, therefore, behavioral change can be implemented via an appeal to consciousness. However one construes the direction of human effort—conservative or innovative—there is still a basically Hellenic version of anthropocentrism implied: Man is seen as the dominant in the chain of being; and intellect, the queen among human faculties. Rationality, too, still tends to have an “Enlightenment” tone. These assumptions, so firmly rooted in Western intellectual history, need to be reexamined today if one envisions humankind as seeking identity as participant in, rather than master of, the earth. Any disciple of Vidal, who probes to the spirit of his worldview rather than the letter of what he wrote, should be particularly sensitive to this horizon for geography as a whole.

[2.] Milieu . . . a series of intertwined forces set in motion by general laws.<sup>40</sup>

A dominant idea that permeated the whole of Vidal's work was that of

terrestrial unity. The model for this unity was *milieu*, capable of “holding together heterogeneous beings in vital mutual relationships.”<sup>41</sup> His repeated references to *milieu* should be understood in the context of the protagonists who claimed that human geography could never be a generalizing scientific field. Many of his programmatic statements could be regarded as efforts to confound that judgment. The best examples of generalizations that could lead to systematic and lawlike statements were those derived from geomorphological and bioecological aspects of *milieu*. These became, in fact, the implicit metaphors for describing population distribution and social “forms.”<sup>42</sup>

The human geographer today should surely be able to transcend the need to defend his field in terms of “the opposition.” Instead of reacting to conventional definitions of science versus nonscience, should not one have the confidence and wit to defend philosophically a study of human life within the context of its *milieu* without having to resort to categories offered by other specialized sciences? Insights that have been derived from studies of environmental perception and behavior have already undermined the materialistic assumptions and reductionist logic of piecemeal segmented research, but two negatives do not necessarily make a positive. An array of specialized studies on various components of humanness—economic, political, cognitive, ethological—each shedding its own light on the significance of *milieu* does not necessarily yield an integrated picture of either humanity or *milieu*.

One of the most interesting issues that arises from a consideration of geographic thought and *milieu* is that of transferring ideas from a descriptive to a normative framework. Each of our major conceptual approaches to *milieu* presumably had a moment and place of origin where the “fit” with environmental conditions was most appropriate, and to extend them beyond that realm has led to enormous gaucheries and distress. Vidal himself might have shuddered to think of ways in which his own regionalization plans for early twentieth-century France were used as models for regional planning elsewhere. He might also have been appalled at the manner in which the basic *pays* model of regional study was a required part of geography curricula even in contexts where its appropriateness may have been questionable.

[3.] Colonialism . . . the crowning glory of our era.<sup>43</sup>

The storm of protest that such a remark may evoke today should not cloud one’s capacity to unmask some of the deeper issues in geographic thought to which it points. How many of our classical ideas have been born and promulgated in places and times where some form of imperial-

ism has been a leitmotif?<sup>44</sup> Perhaps a certain arrogance and unambiguous belief in particular ways of organizing the earth have always attended the development of geographical thought. There is an element of *Herrschaftswissen* in regional geography, a belief in general laws of nature and/or society that should dictate the regional organization of space, whether this be for political or administrative convenience or for promoting economic and social interests.<sup>45</sup> The image of French *pays* studies is quite different. One associates these with a sensitivity to lived experience and *besinnliches Nachdenken*,<sup>46</sup> which aimed at allowing reality to speak for itself. Perhaps a critical distinction should be made between regional geography, French style (which was done in areas of colonial occupation), and that form of regional geography where the political organization of space has been a “domestic” affair. The *pays* model seems to have been very suitable for local studies all over Scandinavia and other parts of Europe where political circumstances have allowed for longer periods of cultural continuity.<sup>47</sup>

There are indeed two counterpoint melodies in Vidal’s work. Perhaps it was only within the context of small-scale regional studies that the two could be orchestrated. When applied to larger scale contexts or to very different settings, his methods failed to achieve the *Gestalt* or to handle the dialectic between place (*géographie des lieux*) and spatial organization (*l’organisation de l’espace*). When particular aspects of *la géographie humaine* are taken out of context, too, they can give rise to such contrasting interpretations as have been made in recent years.<sup>48</sup> Ideologically, there does seem to be a contradiction in Vidal’s own work. He gloried in the spread of French civilization throughout the *Pays d’Outre Mer* without explicitly recognizing that this very process could undermine the cohesion and harmony of *paysan* life, which he so much admired at home.

Hindsight judgment is inevitably biased by contemporary criteria and would serve little purpose if it did not sensitize us to the “beam in our own eyes.” Should we not ask what kinds of imperialistic bias may be expressed in our own approaches to the contemporary world? What are the inherent contradictions involved in developing a specifically “humanistic” field if one is not fully aware of how historically and culturally relative one’s definition of *human* may be?

## Conclusion

When one has removed many “accidents” of style, ideology, and language from Vidalian thought, there is one essential message that endures. The task that no other discipline—with the possible exception of

history—claims is to examine how diverse phenomena and forces interweave and connect within the finite horizons of particular settings. Temporality and spatiality are universal features of life, so historical and geographical study belong together. Both share a quest for unity, and Vidal always warned about the dangers of splitting up for analytical convenience those parts of human and earthly reality that need to be understood in terms of their coexistence in space and time. Today he would no doubt point to the connections between the fragmentation of knowledge about *milieu* and the actual shape of present living places. To restore some harmony and cohesion to life, then, the geographer should contribute greatly by restoring some cohesion within his own disciplinary perspectives:

What geography can bring to the common fund, in exchange for the help it receives from other sciences, is the ability to not break apart what nature has brought together, to understand the correspondence and correlation of phenomena, be it the all-encompassing terrestrial environment or in the regional milieux where these phenomena are located. There is without doubt an intellectual benefit to be derived from all applications of this spirit.<sup>49</sup>

If the discipline as a whole were to reflect on its own development during the twentieth century, it could probably rediscover some of the wisdom in Vidal's holistic view. Should the humanistic geographer not be especially aware of the hazards of becoming an elite that fragments rather than integrates? The procession of special labels that the discipline has spawned during the past twenty years should already suggest caution. Each has claimed attention and carved out personality and niche over a remarkably short period of time. Ideally, each new offspring should mean an enrichment for the "family" as a whole as unexplored or forgotten elements of household business are brought to light. Topical specialization has indeed increased the analytical scope of the discipline. As each component member seeks its own identity, however, and develops its own special language and social world, communication becomes increasingly difficult and harvest time finds an extended family awkwardly facing (or avoiding) the challenge of synchronizing its collective effort.

There is a sociology of geographic thought that mirrors that of the scholarly world as a whole, a sociology not separable from that of its wider societal context. It takes no leap of imagination or faith to trace the linkages between the state of geographic knowledge and the state of lifestyles and milieux in general. Perhaps the most ambitious chal-

lence that "humanistic" geography could set itself is to provoke an awareness of how culturally relative our notions of humanness, life, and world are and have been, and to point to some implications for knowledge and for experience.

Neither cultural relativism nor idealism will be foreign to the humanist. If "humanity" as a whole is the model and measure of reality, many of the old melodies can be played again without necessarily provoking the scholar himself to become aware of his own cultural relativism. Far too many of our heroes have loved humanity but could not stand people. That is why the personal appeal of particular scholars should be so important. The ultimate challenge, precious but costly, is to develop a truly personal type of knowledge, one that allows for emotion as well as thinking, passion as well as reason, and one that leads to an understanding of the self as well as to an understanding of the world.

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34. E. Kant, "Géographie, Sociographie, et l'Ecologie Humaine," *Publ. Sem. Univ. Tartuensis Economico-Geographici*, no. 4 (1933); idem, "Essai sur la Répartition de la Population à Tartu," *ibid.*, no. 15 (1937).
35. Maximilien Sorre, *Rencontres de la Géographie et de la Sociologie* (Paris: Rivière, 1957).
36. P. Chombart de Lauwe, *Paris et l'Agglomération Parisienne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1952).
37. Vidal, "La Géographie Humaine."
38. Idem, *Principes de Géographie Humaine*, p. 23.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
40. Idem, "Des Caractères Distinctifs."
41. Idem, *Principes de Géographie Humaine*, p. 17.
42. Idem, "Les Conditions Géographiques"; idem, "La Répartition des Hommes sur le Globe," *Annales de Géographie* 26 (1917): 81-89; 241-54.
43. Idem, *Principes de Géographie Humaine*, p. 24.
44. Anne Buttner, *Values in Geography*, Association of American Geographers Resource Paper no. 24 (Washington, D.C., 1974); idem, "Insiders, Outsiders, and the Challenge of Regional Geography" (Paper presented to the Annual Meetings of Finnish Geographers, Helsinki, 1977).



45. Henri Lefebvre, *La Production de l'Espace* (Paris: Anthropos, 1974); Milton Santos, *L'Espace Partagé* (Paris: M. Th. Genin Libraries Techniques, 1975).
46. Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1954).
47. H. Nelson, "En Bergslagsbygd. En Historiskt-Geografisk Öfverblick," *Ymer* 3 (1913), 278-352; H. J. Fleure, "Human Regions," *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 35, no. 3 (1919): 94-105.
48. See M. Derruau, *Précis de Géographie Humaine* (Paris: Colin, 1963); A. Meynier, *Histoire de la Pensée Géographique en France* (Paris: Colin, 1969); and Claval, *La Pensée Géographique*.
49. Vidal, "Des Caractères Distinctifs."

## CHAPTER 5

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# THE VIDAL-DURKHEIM DEBATE

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VINCENT BERDOULAY

Many geographers today are reacting against narrow and mechanical interpretations of the scientific method. It is interesting in this respect to look back at the way similar sources of discontent were treated, or even avoided, in the past. Of particular interest is the intellectual debate in France at the turn of the century between Vidalian geography and Durkheimian sociology. The interchange has important implications for our own day because humanistic concerns were at stake. Several themes of the debate are examined in this paper with primary emphasis given to the importance of divergent underlying philosophies. It is the contention of the author that a dialog between Vidalian geography and Durkheimian sociology was made difficult because of basic epistemological divergences.

### **The Debate**

Durkheim gave great importance to the branch of sociology that he called social morphology. This field was described as studying the material, terrestrial aspects of social life (a concern somewhat related to that of the Chicago school of human ecology). Although the impact of social morphology on social life was first emphasized, the reverse relationship was not ruled out. In fact, Durkheimian sociology always remained ambiguous about the importance of social morphology in explaining social structure and human behavior. There remained, however, a deliberate search for cause and effect between the environment and society.<sup>1</sup>

The objectives of Vidalian human geographers were relatively similar, but their written work was more regional, more oriented toward case studies, more historical, and more landscape oriented. The same basic questions nevertheless were asked, questions that revolved

around the objective of understanding the reciprocal relations between society and the environment. There was relatively little significant dialog, however, between these two groups of scholars. Instead, there were mostly polemics, the significance of which has remained quite obscure to this day.

Anne Buttner has recently contributed some clarification of the issues at hand. By examining the Durkheimian arguments against Ratzel's anthropogeography in the early years of the publication of the *Année Sociologique*, she has demonstrated that

While Ratzel viewed world social patterns empirically using a spatial and historical perspective, Durkheim viewed them ontologically, endeavoring to design a broad conceptual framework which could enable scholars to analyze and interpret them within the context of philosophically derived norms.<sup>2</sup>

Durkheim thus had a unitary view of the social sciences, with sociology synthesizing the elements of explanation furnished by the other sciences. The result was that

As systematic social scientists, they [the Durkheimians] tried to evaluate the *Anthropogeographie* in terms of the logic of their own discipline. This perspective missed the main point of Ratzel's work, which was primarily an exploratory study and not a rigidly defined research report.<sup>3</sup>

The conflict between Ratzel's anthropogeography and the social morphologists was carried on in often acerbic debates between the latter group and the French school of geography. The criticisms were directed mostly by Simiand, Halbwachs, Mauss, and Durkheim in the *Année Sociologique* at the beginning of this century. The Vidalians, who did not have much taste for methodological debates, rarely replied. The best two rebuttals, however, were written by Camille Vallaux and by Lucien Febvre. Vidal de la Blache contributed remarks on the relations between geography and sociology but never in a polemical manner.<sup>4</sup> Although some collaboration existed at the individual level (e.g., Demangeon, Vacher), the hostility remained strong and resulted mostly in mutual avoidance for over a generation. It seems as if there was a basic misunderstanding between the two parties. They each held a concept of the other science that was different from what its practi-

tioners thought it to be, and they each based their critiques on these concepts. For instance, when human geographers were studying man as a geographic agent (a transformer of nature), the Durkheimians criticized them for not adequately studying the causal influence of the environment on social organization.<sup>5</sup> The social morphologists especially attacked the use of the regional method by geographers as a valid research tool. They condemned it in the name of nomothetic science in much the same way as was done in the 1960s.

Needless to say, the Vidalians were irritated by the Durkheimian critiques as to what and how they should study. Their tendency was to omit from any definition of their task the ambiguous reference to the questions of environmental influences on man—as is reflected in the books of Vallaux and especially of Febvre. The latter's contribution was to show clearly that this question had been stated in traditional terms that were much too simplistic. He criticized Ratzel for having maintained the framework of environmental influences on man, even though the German geographer's works tended to show man as one of the major geographical agents. This latter aspect of Ratzel's work was recognized and stressed by Vidal de la Blache. Febvre stated clearly that the perspective taken by human geographers was not the one attributed to them by the Durkheimians. What was relevant was man's action on the environment, not the reverse. He concluded from the history of geographic thought that there should be no confusion between human geography and social morphology. The geographer's perspective is to ask "what features of a given 'landscape', or a geographical ensemble directly grasped or historically reconstituted, are explained or can be explained by the continued action, positive or negative, of a certain group, or of a certain form of social organization."<sup>6</sup>

Another point of conflict was that the sociologists accused the geographers of studying all types of social organization, even those lacking territorial foundation or those whose territorial dimension—or, better, "projection" on the land—could not be closely related to environmental forms. In defense of geography Febvre contended that all sorts of social groupings were dependent on the earth in the end (not only on relief and climate, but also on production and living conditions). This perspective, which would today be called "ecological," in Febvre's view justified the interest of geographers in all forms of social life.<sup>7</sup>

### **Epistemological Divergences**

The polemical nature of the debate indicates that more basic issues may have been at stake. For instance, there may have been institutional

underpinnings. The Vidalians' success in the institutionalization of their science in the university system may well have aroused the antagonism of competing groups of scholars. But the depth and significance of the conflict are such that they are best treated as evidence of fundamental philosophical divergences about whose significance the protagonists may not always have been conscious.

Vidal, Durkheim, and their early disciples did not escape the influence of neo-Kantianism, which prevailed among French liberal republicans at the turn of the century. Renouvier, Hamelin, Boutroux, Poincaré, Duhem were among the individuals who were most responsible for the diffusion of neo-Kantianism. This philosophy was almost an official one; it was utilized to reject competing ideologies and to promote the secularized, individualistic, and nationalistic ideology of the newly established Third Republic. The Kantian approach to the foundation of morality, its emphasis on the autonomy of the individual, on duty, rationalism and social order provided a convenient framework to deal with the ethical issues raised by the organizing of the new regime. This philosophical current was not confined to ethics; it especially extended to the epistemology of science.<sup>8</sup>

French neo-Kantianism ("neo-criticism" or "idealism," as it was sometimes called) was concerned with the problem of the opposition between sense perceptions and concepts. By acknowledging the role of the mind, it departed from the simplistic positivist belief in the emergence of theories from facts. French neo-Kantian philosophers explored what part the mind played in the process of understanding. They consequently focused on reasoning procedure and tried to take as a primary example the actual approaches used by scientists.<sup>9</sup> In this attempt to discover and establish limits to the power of the mind to deal with the data of experience, the validity of the scientific enterprise was not questioned.

Neo-Kantianism in France was characterized by an overwhelming concern for the relationships between free will and determinism, which was more and more exemplified by the success of scientific inquiry. It was recognized that determinism was an indispensable assumption of the scientific method, but the major thrust of the work of the French neo-Kantians was to demonstrate that determinism did not preclude the possibility of free will.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, this school of thought was a form of idealism in the Kantian tradition, which tried to propose a philosophy encompassing both the autonomous activities of the mind and the data of experience. It was not antiscientific in the sense that it accepted the necessity for a certain amount of determinism as a foundation of scientific research. It refused, however, to proclaim the existence of a real, absolute determinism at work in all aspects of the world, preferring to view determinism as a

conceptual compromise between the demands of nature and those of the mind that aspires at a scientific understanding.

It is clear from the writings of Vidal, Durkheim, and their disciples that geography and sociology were viewed as sciences, as part of the scientific attempt to understand the world. In addition, their conception of human behavior was not in contradiction with the free will that the then-prevalent neo-Kantian views on morality presupposed. In this respect, the “possibilist” stance is well known and need not be stressed here.<sup>11</sup> The Durkheimians themselves did not escape the pervading influence of neo-Kantianism on late nineteenth-century France.<sup>12</sup> An idealistic, neo-Kantian bias in Durkheim’s thought is well revealed by his studies of the religious phenomenon that, according to him, provided confirmation for the traditional idea of a mind-body dualism: an essential characteristic of human nature.<sup>13</sup> The influence of neo-Kantianism is even more clearly reflected in the significance that he attributed to the “categories” of man’s thought. These were neither purely artificial constructions nor natural, a priori givens; rather, they resulted from the simultaneous interplay of the socio-cultural conditions and human mental activity.<sup>14</sup>

Both the Vidalians and the Durkheimians seem to have also preserved from Kant the antimechanistic idea that the whole is different from the sum of its parts. This accounts for Durkheim’s famous methodological position that social phenomena can be explained only by social phenomena, thus justifying the existence of sociology.<sup>15</sup> In a related vein, Vidalian thought—as is suggested below—directed its attention at the emergence of new forms of spatial organization on the surface of the earth.

Neo-Kantianism was far from monolithic and it was combined in various degrees with other trends, including some Comtean positivism in the case of Durkheim (see below). It is precisely these various emphases that may have fed the epistemological divergences between the Vidalians and the Durkheimians. Three groups of these divergences may be identified; namely, as they relate to (1) the concept of what a science is, (2) the concept of explanation, and (3) the place accorded to contingency and human creativity. These will be examined in turn.

## 1. The Concept of Science

The first set of epistemological divergences is revealed by the attitude taken toward the problem of the overlap of subject matter between geography and sociology.

The Durkheimians held the idea of a particular science (Durkheimi-

an sociology) that would be placed above the others, including geography, and that would coordinate and synthesize their findings. This view was reminiscent of Comte's classification of sciences. There was a hierarchy of sciences with sociology at the apex, each science being defined by its subject matter (set of phenomena) and related set of laws. This strict, reductionistic categorization of sciences prevented the Durkheimians from accepting the presence of human geography—which did not conform to their views—in what they felt should be a domain reserved to social morphology. This classification of sciences was explicitly rejected by Vallaux.<sup>16</sup> A similar rejection was implicit in the work of Vidal. He insisted on the importance of the “special perspective” provided by the geographic “points of view,” thus espousing the nonreductionist idea of the independence of sciences.

In the complexity of the phenomena which intersect in nature, there should not be only one way of arriving at a study of the facts. It is useful to consider them from different angles. And if geography takes into account certain data which bear another imprint, there is nothing in that appropriation which can be taxed as unscientific.<sup>17</sup>

This conception that, according to Vidal, lies at the roots of the “geographic spirit” can be related to French neo-Kantian idealism that built upon Kant's idea that the mind imposes order on the world. Broadly speaking, the general view was that the scientist gives to his thought the form of an hypothesis about the reality of things. Boutroux, for instance, underlined both the gap existing between reality and the mechanistic conception of nature and also the creative role of the scientist in his task. Poincaré is famous for having stressed the more-or-less “conventional” (i.e., resting on an accepted convention) character of the great principles or general theories in the sciences. Boutroux and Poincaré spread the idea that there were irreconcilable differences among the various methods used by the mind to attain knowledge of the data dealt with by several kinds of sciences.<sup>18</sup> No single type of reasoning was recognized as the only valid one. Several points of view and approaches were accepted according to the type of reality investigated. Theories, then, were viewed as pigeonholes in which to fit scientific facts.

In other words, conventionalism showed the relative arbitrariness of scientific theories with respect to reality; it took into account the creative role of the scientist; consequently, it emphasized the hypothetical and heuristic character of all scientific generalizations. It played down the reductionist hope of a unitary science arriving at total explanation

of the world. Certainly, here lay a rich philosophical source that Vidal could tap in order to explain and justify his view of geography. Did not this science, after all, correspond to a certain way of looking at the world: a way shared by professional geographers and others as well? Vidal approvingly quoted Ratzel, according to whom a geographic approach based on relative location had penetrated all modern thought.<sup>19</sup> The diffusion of this approach allowed the geographer's findings to acquire an objective value; that is, to be understood by anyone (and not simply by the specialist). It further prevented geography from being labeled as a purely "nominalist" science—a term used by Poincaré to attack the subjectivist interpretation of conventionalism made by Edouard Le Roy, for whom scientific facts and laws themselves were also pure constructs of the mind.<sup>20</sup> For Poincaré, the essential point legitimizing scientific results was that they could be agreed upon by all, even if some education of others had to be undertaken by the scientists. Indeed, Vidal himself insisted on the necessity, and difficulty, of giving students a modern geographic education; that is, a new way of looking at things.<sup>21</sup>

Vidal's conventionalism is well reflected in his refusal to claim an absolute reality and existence for the combinations of phenomena that he identified and investigated. For example, he talked only of the "notion," or of the "idea," of "milieu." He also referred to "milieu" as a "guiding principle." A *principle*, according to the terminology of the time, is a higher order convention; i.e., a convention that has been consistently verified.<sup>22</sup>

A similar attitude is revealed in Vidal's "idea of terrestrial unity": He referred to it as a "principle" on which a certain "point of view" and a systematic geography could rest.<sup>23</sup> It bred the notion of the "terrestrial organism," which always remained for Vidal, as he made clear, an idea, a sort of validated working hypothesis. It bore great similarity to a conception widely held by scientists and well expressed by Poincaré, who talked of the necessary "belief in the unity" of nature:

If the different parts of the universe were not like the members of one body, they would not act on one another; they would know nothing of one another; and we in particular would know only one of these parts. We do not have to ask ourselves, then, if nature is one, but how it is one.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, as opposed to the Durkheimians, who tried to establish rigorous concepts that they thought were the only ones capable of capturing the reality of the subject matter at hand, the Vidalians were imbued



with the idea of the relativity and the conventional character of concepts and theories. These were viewed as heuristic devices to approach the study of spatial relationships among phenomena. This view was clear in early regional geography. The concept of region represented the reality of relations existing within a certain set of phenomena, but the region thus distinguished was not given an absolute reality.<sup>25</sup> Geography was viewed as providing a grand theoretical framework (among others provided by different sciences) in which phenomena could be classified.

In distinction to Durkheim, Vidal's concern was to establish principles or general ideas that would constitute the contribution of the geographic discipline while at the same time admitting other scientific viewpoints on the same subject matter. Vidalian geography was definitely more in line with the philosophical mainstream of French neo-Kantian conventionalism than Durkheimian sociology, which, as we shall further see, integrated more positivist influence. Characteristically, commenting on the "idea of terrestrial unity," Vidal wrote:

It is . . . one of those very general and very fruitful ideas, which constantly renew themselves and are subject to very different kinds of development, but which one may say transform science by rectifying the perspective of observations. Historically, its appearance represents the point of departure of the scientific tradition of geography; it is through such ideas that the notions of enchainment, of causes, of laws have become implanted in geographic tradition.<sup>26</sup>

It is toward the latter notions that the present discussion will now turn. The second set of divergences between human geographers and social morphologists indeed revolved around the way to achieve explanation. Contrary to the Durkheimians, the Vidalians avoided—to use the words of Febvre—"systematic deduction" and a "narrow idea of a strict and, so to speak, mechanical determinism."<sup>27</sup> What was, then, the Vidalian notion of explanation?

## 2. The Concept of Explanation

In Vidal's writings, the words *cause* and *effect* are found, but the expressions that appear most frequently are *series of phenomena* and *enchainment* (*enchaînement*). This stress on causal series and causal

successions or sequences was a basic tenet of Vidal's methodology. The Vidalians were thus content to bring to light linked series of phenomena. The Durkheimian view was different, maintaining that a true social scientist must explain a phenomenon by giving it an antecedent linked by the most general relationship; that is, a law.

It is clear that the Durkheimian view of explanation was borrowed from the positivist model of science then in great use in the natural sciences. They were thus urging a unitary (reductionist) concept of laws and explanation. On the other hand, the Vidalian view turned toward another concept that was widely diffused by neo-Kantian scholars—mostly philosophers, political economists, and historians. They reacted against mechanistic determinism because it eliminated novelty, creativity, contingent facts by focusing exclusively on repetitive phenomena, on what was called "identity." They turned away from the positivist model of explanation and tried to reconcile the concept of law with that of development; to assimilate cause to condition; and, in explaining a phenomenon, to focus on placing it in a series or sequence, whether or not general laws are brought to bear.<sup>28</sup>

This scheme presented the advantage of providing an explanation for singular, unique phenomena. It was in strong contrast with the Durkheimian view, which Simiand so succinctly expressed when he wrote: "... the individual phenomenon, unique in its kind, has no cause."<sup>29</sup> This individual phenomenon was often called an *individualité* and was thought worthy of scientific causal study by the neo-Kantian scholars. It was also the opinion of the Vidalians.

A problem, however, arises. Each fact considered in science and especially in geography results from extremely numerous conditions. Vidal approvingly quoted Buffon and Poincaré, who shared the same view:

"In nature," said Buffon, "the majority of effects depend on several causes differently combined." With more precision still, the eminent thinker Henri Poincaré, very attentive to things geographical, expressed himself thus in one of his last writings: "The state of the world, and even of a very small part of the world, is something extremely complex and depends on a great number of elements."<sup>30</sup>

It is clear then that the combination of all the causes that produce a certain effect can never be repeated. How then is explanation possible?

Poincaré, in particular, but also others thought that this problem could be solved by the calculus of probability. This view permitted a reconciliation of science, which is deterministic, with the philosophical

demands in favor of free will and creativity. The latter were usually taken into account through the consideration of contingency (especially by the French neo-Kantian philosophers). Suffice it to say here that contingency was introduced through the conventional, and thereby approximate, character of scientific laws and concepts that could not fully grasp the complex and changing character of nature. Although no series of phenomena that the scientist identifies in nature is quite identical with any other series, he can nevertheless classify them according to their degree of similarity; that is, in terms of probability. Consequently, a determinism, consciously conceived by the mind, exists, even if no cause and effect relationships are absolutely identical or repeated.<sup>31</sup> The scientist, thanks to probability calculus, imposes some form of determinism upon the world he studies. Thus contingency theory took into account determinism, which was the *raison d'être* of science, but it did not imply or require the idea of necessity; that is, universal determinism in the world.

These views were reinforced—especially with respect to human matters—by a trend that can be traced to a neo-Kantian precursor, Antoine-Augustin Cournot. He gave to chance an objective reality in nature, independent of man's ability to reach knowledge. This was in opposition to Laplace's position that the world was like a machine and that probability calculus had only to compensate for the imprecision of human observation. Cournot defined chance as an absence of order, as the intersection of independent series of phenomena. The pertinence of such an antimechanistic view for geography is clear in the sense that it fit well the attempt to reconcile determinism as a prerequisite to scientific work on the one hand and the refusal to admit universal determinism on the other.<sup>32</sup>

It should be added that many historians and social scientists defined chance as Cournot did and distinguished it clearly from another form of contingency: individuality (*individualité*). The latter was viewed as the result of a fortuitous combination of conditions; that is, a relatively stable outcome of an intersection of independent causal series. In geography, examples of individuality are the *pays* and the *région*, which result from an intersection of causal series of the natural and human realms—the *pays* being determined by the inhabitants themselves; the *région*, by the geographer.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, a scientific, explanatory study of unique places was possible. Contingency theory helps account for the Vidalian disdain for the Durkheimian "narrow idea of a strict and, so to speak, mechanical determinism" and for the Vidalian use of the regional method, which was well adapted to the explanation of individualities and thus of the personality (*personnalité*) of certain areas.

### 3. The Place of Human Creativity

These comments have led to the core of the third set of divergences between the Vidalians and the Durkheimians. The former, as opposed to the latter, favored an epistemology that relied heavily on the theory of contingency. In doing so, they deliberately wanted to deal, scientifically, with the emergence of new forms (individualities) in the natural and social world, including the results of human creativity. The manifestation of that desire was the Vidalian concept of "*genre de vie*," which, to a great extent, was understood to be a result of man's initiative and creative adaptation to his environment.

This concept is an additional example of the application of contingency theory in geography. It is an individuality, a stable outcome of an intersection of independent (natural and social) causal series. This phenomenon, therefore, can be scientifically studied, although its emergence is the result of human creativity, which is at work in geography just as chance has been conceptualized in contingency theory.

The Vidalians thought that such phenomena could not be accounted for by mechanistic methods and consequently had turned toward the broader concept of science provided by the theory of contingency. The concept of "*genre de vie*," viewed as an individuality, was an attempt to integrate man's creative evolution into a scientific (probabilistic) framework. Febvre suggested just this when he stated that human creativity could be given a place in science in the same way that vitalists gave a place in biology to *spontaneity*, the "faculty to create something new"; that is, to what "Bergson named . . . the impulse (*élan*) and creative power of life."<sup>34</sup> Febvre thought that this place for creativity could be handled as a contingent fact, in terms of probabilities:

Under cover of this theory, there reappeared in scientific studies a vitalism which revived, to the great scandal of a number of scientists brought up in the blind and uncompromising mechanist faith, the fruitful and by no means unscientific idea of chance.<sup>35</sup>

Similarly, Febvre remarked,

. . . was not the theory of ways of life, in geography, as Vidal de la Blache formulated it, also a fitting translation of intellectual needs of just the same, or at any rate of very similar

character, whether its author was fully conscious of it or not?<sup>36</sup>

This link between neovitalism and Vidalian thought cannot be further explored within the limited scope of this paper; however, it helps to underline the divergences between Vidal and Durkheim.

### Significance of the Debate

As opposed to the Durkheimians, the Vidalians' approach was not locked in a deductive framework but strived for an original insight: it took into account the creativity present in the scientist's activity as well as in the world under study. Thanks to this framework, the Vidalians skillfully avoided the pitfalls of mechanistic and reductionist approaches (which hindered the development of social morphology) while retaining a certain amount of scientific determinism. Such distinctive achievements have significance for the renewed epistemological and philosophical discussions in geography.

Since French conventionalism, a neo-Kantian offshoot and a partial critique of positivism, underlay most epistemological positions of the Vidalians, a new insight is cast on the foundations of academic geography. The implications of this philosophy for geographic thought deserve much more attention. For instance, Kant's philosophy, which was a condition of the Western mind for a century and a half and which went through a significant revival at the turn of the century, might well cast more light on the nature of geography than a focus on Kant's specific definition of the discipline. The present essay has suggested that such fundamental philosophical investigations could contribute to numerous issues in geographic thought.

The question of the autonomy of each science, and thus of interdisciplinary research, has been raised because reductionist models may have a pregnant, as well as an inhibiting, effect on research. The nature and purpose of each science should consequently be assessed in order to make critical use of theories and methodological tools. In this respect, the French neo-Kantian reflections of the turn of the century were enlightening.

Another and related implication of the Vidal-Durkheim debate is that our present methods and concepts do not leave much room for novelty and human creativity, however vital these elements of social life may be. Anne Buttimer's monograph, *Values in Geography*, for instance, constitutes a plea for scientifically capturing this creativity.<sup>37</sup> Related concerns have motivated authors such as Gunnar Olsson to

show how much our scientific epistemology and language impose a straitjacket on our thoughts and actions, especially in view of finding new (creative) solutions to our social problems.<sup>38</sup> In the same vein, the need for epistemological reflections on issues such as novelty, creativity, and process has recently been called to our attention.<sup>39</sup> It is worth remembering that in the Vidalian tradition, the incorporation of creativity as an important element of the whole pointed to the broader integration of humanistic concerns with the rigors of scientific method.

## Notes

1. For instance, see Leo F. Schnore, "Social Morphology and Human Ecology," *American Journal of Sociology* 63 (1958): 620-34 and Maurice Halbwachs, *Morphologie Sociale* (Paris: Colin, 1946; trans. *Population and Society*, Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960).
2. Anne Buttimer, *Society and Milieu in the French Geographic Tradition* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971), p. 28.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
4. Camille Vallaux, *Les Sciences Géographiques* (Paris: Alcan, 1925) and Lucien Febvre (with the collaboration of L. Bataillon), *La Terre et l'Évolution Humaine* (Paris: Renaissance du Livre, 1922). Although published after World War I, those two books were conceived and written in great part in the early 1910s. Paul Vidal de la Blache, "Rapports de la Sociologie avec la Géographie," *Revue Internationale de Sociologie* 12 (1904): 309-13.
5. F. Simiand, Review of A. Demangeon's *La Picardie . . .*, R. Blanchard's *La Flandre*, C. Vallaux's *La Basse-Bretagne*, A. Vacher's *Le Berry*, J. Sion's *Les Paysans de la Normandie Orientale*, in *L'Année Sociologique* 11 (1906-9): 723-32.
6. Febvre, *La Terre et l'Évolution Humaine*, p. 76, quoted from the English translation, *A Geographical Introduction to History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925), p. 65.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-51; 56-57.
8. E.g., see D. Parodi, *La Philosophie Contemporaine en France: Essai de Classification des Doctrines* (Paris: Alcan, 1920).
9. This was especially characteristic of the works of Cournot, Lachelier, Boutroux, Poincaré and Duhem.
10. See Parodi, *Classification des Doctrines* and A. Fouillée, *Le Mouvement Idéaliste et la Réaction Contre la Science Positive*, 2d ed. (Paris: Alcan, 1896).
11. For an examination of French possibilism in light of neo-Kantian idealism, see Vincent Berdoulay, "French Possibilism as a Form of Neo-Kantian Philosophy," *Proceedings of the Association of American Geographers* 8 (1976): 176-79.
12. E.g., see Steven Lukes, *Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work* (London: Allen Lane, 1973) and especially Dominick LaCapra, *Emile Durkheim: Sociologist and Philosopher* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972).
13. See Emile Durkheim, "Le Dualisme de la Nature Humaine et Ses Conditions Sociales," *Scientia* 15 (1914): 206-21 and idem, the famous *Les Formes Élémentaires de la Vie Religieuse: Le Système Totémique en Australie* (Paris: Alcan, 1912).
14. See idem, "Sociologie Religieuse et Théorie de la Connaissance," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 17 (1909): 753-58 and idem, *La Vie Religieuse* (which includes most of the last-mentioned article).
15. Idem, *Les Règles de la Méthode Sociologique* (Paris: Alcan, 1895).
16. Vallaux, *Les Sciences Géographiques*, p. 397.
17. Paul Vidal de la Blache, "Des Caractères Distinctifs de la Géographie," *Annales de Géographie* 22 (1913): 290.
18. E. Boutroux's main works are: *De la Contingence des Lois de la Nature* (Paris: G.

- Baillièrre, 1874) and *De l'Idée de Loi Naturelle* (Paris: Lecène-Oudin, 1895). Henri Poincaré's are: *La Science et l'Hypothèse* (Paris: Flammarion, 1902); *La Valeur de la Science* (Paris: Flammarion, 1905); *Science et Méthode* (Paris: Flammarion, 1908); and *Dernières Pensées* (Paris: Flammarion, 1913).
19. See Paul Vidal de la Blache, "La Géographie Politique: A Propos des Ecrits de M. Frédéric Ratzel," *Annales de Géographie* 8 (1898): 111.
20. See Poincaré, *La Valeur de la Science*, pp. 213-76, which is a critique of Le Roy's philosophy.
21. E.g., Paul Vidal de la Blache, "Sur l'Esprit Géographique," *Revue Politique et Littéraire (Revue Bleue)* (2 mai 1914): 556-60.
22. Idem, "Des Caractères Distinctifs," pp. 295-97.
23. Idem, "Le Principe de la Géographie Générale," *Annales de Géographie* 5 (1896): 129-41.
24. Henri Poincaré, *La Science et l'Hypothèse* (Paris: Flammarion, 1968), p. 161, after the English translation in idem, *The Foundations of Science: Science and Hypothesis; The Value of Science; Science and Method* (New York: Science Press, 1913), p. 139.
25. See Paul Vidal de la Blache, "Sur la Relativité des Divisions Régionales," *Athènes* 11 (December 1911): 1-14.
26. Idem, *La Géographie Générale*, p. 141.
27. Febvre, *La Terre et l'Evolution Humaine*, p. 89 and idem, *Geographical Introduction to History*, pp. 75-76.
28. E.g., see F. Simiand, "Méthode Historique et Science Sociale," *Revue de Synthèse Historique* 6 (1903): 1-22; 129-57, versus P. Lacombe, *De l'Histoire Considérée Comme Science* (Paris: Hachette, 1894) and C. Seignobos, *La Méthode Historique Appliquée aux Sciences Sociales* (Paris: Alcan, 1901). See also E. Meyerson, *Identité et Réalité* (Paris: Alcan, 1908), in which a forceful distinction is made between the notions of law and cause, in opposition to the positivist philosophy of science; and Poincaré, *La Valeur de la Science*, ch. 11.
29. Simiand, "Méthode Historique et Science Sociale," p. 17.
30. Vidal, "Des Caractères Distinctifs," p. 292.
31. E.g., see Poincaré, *La Valeur de la Science*, pp. 257-61. See also Parodi, *Classification des Doctrines*.
32. The influence of these views on French geography has already been postulated by Fred Lukermann, "The 'Calcul des Probabilités' and the Ecole Française de Géographie," *Canadian Geographer* 9 (1965): 128-37. On Cournot, see F. Mentré, *Cournot et la Renaissance du Probabilisme au XIXe Siècle* (Paris: Rivière, 1908).
33. See H. Berr, *La Synthèse en Histoire: Son Rapport avec la Synthèse Générale*, reprint ed. (1911; Paris: Michel, 1954), pp. 87-96. On chance and individuality, see *ibid.*, pp. 55-70.
34. Febvre, *La Terre et l'Evolution Humaine*, p. 445 and idem, *Geographical Introduction to History*.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*, p. 446 and idem, *Geographical Introduction to History*, p. 367.
37. Anne Buttimer, *Values in Geography*, Association of American Geographers Commission on College Geography Resource Paper no. 24 (Washington, D.C., 1974).
38. Gunnar Olsson, *Birds in Egg*, University of Michigan Geographical Publication no. 15 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975).
39. Jack Eichenbaum and Stephen Gale, "Form, Function, and Process: A Methodological Inquiry," *Economic Geography* 47 (1971): 525-44.

## CHAPTER 6

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# TOWARDS A HUMANIZED CONCEPTION OF ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

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IAIN WALLACE

This essay should be read as the initial account of a project scarcely begun. Such a disclaimer is intended less to disarm critics than to stress the contingency of conclusions reached here. My objective is to review the inadequacies that various writers have recognized in recent approaches to the study of economic geography; to indicate some crucial questions that I suggest focus the distinctive nature of the subject's potential contribution to knowledge; and to identify the perspectives from which I see the task of formulating a more satisfactory approach taking its direction. At issue are matters of epistemology, ideology, practice, and faith. For the present, greatest attention is given to the first two of these. Even with this restriction the paper attempts too much, perhaps; yet a coherent framework needs to be sketched. Briefly, I argue that neither the determinism of positivist social science and a dogmatic neo-marxism nor a subjective indeterminism are adequate sources of knowledge for the study of human action and interaction with the natural environment. Rather, the varieties of cognitive interest recognized by exponents of the Frankfurt school of critical theory, particularly Habermas, provide a more authentic framework for comprehending human activity. Accepting the critical dimension of social science leads both to an unmasking of the ideologies expressed in contemporary theories and embodied in social practice and to a recognition of pervasive symptoms of social and environmental malaise. Hence the challenge to outline a nonideological paradigm in which to ground an authentically human economic geography, at which point I propose what many readers will regard as the disingenuous thesis that the most coherent account of man's nature and his appropriate relationship to the natural environment is, in fact, a Christian one, rooted in the biblical understanding of creation and salvation history.

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### Liberal Economic Location Theory—Critiques from Within

For two decades locational analysis has been the prevailing paradigm for much of human geography and the one on which geographers' credentials as positive social scientists have been based. This tradition has drawn heavily on locational economics for its theoretical underpinnings and particularly on the behavioral postulates of neoclassical "rational economic man." Gradually emerging discontent with the achievements of location theory embodying this perspective has expressed a variety of concerns, culminating in the recent comprehensive indictment by King,<sup>1</sup> himself a significant contributor to the relevant literature. Admitting the generic deficiency of epistemological positivism in the social sciences and recognizing that implicit ideological assumptions inherited from liberal economic theory must also be reckoned with, he concludes that "much current formal theoretical work in economic and urban geography appears to be heading in the wrong direction."<sup>2</sup> Desirous that geographers retain their involvement in policy formation at a time of fundamental questioning about "the appropriate institutional forms for the functioning of our modern societies," he acknowledges the requirement that if they "are to say something useful about the shaping of society they cannot ignore [value-laden] questions."<sup>3</sup> Although thus joining other critics of positive economic geography, King is nevertheless unable to embrace the prevailing alternatives advanced from marxist and subjectivist standpoints. He finds the latter hard to relate to "the social scientist as one involved in shaping and directing social change"<sup>4</sup> and prefers a "value critical" middle course whereby the social scientist communicates alternative scenarios to the policy maker in the form of parables—a technique of distinguished pedigree!

It was pragmatic dissatisfaction with the achievements of economic location theory, however, rather than overt qualms of an ideological or epistemological nature that initially stimulated critical reassessments. In *Behavior and Location*<sup>5</sup> Pred attacked "economic man" for embodying attributes that were behaviorally incredible, arguing that locational patterns could not be adequately interpreted without reference to the decision-making process that produced them. He thereby ran up against the ambiguous conceptual status of "economic man," but he did not explore the epistemological ramifications.<sup>6</sup> More realistic behavioral assumptions were seen to entail indeterminate conclusions, so that Pred found himself ultimately dependent on the traditional normative yardstick of profit-maximizing assumptions to give his study substance. Contemporaneously, Harvey came to similar conclusions on the same

issue, viewing nonoptimizing behavior as an essentially negative concept, "theoretically and empirically barren."<sup>7</sup>

Chisholm, always scrupulous to observe the distinction between positive and normative theory, needed no convincing of the desirability of the latter. In undertaking to shake normative location theory out of the stagnation that had overtaken it following Isard's synthesis in *Location and Space Economy*, he defines the crucial issue as scale.<sup>8</sup> He demonstrates that no form of market area analysis built upon classical theory's prevailing assumptions can lead to normative location theory beyond the scale of the individual plant. This is a considerable handicap in an age of oligopolistic market power and an emphasis on regional economic growth. As all competition in space contains inherently monopolistic elements, consistency of argument precludes global solutions set within a context of perfect competition. Lösch's global equilibrium is shown to depend in part on the unlikely behavioral postulate that eventually "the struggle [among firms] for space dies down," which Chisholm exposes as the surreptitious introduction of a public welfare optimum scarcely compatible with the assumption of a perfectly competitive market.

His attempt to bypass the scale and consistency problems posed by a normative location theory based on the micro-economics of the firm prompts Chisholm to suggest welfare economics as a more promising point of departure. In this, "We adopt social welfare criteria as our starting point and introduce a minimum number of elements from monopolistic competition theory as constraints to the analysis."<sup>9</sup> Sketching the theoretical framework that might emerge, he focuses on its macro-scale and the related feature that it would "be essentially a *planners'* view of society and not the view of individual *actors* in that society."<sup>10</sup> The difficulties of specifying an operational format for such a theory are fully acknowledged ("The most that can be hoped for is a static equilibrium under conditions of certainty"<sup>11</sup>), but its ideological presuppositions are not.

Serious exploration of the potential contribution of welfare economics to geographical theory has been mostly the work of D. M. Smith, culminating in *Human Geography: A Welfare Approach*.<sup>12</sup> His humanitarian intent, evident in earlier studies of the distribution of social inequalities in the United States and South Africa that go beyond the detached observations of a positive social scientist, is reflected in his specification of the desired normative orientation for a geographical welfare theory:

It would be a "people geography" about real people, and for the people in the sense of contributing to the enlarge-

ment of human existence for all. It would necessarily have a sound basis in positive knowledge . . . [which] would as far as possible be built in an intellectual environment free of ideological bias—capitalist as well as socialist. If there was any bias, it would be in the recognition of the transcending importance of the freedom and dignity of the individual, and a commitment to the creation of a society and a world in which unjust impediments to human realisation and happiness are removed<sup>13</sup> (emphasis added).

What emerges from his fuller investigation of theoretical welfare economics, however, is that its implicit ideological assumptions are inimical to the development of a geographical theory that meets the above conditions. He comes to recognize, as did Harvey<sup>14</sup> before him, that welfare economics' normative criterion of Pareto optimality, whereby changes in the social distribution of benefits are judged solely on their capacity to increase aggregate utility so long as no individual suffers in the process, is a powerful sanction in favor of preserving the particular inequalities of the status quo. He therefore follows Harvey in being attracted to Rawls' theory of justice,<sup>15</sup> in which the normative goal of interpersonal equality is promoted by sanctioning those changes in the social distribution of benefits that do the most to benefit the worst-off members of society.

At this point the humanizing of location theory is effectively abandoned in favor of the analytical kitbag of an explicit moral preference (equality is the norm) and a simple yardstick for measuring the degree of inequality among spatial units (the Lorenz curve). The adequacy of Smith's proposal as a basis for a humane economic geography is questionable, though not all the criticisms it may encounter are necessarily shortcomings. It does not have the potential for mathematically sophisticated elaboration that classical location theory has, and thus it will be dismissed by many as a theoretical retreat; nor is it a geometrical theory, in the sense of specifying a particular spatial pattern, so its "geographical" credentials are weak. Neither of these arguments is particularly telling, for they do not pinpoint weaknesses of Smith's argument in its own terms. More significant are the limitations of the Lorenz criterion as a guide to optimum patterns of production; for, while properly rectifying its past overconcentration on the location of production at the expense of consumption, economic geography still needs a theoretical framework for addressing its traditional concern with efficiency of resource use. Regional diversity of factor endowments and the implications of scale economies are issues that greatly complicate any consideration of a just ordering of economic opportunities over space.

Ultimately, one's deepest misgivings concern the adequacy of the foundation of Smith's liberalism to uphold the human values he wishes

to promote and to withstand an ideological critique. I shall explore this issue below. He senses the problem himself. The criterion of equality "... has strong emotive appeal, with undertones of moral rectitude associated with the egalitarian ideals of much Western philosophy, Judeo-Christian ethics and the rhetoric of democracy,"<sup>16</sup> and egalitarian ideals are claimed to be "extraordinarily widely held."<sup>17</sup> Yet, "What makes this so surprising and extraordinary is perhaps the persistence of very considerable inequalities within most Western societies."<sup>18</sup> He recognizes that "some form of socialism seems a necessary condition for a just distribution" but suspects that "a relatively enlightened liberal democracy with a mixed economy may be more attractive to the intuitive feelings of ordinary people than the rigorous demands of a socialist state."<sup>19</sup> Where the choice can be defined in these terms, the evidence suggests that he is correct, but outside of the member nations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, few peoples are currently presented with the first option as a realistic prospect. *Prima facie*, aversion to the "rigors" of socialism has not been a universal basis for political activity in the postwar era, for the relatively untamed capitalism of parts of the underdeveloped world has been seen to have its rigors, too.

### **The Ideological Assault**

It is, significantly, among geographers of the inner city and the Third World that a marxist challenge to classical location theory has been developed. These environments are, after all, the homes of the objects of capitalism's subjects. For while marxist economics, no less than classical economics and its derivatives, needs to be placed in its ideological framework, in two fundamental respects it comes closer to the reality of human experience. Marx's utopian idealism is as unfruitfully mystifying as the rational idealism of the classical economists, yet he takes seriously the dynamics of historical change and of social groups in conflict in a way that the neoclassical paradigm of a society of atomized individuals living lives whose interaction approaches a static and harmonious equilibrium does not.

To study the process of underdevelopment or of ghetto formation is to encounter empirical evidence that increasing numbers of geographers are coming to regard as most satisfactorily accounted for by a marxian analysis. (There is a tendency, perhaps, to claim all such questioning of the harmonies of liberal economic theory as derivative of Marx, when they have come under fire equally from non-marxist writers such as Schumpeter, Myrdal, and Perroux.) But one of the strengths of

marxism's perspective, as Smith acknowledges,<sup>20</sup> is its overt concern for social justice. This basic value commitment, which goes deeper than the self-proclaimed attachment to a scientific materialist understanding of history,<sup>21</sup> nevertheless raises questions that the majority of Anglo-Saxon marxian geographers have not touched. The relative ideological dogmatism that characterizes many of the contributors to *Antipode* and the later chapters of Harvey's *Social Justice and the City*, insisting that an unreflexive revolutionary theory be made good in praxis, raises doubts about the prospect of a more humanized geography emerging from this brand of marxism.

A major weakness of the marxist worldview is its fundamental ambivalence about the nature of man. Is the individual an end in himself or is he, in the final analysis, a means in the outworking of the grand design of the class struggle and the revolution? Does he have existential freedom that is not merely a mystification of the objective determinism of the economic substructure? The marxist resolution for such tensions involves the same invocation of the long term in which to situate the beneficent outcome of current constraints as does the ideology of classical economics and its derivatives, a point taken up below. But whereas the long run of the latter is considerably less than the lifetime of the individual, the marxist long run is tied to the uncertain timetable of the outworking of revolutionary praxis in history. To find the affirmation of the deprived or sacrificed individual in the (promised) future organic victory of the masses is as dehumanizing as justifying his existential suffering by the smooth outworking of the mechanisms of the market. Notwithstanding this assessment, because marxism speaks to the realities of power and conflict, it identifies factors that a humanized economic geography must necessarily grapple with.

### **The Epistemological Questioning**

Despite considerable contradictory evidence and even occasional bouts of self-criticism, neoclassical economists as a *genus* tend to express satisfaction with the superior "scientific" status of their discipline as compared to other social sciences.<sup>22</sup> This kudos was readily assumed by those geographers who followed the economists' route in adopting the epistemology of scientific positivism. As was noted above in the discussion of Pred's *Behavior and Location*, however, to deepen locational analysis by going beyond pattern to process involves facing up to issues of perception and motivation. Once outside the framework of "economic man," whose freedom or failings in these spheres are assumed away, the fact that locational actors are seen to evidence real choice and the

pull of subjective evaluations suggests that nonpositivist modes of understanding are called for. Gunnar Olsson, as one reared in the tradition of spatial analysis, has become the most telling, if not the most readily comprehensible, epistemological critic of this school of geographical research.

Olsson's recurrent theme is that the pseudo-objectivity of positivism leads to a false resolution of the tension between certainty and ambiguity in human activity:

Through planning based on descriptive models, we consequently run the risk of imposing on reality a strictness which it neither has nor ought to have . . . we shall be left with a society which mirrors the techniques by which we measure it. At the end is a society of puppets with no dreams to dream and nothing to be sorry for.<sup>23</sup>

Addressing the same issue in the context of neoclassical economic theory, Weisskopf notes: "It is quite significant that Marshall excludes regret from his ideal of economic man. An allocation decision that causes regret later is considered as an irrational failure."<sup>24</sup> The possibility of an individual experiencing a conflict of ends is excluded. The psychological appeal of escaping the tensions of ambiguity by imposing order on a shrunken conception of reality accounts for much of the tenacity with which normative theory is defended.<sup>25</sup> Chisholm could not be more explicit. "The moment that growth paths, and paths of change, are postulated, uncertainty finds the door wide open and comes bouncing in. Uncertainty is a deadly enemy of normative thought and must therefore be banned."<sup>26</sup>

This analysis takes us beyond the ideological battle. "The moral of my tale is that even though we will continue to need better analytical techniques, our real need is for a new philosophy of man."<sup>27</sup> The difficulty with Olsson is that he is paralyzed in his experience of the existential tension between certainty and ambiguity. Unable to transcend the dialectic, he sides where his humane sympathies lie, committed to ambiguity. But as a sympathetically critical reviewer expresses it, "No doubt ambiguity, openendedness, and indeterminacy are in the end preferable qualities to fixity, closure, and delimitation. Yet in and of themselves they take us everywhere and nowhere. Or rather, they take us straight to Cloud-Cuckoo Land."<sup>28</sup> The retreat from society into solipsism is the more saddening, for Olsson is left unable to respond creatively to the pessimistic signs of the times (increased societal stress and material shortages) that he reads so clearly.

## Classical Theory's Presuppositions in Retrospect

In order to move beyond Olsson's diagnosis towards a philosophy that can articulate humanized economic relations more adequately, more attention needs to be given to the orthodox liberal economic theory that has been assimilated in the models of economic geographers. The central, but ambiguous, construct of "economic man" has been subjected to solid critiques at both the epistemological and ideological level. Hollis and Nell<sup>29</sup> methodically demolish the positivistic self-understanding of neoclassical economics and thereby expose "economic man" to be neither a rationally normative model of what *should* happen nor a positive model of what actually *does* happen: he is, rather, a vacuous predictive model of what *would* happen if men were perfectly rational, fully informed, and *ceteris were paribus*. The ideological argument that the normative status in fact accorded "economic man" is demonstrably more than a methodological device to insure the maximization of utility at the margin, but has been given overtones of a moral imperative, is developed by Weisskopf<sup>30</sup> and summarized in the paragraphs below.

Myrdal provides the basic clue to understanding how a paradoxically normative stance has survived the evolution of positive economics:

We must look upon the majority of modern economic doctrines as modified reminiscences of very old political thinking conceived in days when a teleological meaning and a normative purpose were more openly part of the subject matter of economics.<sup>31</sup>

Whatever the precise nature of the link between Protestant, particularly Calvinist, theology and the "work ethic" of the flowering capitalism of the seventeenth century, this at least can be said: God's elect were required to authenticate their status by their lifestyle. The positive sanction of hard work and thrift that this involved as a spiritual and ethical norm not surprisingly tended to result in capital accumulation and productive investment. Yet the initially distinguishable means and end had largely coalesced even before the general atrophy of religious enthusiasm of the mid-eighteenth century. It was not difficult to show from selective use of the Old Testament that wealth was a sure sign of God's blessing. This ideology was readily secularized, even before the full development of Hume's natural law philosophy, which provided the context for Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.

One of the central questions that we face today—how to define an

ethical framework that sets limits to the pursuit of self-interest by individuals and stronger groups (be they neighborhoods, classes, or nations)—had been abandoned by theologians by Smith's time<sup>32</sup> and was antithetical to the interests of the prevailing utilitarianism. It was apparent, however, that an economic theory fundamentally concerned with long-term growth clearly called for some legitimation of both work and self-restraint. Calvin's theology had provided this: a secular equivalent had now to be found.

Adam Smith's central concepts of the primary motivation of individual economic self-interest, of an overarching societal harmony of interest, and of a labor theory of value (inconsistently articulated) are simultaneously secularizations of the Puritan ethos and apparently demonstrable characteristics of the "natural order" of human existence. His activist morality equates self-interest with continual exertion for the sake of capital acquisition to the exclusion of all possible alternative definitions. Pursuit of self-interest by individuals and groups, acknowledged as a source of bitter social conflict, is nevertheless justified by its unsought-for beneficial outcome, as "an invisible hand" (his deism poking through) coordinates the conflict to maximize the nation's wealth. The ideal of acquiring more and more is not a meaningless end in itself (as it has become in much of contemporary Western society), but it is purposive, both for the individual *and* for society, set in its pre-Industrial Revolution context of a relative scarcity of capital goods and a population growing in numbers and basic expectations. Both conspicuous consumption by the aristocracy and the maintenance of "the most frivolous professions" (which include academics!) are correspondingly condemned.

Smith's ambiguous espousal of the labor theory of value—for he simultaneously recognizes the influence of utility on prices—provided the theoretical point of departure for both Marx and Marshall. Smith's desire to ground an objective theory of value based on the (labor) cost of production should be seen as an implicit attempt to maintain the moral sanction of economic activity that the medieval Church had focused in the concept of an objectively "just price." But neoclassical value theory, as elaborated by Marshall, based on marginal utility is ethically noncommittal as to the measure of value or to the ends of economic activity. The classical economists' espousal of a value system that considered objective factors, such as more and more production and acquisition as ultimate goals, moreover, became less tenable as the industrial economy matured. The growing abundance of goods changed the industrialists' preoccupations from production to marketing, and the subjective assessment of consumer preference came increasingly to the fore. The problem facing neoclassical economics was thus a more acute version of the dilemma encountered by utilitarianism: "how to



combine subjective wishes, desires and wants with the discipline [of working, saving and productive investment] necessary in the market economy."<sup>33</sup> Subjectivism admits the possibility of nonrational or impulsive behavior, so against this Marshall maintains the ideal of the activist mode of life, directed by rational, deliberate conduct and self-control. Thus "economic man," while supposedly an explanatory model of human behavior, is at the same time a normative guide. One notes that in the area both of value theory and of impulse control the normative is given positive rationalization by reference to the long term. In this way, prices are argued to reflect, in the long run, objective costs of production (whereas more subjective utility evaluations may prevail in the short run), and our self-restraint is seen to yield its dividends of enhanced ultimate pleasure.

"For Marshall, maximization [of utility] is clearly an ideal and a moral obligation. . . ,"<sup>34</sup> and what goes for the individual goes also for the entire economic system, which seeks an optimum equilibrium derived from the collective maximizations. "The ethical code of rational, maximizing, economic man becomes the law of the market—an obvious attempt to ground a normative scheme of values in facts, thereby justifying these values."<sup>35</sup> The welfare economics of Pareto and Pigou builds directly on this concept of the optimum allocation of resources that maximizes social utility but only at the expense of a definition of welfare that is even more empty of objective content than is Marshall's.

The classical economists identified objective economic goals for both individuals and society. Increased welfare was identified with growth, or increased production: individual acquisitiveness was justified by its social beneficiality. But welfare economics inverted the rationalization, attempting to derive social goals from the aggregate of individual satisfactions. The welfare of individuals is defined, however, in purely value-empty terms of the formal maximization of a completely undefined, subjective "utility." There is no substantive content to ideas of either the individual good or "the public interest." The dangers and limitations inherent in this situation have frequently been evident when the theory is operationalized in a cost-benefit analysis. John Adams' review of the Third London Airport debate in Britain provides an excellent contextual critique.<sup>36</sup> The substantive value question of whether it is desirable to build another airport and, if so, whether at the expense of the birds of Foulness or the historical buildings of Hertfordshire are shown to be outside the technique's frame of reference. The argument that this is as it should be, that an analytical tool of positive economics should not be misinterpreted as a source of normative judgment, founders on the implicit value judgments the technique entails. Sanctioning prevailing price and wage structures means logically, at the

extreme, that on account of their lower net social product, female air passengers are not as costly to lose in a crash as are male ones.<sup>37</sup>

### **The Moral Dilemma**

The dissolution of the moral qualities embodied in Marshall's "economic man" into the maximization of subjective and relative individual "utilities" of the Pareto optimum critically undermined the gradually eroding sanction of restraints on immediate self-gratification. The only limitation to the pursuit of individual self-interest envisaged by welfare economics in deference to a conception of the common good is that change should not benefit one person's interest at the expense of another's or should insure that the gainer can afford fully to compensate the loser. Such an ethic, however, which plainly favors continued aggregate economic growth as the context for improving the lot of the worse off, thereby avoiding the more painful challenge of redistribution from rich to poor, is increasingly seen to be at odds with the demands of an interdependent and finite world. The magnitude and control of resource use by the already rich makes a mockery of promises that the distribution of global wealth is being, or will be, evened up in favor of the poor. This recognition reinforces other evaluations by poorer and less-powerful peoples that a radical break with the patterns of economic relationships fostered by the exponents of liberal economic theory is more likely to redress imbalances of wealth than trusting to the distributional dynamics of the prevailing system. Yet beyond the ideological dispute as to which social system will most likely produce a desirable global distribution of relative wealth,<sup>38</sup> there remains the unsolved question of how to cope with absolute limits to resource use.

It is not essential to the argument of this paper to evaluate the conflicting prognoses of the *Limits to Growth* school of thinking and of those that believe human ingenuity and the price mechanism are adequate to surmount all the resource challenges of the future. With few exceptions, governments of all ideological hues remain committed to continued economic growth, for the promise of a steadily rising standard of living is the cornerstone of their claims to legitimacy. Whether explicitly or otherwise, they encourage the individual to pursue his own material self-interest and so contribute to maximizing the product of society as a whole. Growth lubricates mechanisms of redistribution whereby the less advantaged are reassured of beneficent direction of socio-economic change even while conscious of prevailing disparities.

Were the universal and equal satisfaction of demand for manufac-

tured goods capable of resolving all discontent with the status quo, one might imagine an eventual solution to the problem—everyone would be able to “eat cake”—though if this implies raising world per capita Gross National Product (GNP) to the level of the United States, the environmental implications are astounding. As Hirsch points out,<sup>39</sup> however, precisely in those societies where interpersonal disparities in material wealth are comparatively small, the social relations fostered by stress on individual self-interest heighten the significance of the *positional economy*. This term embraces those environmental and social milieux in which scarcity is absolute rather than relative and in which, therefore, the legitimating promise of eventual access by all is inescapably hollow. There are only so many senior managerial positions in society, just as there are only so many potential lake front properties within weekend commuting distance of the metropolis. Competition for the “products” of the positional economy inevitably produces social stress that no amount of technocratic ingenuity can alleviate. The legitimacy of the entire system is thus called into question.

Even those societies ideologically committed to a corporate definition of well-being, insofar as they accept, in practice, the materialistic conception of human fulfillment, are confronted with this problem. Incentives to reward efficiency imply income or prestige differentials that need an overarching philosophy of society that sanctions them or else a repressive system that enforces them. A society whose dynamics are inherently inimical to the forging or maintenance of social relationships that go beyond the impersonal pursuit of self-interest within a market or command (bureaucratic) economy is one that has reached, or is heading towards, disintegration or totalitarianism. Without internalized restraints, legitimized limits to the individualistic pursuit of goods, power, and happiness, the management of a free society becomes increasingly problematic,<sup>40</sup> and the preservation of a healthy natural environment is increasingly at risk.<sup>41</sup>

### **Towards an Alternative Framework**

It is in grappling with the substantive issues of man's use of the earth's resources and its social ramifications that, I suggest, economic geographers can recover their direction and make their distinctive contribution. This is no call to return to the “geography of commodities” of the past, but it is rather a challenge to apply an enhanced philosophical and methodological awareness to fundamental contemporary problems. The ideological and epistemological blinkers of a number of recent attempts to provide a basis for theory in economic geography have been criti-

cized above: now there is an obligation to speak more constructively. In what manner might a humanized economic geography address its subject matter more convincingly than prevailing approaches?

Its concept of man is crucial. A framework is called for that will simultaneously accommodate: (1) the humanity of the individual in its diversity, depth, freedom, and boundedness; (2) the structured nature of society, in which units from the size of the family to that of the international organization are accorded legitimate power and freedom; and (3) man's complex relationship with the natural environment, on which he is substantially dependent, yet over which he has substantial powers of adaptation and exploitation. The fact that tensions are inherent to this specification—for instance in the perennial conflict between individual and corporate interests—is to accept that the search for a single, universally applicable normative theory in economic geography is a distraction.

Taking full cognizance of contextual reality—both the objective “givens” of man's environmental and social dependencies and the subjective understanding of, and response to, these by the persons involved—calls for humility, yet breadth of vision. Neither the complacent positivism characteristic of liberal economics nor the unreflexive consciousness of those “radicals” who are convinced that “dialectic materialism is the philosophical basis of a truly *scientific* social science”<sup>42</sup> appear to meet the specifications. If, as Hollis and Nell claims, it is “as true as ever that a scientific method must reflect a philosophy of science, which must reflect a theory of knowledge,”<sup>43</sup> reconstruction must start at the level of epistemology. In this light, the work of Habermas would seem particularly fruitful, although space precludes anything more than a brief and highly selective consideration here.

In the appendix to *Knowledge and Human Interests*,<sup>44</sup> Habermas confronts “the positivistic self-understanding of the sciences” with the evidence of human cognitive interest in autonomy and responsibility. The objectivism that rigidly separates knowledge and interest “deludes itself about the fundamental interests to which it owes not only its impetus but *the conditions of possible objectivity* themselves.”<sup>45</sup> He outlines three “categories of processes of inquiry for which a specific connection between logical-methodological rules and knowledge-constitutive interests can be demonstrated.”<sup>46</sup> The first of these is the empirical-analytical sciences, in which a framework for constructing and testing theories allows for the deduction of lawlike hypotheses with empirical content. Predictive knowledge about the natural world is thus made possible, providing a basis for the human interest in “technical control over objectified processes.” The second category is the historical-hermeneutic sciences, in which “access to the facts is provided by the understanding of meaning, not observation.” This form of inquiry

“discloses reality subject to a constitutive interest in the preservation of the intersubjectivity of possible action-orienting mutual understanding.” The third category is the sciences of social action, which also attempt to produce lawlike knowledge; but, Habermas argues, unlike the empirical-analytical sciences, they cannot remain satisfied with this. They are concerned “to determine when theoretical statements grasp invariant regularities of social action as such and when they express ideologically frozen relations of dependence that can in principle be transformed.” They thus serve an emancipatory cognitive interest made possible by a process of self-reflection that “releases the subject from dependence on hypostatized powers,” so increasing the realm of human autonomy and responsibility.

The complexity of both technological and social interdependencies in contemporary society has provided an increasingly cogent rationale for defining and resolving questions of social policy and planning solely in the mode of the empirical-analytical sciences. Exploration of the diverse intentionality of human actors and of alternative conceptions of desirable futures has been suppressed in favor of a deterministic technocratic rationality<sup>47</sup> that, particularly in the economic sphere, has been powered by a fundamental and unquestioned commitment to growth. Reaction to this in liberal democracies, where dissenting opinion has considerable freedom of expression, has progressed from the individualistic expressions of the counterculture of the sixties to the position of having at least a formal impact on the process of major public policy formation. The Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Enquiry undertaken by Mr. Justice Berger for the Canadian government is a singular example of this.<sup>48</sup> This is not the place to evaluate the Berger report either as an example of a humanized approach to economic geography or as a replicable and desirable form of policy formation. One simply notes its dependence on a variety of epistemologies and that, like any investigation of a similarly substantive issue, it has to come to grips with diverse value judgments concerning the legitimacy and desirability of the project under study. To reach a conclusion and thereby suggest a policy, it has to choose among worldviews that are essentially conflicting in terms of their implications for the human use of natural resources and for the character of economic and social relationships they embody.

So the issue of ideology returns. As Hirsch argues, “We may be near the limit of explicit social organization possible without a supporting social morality. Additional correctives in its absence simply do not take. . . . Society is in turmoil because the only legitimacy it has is social justice. . . . The central fact of the modern situation is the need to justify. That is its moral triumph and its unsolved technical problem.”<sup>49</sup> The foregoing argument has suggested that neither the individualism of traditional liberalism nor the impersonal collectivity of marxist man is an adequate model of humanity. But a particularly crucial issue for

contemporary economic geographers, as for society at large, is the apparent absence of effective sanctions to restrain the pursuit of a materialistically defined satisfaction that characterizes most of mankind, to different degrees in different cultures, but irrespective of ideological outlooks. From what quarter, in a world facing limitations to resource use at the same time that the gap between rich and poor continues to widen, will the more affluent and powerful peoples hear a call to restrain the pursuit of self-interest in the context of a worldview that can legitimate such unfamiliar ideas?

They will not hear it from contemporary liberalism. Despite the recent revival of interest in questions of distributive economic justice, to which Rawls' work is central and which has spawned explicit geographies of welfare or inequality,<sup>50</sup> no serious solution to the problem that self-interested acquisitiveness poses for social order and environmental integrity has been advanced from this quarter. To the degree that socially desirable ends cannot be realized by an appeal to rational self-interest, an overarching ethic that internalizes a necessary altruism is the only alternative to an increasingly oppressive bureaucracy<sup>51</sup> that attempts to make persons "good" despite themselves. But in societies where commitment to continual provision for rising real incomes has become the only real basis of a government's legitimacy, no attempt at a fundamental reappraisal of what constitutes human fulfillment in a sustainable society can be expected. Restraints to consumption advocated on the basis of the claims of future generations, a stance derived from a form of nineteenth-century social evolutionism, do little to impede the progress of a pragmatic economism.

The same radical inadequacy in coming to terms with a materialistic acquisitiveness is evident in marxist societies. Tensions between individual and corporate definitions of what is desirable are handled in a different way, but the "new man" to which the socialist state aspires remains elusive. Cuban spokesmen in particular have been frank in discussing their disappointing experience of attempting to foster altruism in place of self-interest as the mainspring of social and economic organization.<sup>52</sup> The richer of the state-socialist nations, which may fairly be compared to the industrialized West, espouse in practice a definition of *the good life* notably similar to that of the liberal democracies. They too embody a concept of man and his environmental relationships that sets no bounds to the consumption of resources.

Economic ideologies or social systems that effectively define man as a producer (bracketing activists Marshall and Marx) or as a consumer (bracketing the United States and the USSR) lead to practice that (1) does not do justice to what it is to be human; (2) encourages a self-interest that is antithetical to fulfilling social relationships, whether at a communal or global scale; and (3) ignores the limitations both of the earth's resource base and of partisan rights over it. Olsson's call for a

new philosophy of man and of his proper relationship to the environment still awaits a transideological specification.

To claim that the direction from which this might come is that of a biblical view of man and the world will strike many readers, for a variety of reasons, as quaint. The credibility of the thesis certainly requires to be substantiated at length, and only the skeleton of the argument can be provided here. Its essence is a challenge to secular man to abandon his naturalistic metaphysic in favor of an openness to seeing the universe as a field of the purposive action of a personal Creator. Man's responsibility and accountability *to God and for the creative adaptation of his social and environmental setting* provide a framework within which authentic human freedom is possible. Epistemology and practice are both addressed and given concise normative orientation in the injunctions to exercise a delegated and qualified (as opposed to nonresponsible and limitless) dominion over the natural world<sup>53</sup> to love and to do justice. That there is substantial affinity between these norms and the cognitive interests in technical control, intersubjective understanding, and emancipatory social change identified by Habermas is at least suggestive. The history of pervasive human unwillingness to live with this orientation (i.e., to internalize it), seen in the clash of personal ambition, the exploitation of social and economic power, and the environmental consequences of commodity fetishism, saves the biblical worldview from idealism (without depriving it of its eschatological hope). Admittedly, as a result, its exponents tend to be cast more frequently in the role of prophets than that of policy makers. But equally, it challenges the community of those who share it to find creative ways of expressing it contextually.<sup>54</sup> There is more than one revolutionary paradigm.<sup>55</sup> The project of giving substance to a humanized economic geography on such a foundation lies before us.

## Notes

1. Leslie J. King, "Alternatives to a Positive Economic Geography," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66 (1976): 293-308.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 308.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 304.
5. Allan Pred, *Behavior and Location: Foundations for a Geographic and Dynamic Location Theory, Part I*, Lund Studies in Geography, ser. B, no. 27 (Lund: Gleerup, 1967).
6. See "Classical Theory's Presuppositions in Retrospect," the present paper, below.
7. David Harvey, "Conceptual and Measurement Problems in the Cognitive-Behavioral Approach to Location Theory," in Kevin R. Cox and Reginald G. Colledge, eds., *Behavioral Problems in Geography: A Symposium*, Northwestern University Studies in Geography no. 17 (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 49.
8. Michael Chisholm, "In Search of a Basis for Location Theory: Micro-economics or

- Welfare Economics?" in Christopher Board et al., eds., *Progress in Geography*, vol. 3 (London: Edward Arnold, 1971), pp. 111-33.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
  10. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
  11. *Ibid.*
  12. D. M. Smith, *Human Geography: A Welfare Approach* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977).
  13. D. M. Smith, *An Introduction to Welfare Geography*, University of the Witwatersrand Department of Geography and Environmental Studies Occasional Paper no. 11 (Johannesburg, 1973), pp. 117-18.
  14. David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), ch. 3.
  15. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).
  16. Smith, *Human Geography*, p. 132.
  17. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
  18. *Ibid.*
  19. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
  20. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
  21. See Alvin W. Gouldner, "Marxism and Social Theory," *Theory and Society* 1 (1974): 17-35.
  22. Recent debate is exemplified by G. D. N. Worswick, "Is Progress in Economic Science Possible?" *Economic Journal* 82 (1972): 73-86 and W. W. Heller, "What's Right with Economics?" *American Economic Review* 65 (1975): 1-26.
  23. Gunnar Olsson, *Birds in Egg*, University of Michigan Geographical Publication no. 15 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975), pp. 495-96.
  24. Walter A. Weisskopf, *Alienation and Economics* (New York: Dell, 1971), p. 85.
  25. See *idem*, *The Psychology of Economics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).
  26. Chisholm, "A Basis for Location Theory," p. 130.
  27. Gunnar Olsson, "The Dialectics of Spatial Analysis," *Antipode* 6, no. 3 (1974): 59.
  28. Allen J. Scott, review of G. Olsson, *Birds in Egg*, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66 (1976): 633-36.
  29. M. Hollis and E. J. Nell, *Rational Economic Man* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1975).
  30. Walter A. Weisskopf, *Alienation and Economics*, chs. 3, 4; *idem*, *The Psychology of Economics*, chs. 2, 15.
  31. Gunnar Myrdal, as quoted in A. B. Cramp, *Notes Towards a Christian Critique of Secular Economic Theory* (Toronto: Institute for Christian Studies, 1975), p. 33.
  32. An aberration that provided much grist for Marx's mill.
  33. Weisskopf, *Alienation and Economics*, p. 80.
  34. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
  35. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
  36. John G. U. Adams, "London's Third Airport: From TLA to Airstrip One," *Geographical Journal* 137 (1971): 468-504.
  37. *Ibid.*, p. 477.
  38. Demythologized by Peter J. Berger, *Pyramids of Sacrifice* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).
  39. Fred Hirsch, *Social Limits to Growth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).
  40. *Ibid.*, ch. 12. Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (London: Heinemann, 1976) addresses the same issue from a different perspective but identifies many of the same weaknesses.
  41. William Leiss, *The Limits to Satisfaction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976).
  42. Richard Peet, "The Development of Radical Geography in the United States," *Progress in Human Geography* 1 (1977): 252.
  43. Hollis and Nell, *Rational Economic Man*, p. 3.
  44. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971).
  45. *Ibid.*, p. 311.
  46. Quotations to follow are from *ibid.*, pp. 308-10.
  47. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964); J. Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964).



48. T. R. Berger, *Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland: The Report of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Enquiry*, vol. 1 (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1977).
49. Hirsch, *Social Limits to Growth*, p. 190.
50. E.g., see Smith, *Human Geography*; Brian E. Coates et al., *The Geography of Inequality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).
51. See the critiques of James S. Coleman, "Inequality, Sociology and Moral Philosophy," *American Journal of Sociology* 80 (1974): 739-64; and Tom Settle, *In Search of a Third Way: Is a Morally Principled Political Economy Possible?* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1976), esp. pp. 146; 158.
52. A. R. M. Ritter, *The Economic Development of Revolutionary Cuba* (New York: Praeger, 1974), ch. 7.
53. H. P. Santmire, *Brother Earth* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1970) gives a more balanced interpretation than Lynn White's much-reprinted "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis."
54. It was the author's Christian commitment, not a misstated "Buddhist Economics," that provided the thrust of E. F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful* (London: Abacus, 1974) and found expression in his advocacy of intermediate technology as appropriate to the contemporary needs of poorer nations.
55. See J. H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1972); H. Küng, *On Being a Christian* (London: Collins, 1977).

## CHAPTER 7

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# OF AMBIGUITY OR FAR CRIES FROM A MEMORIALIZING MAMAFESTA

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GUNNAR OLSSON

### I

In Dublin on June 16, 1904, there occurred a strange set of events. They form the empirical anchorage of the adventures that James Joyce retells in his *Ulysses*. Their historical impact is yet to be recognized fully.

Perhaps it was merely a coincidence. Or perhaps it was a self-generated sign of the future. But on exactly the same date seventy-three years later in the Danish town of Odense, I started writing part 2 of the work you have just begun to read. It was completed three weeks later in Uppsala, the capital of what eventually was to become Sweden. In the betweens, I moved over long distances.

My odyssey was in search of creativity. What I set out to find was a reconciliation of the utopian optimism of Marx and the realistic pessimism of Wittgenstein. In the process, I found myself confined within the same prison house of self-reference that they did. For how could Marx hope to change the world, if he had known about Wittgenstein's conclusion that the limits of my language mean the limits of my world? And how could Wittgenstein have been caught within those limits if he had realized Joyce's attempt to break out of conventional categories? But what good are those attempts, if nobody else can understand them?

The log book of my intellectual journey is in part 2, a discussion of the relations and tensions between certainty and ambiguity. But one of the tensions in writing on this theme is the (impossible) problem of telling the truth, of creating, and of communicating all at the same time. Triple bind! Out of the agony grew this unconventional introduction, which was added later to further explicate some of the themes of this essay. It can be made extremely brief, for in a sense I have already said what I wished to say before.<sup>1</sup> This is that my current interest in certainty and ambiguity stems directly from my earlier studies of geographic form and process. As some of us experienced it toward the end of the 1960s, geography had then been crystallized into the inferential prob-

lem of what one can say about generating processes from a knowledge of spatial form. In the extension of this seemingly technical issue was a deep concern with the consequences that spatial planning may have for human behavior. Our work aimed at the heart of an influential area of the discipline. Our findings wounded it severely. Indeed, I remain uncertain about its survival.

The issue with which we originally grappled now appears as a problem of translation. How, for instance, can we distill meaning from the marks on a map? What do the signifying symbols signify? What are the relations between the geographic words of spatial coordinates and the objects of human action?

But once this shift in understanding has occurred, then the entire literature on the impossibility of translation becomes highly relevant. One part of that literature is in the formal reasoning to which quantitative geography aspires. Another is in the creative writing to which humanistic geography is more akin. The former tradition tries to preserve simple truths by striving for ambiguous certainty, while the latter tries to render rich insights by using languages of exact ambiguity. But history indicates that we should keep a balance between the two forces. If we cannot do so, then the world will tend toward either static dictatorships or shattering anarchies. The choice is simple, for the alternatives are impossible.

At this level of appreciation, the academic form-process problem has changed into an issue with profound political implications. These concern the concept of creative action, on the one hand, and the type of social system least likely to destroy it, on the other. But the real class struggle is not between socialists and capitalists. It is instead between those who love multiplicity and those who wish everything to be the same.

One of the most crucial fronts in this constant war between social simplicity and individual complexity is in the communication process itself. Thus, it is in the interest of social cohesion to impoverish language. It is my conviction that these forces must be fought, or our very survival as a species is at stake. As a consequence, we should continue to read modern writers such as Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Joyce, Kafka, and Beckett. For even though they never managed to escape from the prison house of language, they nevertheless bent its walls and thereby expanded our common universe.

With these hints, you should now proceed into the piece itself. But before I let you do so, I must admit that I have never written anything so reluctantly as I have this introduction. But my dilemma is simple. I brought it on myself by promising the editors the impossible: to explain more fully and more clearly that which, in part 2, I already had explained more fully and more clearly than I ever had before. I would

nevertheless be happy if you could use my text as a mirror in which to catch a glimpse of yourself. But as you try, please note the rubric on which the mirror is hung. And note especially that whereas *far* is Swedish for "father," so *mor* means "mother." Little *me* is somewhere in between. The result is a happy manifesto full of memories and morals.

## 2

In this piece, I shall continue my explorations into a philosophy in which the human condition evolves from an interplay of certainty and ambiguity.<sup>2</sup> I use these terms to cover a host of related concepts like "outer-and-inner," "physical-and-mental," "things-and-relations," "external-and-internal," "conscious-and-unconscious," "society-and-individual," "public-and-secret," "order-and-adventure," "authority-and-freedom." Like other words, my labels get their meaning partly from themselves, partly from their contexts, and partly from their opposites. The reason is that identity presupposes distinction, just as distinction presupposes identity. Thus we acquire knowledge first by establishing boundaries and then by crossing them. Through sensual games of deconstruction, new sets and relations grow out of well-delineated categories; in change, equivalence is both ~~asserted~~ and ~~questioned~~, for whatever we erase always leaves a trace.<sup>3</sup>

To categorize by identifying and distinguishing is as necessary as it is inhibiting. For even though establishing truth is the same as settling issues of identity, identities are not in the simplicity of the either-or but in the manifolds of both-this-and-that. The difficulty is in grasping that what once was no longer is and what is no longer will be. What is involved is a self-referential struggle of unity and opposition, of past and future, of conservative certainty and creative ambiguity. Indeed, it was none less than Frege who noted that on one level the concept of identity is a precise logical constant, while on another level it cannot be defined but only experienced<sup>4</sup>; as most people know, we often learn more in bars and bedrooms than in lecture halls, laboratories, and planning offices.

The struggle of certainty and ambiguity is in all life, in theory and practice, in society and individual. It penetrates into the deepest structures of exchange and thereby into all modes of communication.<sup>5</sup> And yet, even though all languages have roots in both certainty and ambiguity, some are more entrenched in one camp than in the other. In this regard, science and poetry represent different traditions.<sup>6</sup> But what on first impression appears certain in science usually turns ambiguous, just as what initially seems ambiguous in poetry turns certain; while scientific reports are robust and simple enough to retain most of their truths in translation, good poems are too close and exact to be rephrased.<sup>7</sup> To

acknowledge the futility of reductionism and perfect translation is therefore to leave both reader and writer in suspension, dangling in that abyss of paradox that is the human condition itself.<sup>8</sup> It is in this realm of the dialectic that the complex becomes simple and the simple, complex. In the process, life attains meaning.

It is crucial to keep these remarks constantly in mind, for I will now shift attention from the wholeness and focus mainly on the concept of ambiguity. My motivation is that our own culture of law and order tends to overemphasize the certainty side, and I believe this bias must be left to right itself. Many would even argue that we now live in a world in which the imbalance has become both cause and effect of individual and social alienation, of bureaucratization and of "thingification."<sup>9</sup>

Another reason for momentarily stressing ambiguity over certainty stems from Wittgenstein's distinction between internal and external, especially from his insight that "If I am to know an object, though I need not know all its external properties, I must know all its internal properties."<sup>10</sup> Since external is in things and internal, in relations, Marx may have meant something similar when he wrote that "The relations connecting the labor of one individual with that of the rest appear, not as direct social relations between individuals at work, but as what they really are, material relations between persons and social relations between things."<sup>11</sup> When they are filtered through my own philosophical system, both Wittgenstein's internal properties and Marx's relations fall mainly into the ambiguity class. How radical this connection actually is becomes more obvious if it is recalled that Wittgenstein subsequently concluded that "A property is internal if it is *unthinkable* that its object should not possess it"<sup>12</sup> (emphasis added); when we try to escape, we inevitably run into the self-referential prison walls of ourselves and the culture of which we are a part. The reason is that identity is circular, constantly searching for itself and constantly returning to oneself.

It is on the self-referential level of the collective unconscious that Marx, Frege, Jung, Wittgenstein, Joyce, and Duchamp all come together. For what can be shown in material relations cannot be said, only experienced. But creative experience is in breaking categories, in exploiting ambiguity until it turns into explosive certainty. It is in seeing the mythical meaning of the multicolored rainbow and the sudden thunder of fall and redemption, of deluge, the ark, and the sign in the sky.<sup>13</sup> It is in watching the watched watch and in appreciating that chaosmos means "chaosmos," not "chaos out of cosmos" or "cosmos out of chaos," although it means that, as well. It is in realizing that the deconstruction of a text is not merely the conjunction of deconstruction and construction.<sup>14</sup> It is in being able to write with traces of what is but never was, with anticipations of what is coming but never will

be. It is in learning to see a text as a mirror and not as a picture. It is in rememorizing that the sin of the primal scene is not in the erotic but in the procreative.<sup>15</sup> It is in identifying the individual in the manifold. And, more than anything else, it is in seeing through the dialectic of Duchamp's bride stripped bare by her bachelors only to discover that what we see is nothing but ourselves looking.<sup>16</sup>

New worlds are born of error. How this occurs and how creation is related to the concept of ambiguity is the issue to which I now proceed.

The task is to understand how creativity can be a gradual evolution of quantitative contradiction followed by a sudden revolution of qualitative resolution. Put differently, the problem is to grasp how one authority gives way to another. What makes this so difficult is that even though authority expresses itself through the materiality of external things, its real base is in the taken-for-granted world of internal relations. Fundamental change is therefore rarely an issue of design but usually one of mistake, error, or misinterpretation<sup>17</sup>; chance is converted into power because, as Mallarmé knew, "Every Thought gives off a Throw of the Dice"<sup>18</sup>; which perhaps is merely another way of saying that

The errors of a wise man make your rule,  
Rather than the perfections of a fool.<sup>19</sup>

It is true that the king has yielded to parliaments; the priest, to professional commentators; and the church, to corporate organizations. But even though the crucifix in the bedroom has been replaced by the tv set in the living room, the effect is still the same: authoritarian enslavement of humanity in the name of the untouchable collective. Borrowing Blake's words around Dante, we must therefore "... go into the mind in which everyone is king and priest in his own house." And that house is nowhere so entrenched as in the family itself<sup>20</sup>; for without obedient minds, the power of external force is lost. What we must do consequently is first to isolate today's counterpart to the old state-and-church and then engage it in battle, thereby reasserting Bakunin's connection between the materialism of the state and the idealism of the church.<sup>21</sup>

The Church of Logic has its own approach to the problem of internal and external. It was codified in Russell's theory of types, whose very purpose was to find a method for resolving paradox.<sup>22</sup> But the technique managed only to define the problem away; the trick was the old one of shifting the analysis from one level of reasoning to another and even-

tually to none less than God.<sup>23</sup> Rather than destroy the authoritarian practice of forcing theorems to be slaves under master axioms, the theory preconditions our minds into preserving the schizophrenic attitudes of the existing power structure.<sup>24</sup>

Following Gödel,<sup>25</sup> it now appears that the problem of paradox may perhaps never be resolved except as it always has been: not through the blameful passing of the buck but through a practice of constant escape and return. "The great difficulty here, however, is that no one knows how the paradoxical wholeness of man can ever be realized, . . . because the realization of the wholeness that has been made conscious is an apparently insoluble task."<sup>26</sup> Perhaps, therefore, Joyce was correct in his observation that indeed we are locked into "a commodius vicus of recirculation"<sup>27</sup> and that the place to learn about escaping and returning is in the accumulated wisdom of the mythic tradition. Perhaps the best strategy is not the Russellian one of abolishing all propositions about Pegasus, unicorns, and round squares; perhaps it is instead in trying to understand why it was necessary to invent such contradictory objects in the first place. Perhaps paradox and creativity are not primarily issues of strict logicist epistemologies at all<sup>28</sup> but rather of understanding the social context of the belief that "Every presentation and every belief must have an object other than itself."<sup>29</sup> Perhaps even logic is too rich and allusive to be caught in a definite net of certainty. Perhaps we should explore Spencer Brown's insight that identity locks all objects into themselves, while distinction lets them free to break into their playful opposites.<sup>30</sup>

The poetic approach to self-reference is often close to the mythic. Thus, good poets tend not only to accept circularity but to use it for establishing erotic relations with their words. The hope is thereby to bring forth the richness and allusive multiplicity of thoughts, images, and actions. But the difficulty is to weave a net of words that in its ambiguity is as multitudinous and precise as the reality it tries to catch; in paraphrasing Beckett, the difficulty is to learn to write and read so that it is not *about* something but it is something itself.<sup>31</sup>

The techniques for achieving such unity of form and content are as numerous as their practitioners, including the use of *bricolage*, puns, alliterations, rhymes, off-rhymes, and on and on. But more than anything else, success lies in being sensitive to the rhythm of that sound-dance that bends and moves without ever destroying the penumbræ between external and internal, subject and object, body and soul. The point, though, is not to engage in doubletalk but to express simultaneous thoughts: ". . . by the queer quick twist of her mobcap and the lift of her shift at random and the rate of her gate of going the pace, two thinks at a time."<sup>32</sup>

So,

Therefore I lie with her, and she with me  
And in our faults by lies we flatter'd be.<sup>33</sup>

Via a strange root, I am now arriving at the Land Of Geography and at the question of how a humanistic perspective can enrich the wasteland. I choose James Joyce as my companion, for he realized better than anyone else that if we never go away we will never know home; a realization that was one piece of *Ulysses* as it was of the *Odyssey*, of *Finnegans Wake* as it was of the Books that went before it.<sup>34</sup> What they all share in common is that man is assumed in, not out.

At the present juncture, understanding creativity has gradually changed, so that it is now an issue of appreciating that authority is not vested in external things but in the power of defining internal relations. Here, the medium is the word and the process, that of naming. It was indeed through the power of definition that man long ago let his god create the world. Thus,

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.  
The earth was without form and void, and darkness was  
upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was mov-  
ing over the face of the waters. And God said: "Let there  
be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light  
was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.<sup>35</sup>

In Baudelaire's rendering, God did not create the world, but he uttered it. Light and darkness, stones and trees, fish and fowl—all flowed from his commanding mouth. The structure of this myth must be taken seriously, for the word *god* is itself nothing but a name whereby our forefathers came to symbolize the unthinkable totality of their own relations. Thus it is through the circularity and tautology of God's name that society establishes both identity and opposition, for the circle expresses "the idea of safe refuge, of inner reconciliation and wholeness."<sup>36</sup> To create is therefore to overstep the boundary of the circle, to overthrow what is now taken as God—be this Church, Party, State, Family or any other organization—and to form new contexts, unities, and opposites. One way of achieving such a creation is to assault the world through its own language, for it is not guns but language that provides the entrance to the armory of the mind. And the most creative language is not in transparent and truth-functional statements of brute facts but in oblique and contextual belief statements of institutional facts.<sup>37</sup> As a consequence, the literature of real revolt is in the hermetic poetry of absence, not in the pervading metaphysics of presence. As modern artists like Mallarmé, Joyce, and Duchamp have experienced,



there is no alternative but to trespass into other territory and thereby to sin<sup>38</sup>; for to sin is to break into the absence of the present, exactly as recognized in the Lord's Prayer, "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." And what is trespassing, if it is not in the bloody breaking of a boundary?

In *Ulysses*, Joyce lets Stephen associate space and geography with the body, the visible and the external, while time and history are connected with soul, invisible and internal. The State is in the former, the Church in the latter. Together, these worldly and spiritual institutions become totally oppressive, for together they represent the amalgam that is the totality of internal relations, of the collective unconscious, and of the chains whose very existence is unthinkable.<sup>39</sup> It follows that

Fatherhood in the sense of conscious begetting, is unknown to man. It is a mystical estate, an apostolic succession, from only begetter to only begotten. On that mystery and not on the madonna which the cunning Italian intellect flung to the mob in Europe the church is founded, like the world, macro- and microcosm, upon the void. Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood.<sup>40</sup>

So, perhaps it cannot be said more clearly: Creativity stems from the richness of ambiguity. And since no one end is ever known,<sup>41</sup> ambiguity is never resolved, except perhaps in that fleeting moment of unquestioning happiness.

The message is that society's words are fixed and anchored in the strictures of law and order. But to bring them into full Bloom, they must be so screwed up that their inherent ambiguity is brought forth; the communicable of Leibniz's *salva veritate* and Descartes' categories yields to the silence of Beckett's manifolds.<sup>42</sup> Here sound is as important as sense, internal and external; for, as Nietzsche taught the French, it is not the world that speaks, but the Word Itself.<sup>43</sup>

So,

"Are you to have all the pleasure quizzing on me? I didn't say aloud, sir. I have something inside of me talking to myself."

"You're a nice third degree witness, faith! But this is no laughing matter. Do you think we are tonedeafs in our noses to boot? Can you not distinguish the sense, prain, from the sound, bray? You have homosexual catheis of empathy between narcissism of the expert and steatopygic invertedness. Get yourself psychoanalised."<sup>44</sup>

Put differently, the immature feels the assault on the self as coming from without, while the mature understands that it comes from within. The former is caught in the Cartesian either-or; the latter, in the dialectic subject-object.<sup>45</sup> What a challenge for positivistic geography if we actually discovered that “there could be no things but nameless things, no names but nameless names”!<sup>46</sup> What an opportunity to break away from the realm of reified meaning into the truth of the inexpressible!

The possibility of such a change is proven in Joyce’s own work, especially in the progression from the day of *Ulysses* to the night of *Finnegans Wake*. In the former, the characters are still clearly delineated and their identities are stable. In comparison, the Wakean figures are dreamlike images whose identities shift, merge, and remerge. There is a *bricolage* of associations whose purposeful effect is to distill the collective unconscious and to bring out everyman and everywoman, the I, you, he, she, it, we, you, and they in the HCE and ALP. Both the intent and the technique is well reflected in the crucial passage on authority, Grimm, grammar, one-and-many, creation, rhythm, language, thought, and action:

Hang coercion anyhow! And smothermock Gramm’s laws! But we’re a drippindrhue gayleague all at ones. In the beginning is the void, in the middle is the sounddance and thereinafter you’re in the unbewised again, vund vulsyvolsy. You talker dunsker’s brogue men we our souls speech obstruct hostery. Silence in thought! Spreach!<sup>47</sup>

So,

The trumpet sounds: Silence in thought!  
SPREACH?  
Break and preach, search and reach  
Through the speech of each.  
And Babble’s walls come mumbling down.

With its traditional stress on space, measurability, and visual landscape, geography has committed itself to the surface features of the external. Since the external is in things rather than relations, we have produced studies of reifications in which man, woman, and child inevitably are treated as things and not as the sensitive, constantly evolving human beings we are. Our professional terms are seemingly well de-

fixed and the identities are as stable as any authoritarian ruler could demand. When we subsequently base our plans and actions on such knowledge, we become bound to produce “thingified” people obedient to any social authority.

This is why a more humanistic perspective is so sorely needed not only in geography but in the social sciences at large. It is a perspective that allows us to grasp both the certainty of the external and the ambiguity of the internal, of jibberish and silent communication.<sup>48</sup> To speak in aid of ambiguity is therefore not to condone obfuscation but rather to be so precise that the inherent contradictions are preserved intact. Thus, we must try to paint the picture of today in a manner such that we can see not only what we think is now but also the traces of what is in a past and what will be in a future. In the process of searching for itself, identity crosses itself out, just as both Spencer Brown and Derrida write that it must.<sup>49</sup> So, whereas we earlier have striven to keep subject and object apart, we now let them free to merge in the creative embrace of releasing dreams; fetishism is consumed by the praxis of its own dialectic.<sup>50</sup>

In conclusion, we must get used to reading and writing in the dream-like state that Joyce practiced and Freud and Jung analyzed. The result may be that we eventually come to describe, explain, predict, and create all at the same time; for truth emerges when identities are violated and opposites, unified; as Hegel had it, “The truth is thus the bacchanalian revel, where not a member is sober.”<sup>51</sup> So, by Humanly Condoning Error, we may come closer to achieving A Little Peace. In the thunder of Here Comes Everybody is then born the Great Sommboddy within the Omniboss. In the meantime, Anna Luvia Plurabella Pours her rain into the river only to suck it up for another rann. There is Noah again, heading for the rainbow!

All of which is yet another attempt to heed Beckett’s call for unifying form and content so that the text is what it expresses and expresses what it is. For those who are too afraid to admit that this is geography, the reply is that “The map of the soul’s groupography rose in relief within their quarterlings.”<sup>52</sup>

My hope is that the same holds for the present volume as a whole, for to spreach is to speak in a way such that we break internal relations. In Norman O. Brown’s language,

The true (*verum*) and the made (*factum*) are  
convertible  
verification is fabrication  
homo faber  
man and forger; at his forge  
forging the uncreated conscience of his race.<sup>53</sup>

## Notes

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**OVERVIEW.** Several years ago David Harvey maintained that it was absolutely vital for any serious investigation into “explanation in geography” to distinguish between philosophy and methodology.<sup>1</sup> Where the former engaged issues of belief, so he argued, the latter dealt strictly with logical procedures; and the one, methodology, did not necessarily entail the other, philosophy. That argument, itself a philosophical position derived of logical positivism, has no salience in a humanistic epistemology. On the contrary, even as one may distinguish between the “how” and “why” of inquiry, the central methodological demand of a humanistic geography is to assure the coincidence of method and philosophy. The “means” of analysis, in short, are intimately tied to the “meaning of analysis.” Methodology is but a further, if sometimes more specialized, branch of epistemology.

Most if not all of the early complaints leveled against positivist geographies on the part of humanists have been aimed to decry the inappropriateness of certain methods, especially that of quantitative reductionism. In fact, one can argue that positivist methods are appropriate to a thoroughly positivist philosophy of man but that an alternative view of the human condition requires its own method. Phrased differently, a humanistic geography requires an appropriate methodology.

The question remains, however, Just what sort of methodology could fulfill the manifold epistemic demands of humanism? In one sense, of course, a humanistic methodology intends the rejection of abstract, statistical, and aggregate measures of the human subject, emphasizing instead a more particularistic, concrete, or highly empirical mode of inquiry. Empiricism and often radical empiricism are hallmarks of an approach that demands greater attention to the subjective roots of man’s place, to the insider’s perception. Methodologies appropriate for such research are particularly methodologies of encounter, requiring field work; these would include observation, participant observation, the use of unobtrusive indicators, and various forms of interviewing.<sup>2</sup> Each of these is a method designed to maintain rather than eliminate the richness and variety of experience. They have

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1. David Harvey, *Explanation in Geography* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969).

2. See, for example, John Lofland, *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1971).

been challenged on occasion as being overly subjective, though it is not apparent why a method retaining the diversity of real world places should be more subjective than research referred to sterile or abstracted settings with an impoverished conceptualization of experience. Too much social science research conducted under idealized or laboratory conditions with pretensions of precision can be little more than speculative. In such work subjectivity is not banished, as is claimed, but rather it is the often unrecognized subjectivity of the theorist that is projected into the research design and the research results, in place of the humanist's quest for the subjectivity of the actor in the social world. Alfred Schutz has commented eloquently on the fallacy of social research abstracted from its proper contexts, which "consists in the substitution of a fictional world for social reality by promulgating methodological principles as appropriate for the social sciences which, though proved true in other fields, prove a failure in the realm of intersubjectivity."<sup>3</sup>

But field work is only a first step in a humanistic method, to be followed by reflection—interpretation and understanding. The method of *verstehen* is usually conceived of as the attempt to recapture the subjective meanings of experiences and situations; but, as Weber himself asserted, understanding must go beyond a narrow definition of *verstehen* to consider the broader contexts within which actions unfold.<sup>4</sup> Useful here is the notion of several levels of meaning to a cultural act, acts that might well, of course, include the construction of landscapes. Most superficially there is the objective or functional meaning of an action; secondly, its expressive meaning, that intended by the actor; and, thirdly, the documentary meaning, that reflective of the broader currents of the time and the place.<sup>5</sup> The documentary meaning reveals influences and contexts beyond the actor himself, indeed, commonly contexts of which he is unaware despite their impact upon him.<sup>6</sup> For a full interpretation, an understanding of these influences is necessary. The researcher cannot rest content with the actors' own definition of their situation but must immerse himself in a place and a time to uncover the relevant factors at work. For this purpose, a variety of other sources may be consulted, including archival material, literary works, government and other organizational documents, and even statistical data. Whenever direct field contact with a problem is limited, as with historical research, or where access is restricted, as it might be in an investigation of organizations, then interpretation and understanding must rely more heavily on such sources.

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## CHAPTER 8

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# THE HISTORICAL MIND AND THE PRACTICE OF GEOGRAPHY

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COLE HARRIS

A sense of history, as much as of science, is a symptom of modernity that we all share to some degree. Geographers know, therefore, that present places have past roots, that human landscapes and environments are constantly changing, that humans have not always lived on the earth as they do now. Sharing the habits of mind and some of the information of our age, we readily admit that tool-making primates appeared at least two million years ago or that the dawn of agriculture marked as momentous a geographical change as the advent of industrialization. Yet, as a discipline, we hardly exploit such knowing.

Probably the reasons are obvious. We are drawn to the present because it is the world of our direct experience about which geography has always tried to provide information and insight. Bureaucracy moreover harnesses knowledge of the present to planning, and modern geography everywhere makes much of this applied connection. Perhaps it is significant, too, that North American geographers live within a particularly enveloping present. Most human landscapes in North America are relatively new, and their longer pasts are an ocean away. Immigrant energy has gone into development. Cultural differences among immigrant groups have been weakened or eliminated. In such settings the past fades from sight or survives ritually as lives are lived amid what seems to be an ongoing, unconnected present. Nurtured in this environment, North American academic geography might be expected to emphasize production before culture and to diminish the past. Perhaps the conception of geography as a chorological (spatial) science found its fullest expression in North America not only because Richard Hartshorne argued the position so well in his enormously influential book, *The Nature of Geography*,<sup>1</sup> but also because a spatial view of geography fit the mobile and relatively timeless quality of American experience. One could believe in North America that geography was a field in

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which “time in general steps into the background”<sup>2</sup>; one could not apply this statement, say, to France, however, where a different experience with the land—an experience that was part of a far larger historical sensitivity—held a geography of spatial relations at bay until, in the 1960s, it was finally transplanted from North America into an urban, industrial France that was fast effacing its older, rural, time-bound self.

Whatever the reasons, the claim that geography is the study of space (*chorology*) and history, that of time (*chronology*) has dominated four decades of North American geography and could only dampen most geographers’ sense of history. Yet even in North America some geographers have always withstood the antihistorical assumptions of geography-as-chorology. The group of scholars associated with the Department of Geography at Berkeley is the most obvious example, its quality depending not only on Carl Sauer but also on an intellectual environment that kept the past open. The works of Ralph Brown and Andrew Clark represent other strands of this difficult reaction to the predominant geographical methodology of their day. In the early heyday of chorological orthodoxy, only a geographer of Sauer’s stature might “let protest fall where it may”<sup>3</sup> to pursue his interest in the origins and evolution of crops, landscapes, and cultures. Brown’s most famous book, *Mirror for Americans*,<sup>4</sup> was a cross-section (a depiction of an area at a particular point in time), a respectable spatial slice through the eastern seaboard of the United States in 1811. Andrew Clark insisted that changing spatial patterns could be studied as “geographical change,” and he demonstrated this methodological possibility in one of his books, *Three Centuries and the Island*.<sup>5</sup> In England, H. C. Darby held out a somewhat different solution to the problem of time in a spatial subject, suggesting that change could be described geographically in a series of cross-sections.<sup>6</sup> These were necessary methodological devices when geography was chorology; they kept some geographers open to the study of the human past and open to the discipline of history.

To be open to the past is, simply, to be open to the roots of what we are. The past is contrast and perspective for our present. Even our culture, which accelerates obsolescence, resurrects the past in western movies, pioneer villages, heritage buildings, and national holidays—nostalgia that is but an edge of the enveloping influence of our past. I suspect, for example, that geographers will write more powerful urban geographies of contemporary North American cities in proportion to their knowledge of the evolution of these places. But this is not quite the point I wish to develop here. The study of the past exerts another, less obvious, influence. Such study encourages a habit of mind that, for want of a better term, I call the “historical mind.” I do not mean that a historical mind is an attribute only of historians or of those who study

the past, or even that it is the only way to study the past. I strongly suspect that, as a form of explanation, it is part of everyday experience. Yet in academic writing today the intellectual disposition that I characterize as the historical mind is most commonly associated with studies of the human past. Indeed, it is in relation to the writing of history that the logical structure of this mode of explanation has been most carefully analyzed. As an approach to thinking about and studying the world, the historical mind seems to me to have shaped much of our best geographical writing and to represent one clear approach to the writing of humanistic geography. Hardly an explicit methodology, it is better thought of as a habit of mind.

### **The Historical Mind**

Anyone studying the past confronts distinctive problems of data. Living informants are not likely to be at hand, questionnaires are not useful, and there can be no hope of controlled experiments. Censuses, parish rolls, tax lists, or other easily tabulated data (whatever their gaps, inaccuracies, and ambiguities) may not exist. There may be letters, newspapers, diaries, journals, court orders, bills of lading, wills, land deeds—a miscellany of written material housed with more-or-less organization in archives or attics. Farther back, written records are left behind for another realm of pollen analysis, C<sub>14</sub>, and careful archaeology. Perhaps landscape relicts survive, but when much has been effaced, the remainder is notoriously illegible. Survivals from the past comprise a complex, scattered, always incomplete, and often contradictory record that is itself a formidable challenge. Old forms of language may have to be studied, scripts deciphered, new languages learned, field methods mastered. Always there is a problem of interpretation. Different figures survive to describe the same population. Different commentators leave contradictory descriptions of the same place. What to accept, what to reject? There are no formal rules of selection. An archive or a relict landscape cannot be approached like an elementary chemistry experiment with its standardized procedures and statement. The records for any given study are too individual; the problems of interpretation, ultimately too personal. Rather, comprehension of the data grows with familiarity and in direct proportion to a scholar's knowledge of the people and place that produced them. Isolated facts acquire meaning in context. Different opinions come into focus in the light of the values of their holders. An initially meaningless document is understandable later on in a study. In this sense data from the past are neither static nor separate from their interpretation. They acquire meaning in a scholar's

mind as they are placed in context; and the scholar is able to do this, a geographer would most characteristically say, as he or she is steeped in the study of a particular region.

Already this says a good deal about the habit of mind we are considering. If its very data come into focus contextually, then studies that depend on such data will tend to the particularistic. Otherwise data will seem to float on air, ungrounded in reality. They may not mean what they seem; generalization seems to be detached from empirical warranty. Those who have worked hard with the confusing record of the past tend to share such caution. So much effort has gone into making some sense of a small part of the past, so much still remains uncertain that, from this perspective, overarching generalizations, even tidy research plans, seem exercises in fantasy. Perhaps geographers are a shade less cautious than historians—place and milieu, I suspect, point a little more directly toward generalization than do events and society—but Sauer's advice to young geographers to immerse themselves in a region is characteristic of this frame of mind.<sup>7</sup> It anticipates a growing confidence with the evidence together with a more penetrating understanding of an intricate part of the world, an appreciation of the complexity of human experience, and much pleasure.

Of course, there is a question of scale. Is the focus of a study a nineteenth-century slum, Birmingham, nineteenth-century British industrial cities, or cities themselves? Is it Montpellier, Bas Languedoc, the Midi, or the Mediterranean rimlands? Many historians have devoted the better part of their lives to the study of an outstanding individual, and at least one geographer would study the biography of landscape, assuming with Carlyle that great men shape much of the course of human affairs.<sup>8</sup> More geographers would emphasize broader social, economic, and cultural tendencies; but, characteristically again, the habit of mind we are considering is cautious. The great French regional monographs, the French geographer Paul Claval has recently noted,<sup>9</sup> tended to be written at a scale between 1:50,000 and 1:250,000. Today many would wish a narrower focus and tighter data, a solid base for broader interpretation. A bold, highly informed scholar might try to synthesize the experience of life in the British industrial city or (as we shall see) in the Mediterranean rimlands. These are grand efforts that push the range of the historical mind towards its limits. Such a mind is contextual, not law finding. Sometimes it is thought of as law applying; but, characteristically, the historical mind is dubious that there are overarching laws to explain the general patterns of human life. Toynebee is interesting and erudite; but his views on the growth of civilization are considered simplistic, and his long exposition of the "law" of challenge and response is judged misleading or wrong at almost every particular turn.

Some fifteen years ago, during the full confidence of geography as spatial analysis, a student of transportation in Ghana found that some villagers preferred traveling a longer route, XQZ, to a shorter route, XYZ, because they thought the latter was haunted. This was an unexpected complication, for witchcraft has no place in a gravity model except, eventually, as noise in the system. For purposes of modeling circulation patterns, such a use of the gravity model may be a useful procedure, but this is not a common practice of the historical mind; and the fact that it is not reveals another dimension of this mode of study. The historical mind is also contextual in the sense that it takes people as they come. It seeks to understand why people acted as they did, and this means understanding why they thought and felt as they did.

How can this be done? To a certain extent we understand other human beings because we are human ourselves. We encounter ourselves in them. But again, caution. The unforgivable anachronism for the historical mind is simply to transpose current values into the past, to assume others thought and felt as we do. Perhaps I do understand, at a certain level, Marc Antony's attraction to Cleopatra. But this was not any torrid affair for she was, after all, queen of Egypt. There were beautiful women aplenty in Rome. Antony's relationship with Cleopatra was not unconnected to his political and military strategy, and it unfolded within a web of social mores that are not part of contemporary experience. Were I to understand their relationship I should need to understand a good deal of their life and times and, in this context, to understand what Marc Antony was trying to do. Empathy must give way to study. And what of those bewitched Ghanaians? The values of a traffic engineer and however much goodwill are not likely to unravel their particular terror. Knowledge of the general characteristics of belief in illiterate non-Western societies may be helpful, but to understand why particular villagers did not use a particular road depends on a good deal of knowledge of the events and feelings surrounding their particular decisions. So, at least, the historical mind would assume. It seeks to understand by placing action in its context and by coming to terms with motivating thoughts, feelings, and values. The idealist philosopher of history, R. G. Collingwood, held that this understanding was achieved by rethinking the thought behind action.<sup>10</sup> Collingwood thought it possible so to steep oneself in another's world that one could duplicate another's thought and, hence, understand an event from within by reproducing the very thought that lay behind it. Whether or not such rethinking is strictly feasible, the historical mind is acutely sensitive to the motives behind action, contextual in its approach to understanding motives, and skeptical that covering laws can provide a full explanation for the motivation behind particular events.

For the historical mind, the human landscape is the direct result of

human action and, therefore, a product of thought, values, and feelings. A farm in pioneer Ontario was a setting where trees were chopped and burned; cabins and fences, built; kitchen gardens, tended; and wheat, raised for sale: a simple unit of production. But the scholar who knows the context of this patch of human living recognizes so much more. Perhaps the settler had come out of the starvation wages and exorbitant land costs of early nineteenth-century Ireland, where he had struggled to support his family and to hold on to a tiny plot for which, year by year, the rent was harder to pay. Finally, desperately, he had decided to emigrate; the neighbors held a parting wake, the family crossed the Atlantic in the hold of an immigrant ship and put their meager capital into the down payment for a farm lot—a wild throw of the dice by desperate people. Eventually, out of the sweat and yearning of this pioneering, a farm emerged. It was a unit of production, of course, but it was also a home for the family, a perceived haven from a changing, industrializing world, a symbol of personal achievement, and the culminating satisfaction of a life. Why do we now, generations later, picture such farms on our Christmas cards and visit pioneer villages? Obviously layers of meaning, past and present, surround these farms, each of which is at once a record of a family's achievement and some measure of the meaning of the European penetration of North America, a setting for a personal struggle that bears on the values and ideologies of a continent. The historical mind surveys this expanding horizon, this intertwining of values and landscape, enthralled by the connections that open before it but finding them within a particular context: British overseas migration during industrialization, the North American frontier, the ideological assumptions of contemporary North Americans. There is another way of thinking about such a farm, and that is to find in it symptoms of timeless human experience; but, again, this is not the characteristic mode of the historical mind. From its perspective, such insights are likely to be trivial—that, perhaps, human beings seek to satisfy basic wants of food and shelter (but what is a *basic want*?)—whereas for the historical mind the challenge of understanding such a farm is to work out its fit within a particular social, economic, or ideological context.

Late in the nineteenth century a group of German historians tried to write totally objective, scientific history. In their view, the scholar and his biases could be weeded out. Hard fact—the truth—would speak for itself. This enthusiasm generated many fastidiously detailed studies that now are most interesting for what they reveal about their authors. Totally objective studies of the past failed, and for obvious reasons. No one can pack into any study the vast array of relevant data that survive from the past; were this possible the data would simply be transferred from one depository to another. Invariably a selection is made. A docu-

ment is read, a short note is taken, the document is returned to its archival folder, and the note, one of thousands of selections from the data in any major study, is returned to a card file. But on what basis is this selection made, when research procedures cannot be standardized and interpretation cannot be deduced from overarching covering laws? In this predicament there is probably no alternative to a scholar's own considered and informed judgment. As we have seen, the ability to judge grows with exposure to the evidence and with an understanding of its context, but this is not the end of the matter. The scholar is not an empty vessel that soaks up information, digests it, and regurgitates an interpretative synthesis. He or she is a human being with individual predilections, foibles, and inconsistencies: a member of a society and a product of an age. The scholar brings a particular vantage point to the study of the past that, willy-nilly, affects the judgment of it. To take blatant examples, it is probable that marxist and capitalist will write different descriptions of the industrial city; Protestant and Catholic, different accounts of the Protestant plantations in Ulster. One convinced that science and technology have sundered essential bonds between man and nature will write differently about the medieval peasant or about the pioneer Ontario farmer than will another who believes that science can rid the world of superstition and open the door to general affluence. The relationship between a finished study and the particular vantage point of the scholar may be subtle or obvious, but it is never absent. The selection and interpretation even of the same evidence will vary, therefore, from scholar to scholar and from age to age. A considerable achievement of laboratory science is a method that standardizes results in different settings. There is no such thing as a marxist or a Catholic chemistry experiment. Common experimental procedures yield the same results in different laboratories; the same initial conditions applied to the same laws yield the same deductive inferences. The individual scientist fades into his laboratory as verified results come to the fore. Not so, despite all the determination of some nineteenth-century German historians, for the habit of mind we are discussing here. Each age rewrites its past and, after a time, a given study becomes information about the scholar and age that produced it.

This would seem to imply that such scholarship is entirely relative, that one scholar's interpretation is as valid as another's because both are personal statements. Yet anyone familiar with the historical habit of mind would want to deny this. Some studies are superseded because they are shown to be wrong; and others, because more evidence has come to light, permitting a fuller interpretation. We know more about the industrial city in early nineteenth-century Britain than we did fifty years ago because studies build on each other, often in reaction, absorbing new information as it comes to light and responding to interpreta-

tive insights. The historical mind assumes a reality that it seeks to understand. Frequently, there is no disagreement. To say that in 1608 Champlain founded a French colony along the lower St. Lawrence where, fifty years later, there were some 2,000 French-speaking inhabitants is not to be controversial. Nor would it be difficult (if a little dull) to write a book made up of similar observations on New France. Sparks would begin to fly only when it was asserted, for example, that a society emerged in Canada with no French counterpart because the relationship of persons to land on the two sides of the Atlantic was fundamentally different. To make such a statement is to raise exceedingly complex matters pertaining to the social structure of seventeenth-century France and Canada and to the role of land as a mechanism of social change. On these matters there is legitimate ground for differences of opinion that, knowledgeably argued, may be expected to lead to deeper insights.

In short, the historical mind does not give free reign to personal whim, and it denies most emphatically that one opinion is worth as much as another. An interpretation becomes plausible only when it is fit to known facts, and scholars will dismiss ideas that do not have such grounding. Hence the constant emphasis on factual accuracy, which in many recent studies takes the form of elaborate statistical compilations. What was the average lifespan of the seventeenth-century French peasant, the average age of marriage, and the average number per family of children who survived their first year? What is the correlation between this demographic information and the size of peasant landholdings? Parish roles and seigneurial records yield much of the information necessary to answer such questions, and demography provides some relevant theory. Such data and such theory are indispensable to any arguments about the influence of a new environment along the lower St. Lawrence on the reconstitution there of French rural society. There is room for disagreement but not for uninformed opinion.

Enough said, perhaps, to indicate something of the habit of mind we are considering. It is open, eclectic, and curiously undefinable. It is responsive to a vast array of data but lacking a formal research procedure; it tends to see things in context; it is sensitive to motivation and value, even the recognition that a scholar's own values infiltrate his work; it is enthusiastic for hard data; and it is ready to make explicit use of appropriate theory. Not much is excluded. There is a wariness about sweeping generalization and about the power of encompassing covering laws to explain complex human situations. There is a tendency to separate explanation from prediction and to assume the former to be the task at hand (the goal is thought to be understanding, not planning). What sort of intellectual mulligan stew is all of this: an art, a science, or a hodgepodge? What holds it all together, and what good is it?

In the sense that the historical mind tries to be right, its objectives are the same as a chemist's. Yet the evidence from the past is fragmentary; controlled experiments are impossible; and the scholar knows that his own values are entwined in his work. He cannot, therefore, be as confidently right about the world as is the chemist, and he cannot produce detachable conclusions and verifiable laws. Yet the unremitting effort to be accurate separates the historical mind from that of the novelist or poet. It is not a literary criticism of "Evangeline" that Longfellow knew little about the Acadians. *Julius Caesar* is not a lesser play because Shakespeare perhaps misunderstood Roman society or politics. The writer comments on human nature, the human condition, the temper of the times; or he tells a good story. He or she, too, is an interpreter of the world; but it is some measure of the different connection that, unlike the evaluation of the products of the historical mind, literary criticism is rarely preoccupied with factual accuracy. And yet selection, abstraction, and interpretation are essential qualities of art; and they are also essential in turning the scattered remains in archives and on the land into a coherent and accurate depiction of the past.

Because the habit of mind we are discussing appears to have qualities of both art and science, it has attracted a good deal of attention from philosophers interested in whether there are different modes of rational explanation or only one mode, and that scientific.<sup>11</sup> A scientific explanation is usually thought to be deduced from a set of initial conditions and a covering law or laws, as when the color of a litter of kittens can be explained on the basis of Mendelian theory and some genetic information about their parents. The habit of mind we have been considering depends, it is said, on countless, implicit, lawlike assumptions. We understand the Irish emigrant's decision to leave home because, for example, we make the lawlike assumption that people who perceive another, more favorable location will tend to move there. Of course, some would say such explanation is loose. It cannot be experimental, its assumptions cannot be falsified, and its implicit "laws" have weak deductive force. In effect, it is but an explanatory sketch, but a sketch with the logical structure of any scientific explanation. Against this it is argued that description may also be explanation: to describe the building of a car is to explain how it was built; to describe the motivation for building a car is to explain why it was built. It is held that without absolute laws of human behavior probabilistic statements cannot explain particular events; conceivably the same probabilistic statement could be cited to explain why an event happened or did not happen. Rather, a particular event becomes understandable when seen in context, and this seeing depends on a scholar's synoptic judgment. It is simply the wrong approach, it is said, to package the historical mind in the methods of science. To do so is to squeeze into a fixed shape what



is not an explicit methodology. Understanding depends not on theory but on judgment, and there is no logical method for testing judgment, a form of thinking dependent on wide learning, experience, imagination, and the habit of mind of seeing things together.

Here is a closely argued philosophical debate about the nature of inference; and yet, from the vantage point of the practicing scholar, the two positions do seem to back into each other. If the historical habit of mind depends on countless implicit, lawlike assumptions, the scholar would appear to choose and arrange the relevant assumptions. Personal selection and judgment seem as much part of one mode as another, and it seems unlikely that the historical mind will adjust very much, whatever the outcome of a philosophical debate. But if judgment must come to the fore, how is judgment itself evaluated?

Mendel's Law, we might agree, is a valuable scientific achievement because it works. It can be empirically tested. It can be used predictively. *Julius Caesar* may be a great play but not for these reasons. There are no theatrical canons from which its quality can be deduced. It has no predictive warranty. *Julius Caesar* is a great play in the judgment of the scholars, literary critics, and wider public, who through the years have been instructed and delighted by it. Conceivably, another age will not so judge it; even we have some reservations. It is not, we feel, quite a *Hamlet*. The products of the historical mind are judged in this same way; that is, by their market. A study of Roman Britain may delight the general public and infuriate scholars. It succeeds in one market and fails in another. Scholars are critical because there are too many factual errors, because an important body of evidence has been overlooked, because the interpretation does not take into account the intriguing views of X, because, finally, the interpretation has already been substantially demolished by the meticulous work of Y. The scholar depends on his own judgment to complete a study and then is exposed to the judgment of his peers. That such judgment is fallible and sometimes fickle there is no doubt, but there is hardly an alternative to it. Great poems or paintings may be discovered after years of neglect—they are inclined to deal with timeless verities and are not dated by new factual information—but the historical mind writes out of its age, and its achievements feed back into that age. What, then, of the elusive matter of use? The mature historical mind that has devoted years to the study of the past is not useful in the way a bulldozer or a traffic engineer is useful. It is not likely to be commandeered to solve current practical problems, although it may be approached for general advice. Its yield is not expertise but, at best, a measure of wisdom and knowledge. It may be turned to for pleasure, it seeks to satisfy our curiosity about the past, and it comments on the human present by saying something about

where we have been. I suspect, for example, that modern France would be a different and poorer place without the wealth of splendid scholarship—most of it by historians but not an inconsiderable part by geographers—on its past. I live in British Columbia on the recently settled western fringe of a New World. Here the whole settlement experience—coupled, perhaps, with a meager scholarship—makes it difficult for British Columbians to know their past and, in a certain sense, therefore, to know themselves. For all its sumptuous physical environment, life in such a place embodies an inherent bafflement.

And if, as I suspect, the historical mind is not necessarily retrospective, then its usefulness has another dimension. As I write this, decisions with monumental geographical implications are being taken about the Canadian North: should a pipeline be built and, if so, where? After weighing the conflicting visions of environmentalists, natives, and oilmen; after gathering mountains of social, economic, and environmental data about the North, past and present; and after assessing energy needs and reserves, a commission and the National Energy Board have now recommended against a Mackenzie Valley route. There are no formulae for such decisions, there is no possibility of deducing them from some overarching covering law, and there is no single correct solution. Different options have been weighed in informed minds that eventually exercised their judgments. However removed from archive or university, something of what I have called the “historical mind” undoubtedly is present in such decision making. In a few minutes I will get on my bicycle and ride home, whether through the woods, hopeful of seeing a blue heron, or via the shops, to pick up a few things for the family. Many such simple choices and trivial judgments of everyday life are perhaps not structurally different from a decision about a pipeline or from the decisions embedded in the scholarship that I have associated with the historical mind. Amplified with study, sensitivity to the variety of human experience, and creative intelligence, the personal ability to judge would seem to have a huge capacity in profound and humane ways to interpret the present as well as the past. But, of course, in recent years neither our discipline nor most of social science has sought to develop the qualities of judgment embedded in the historical mind. To do so we would have to deemphasize technique and resurrect learning. We would have to despecialize ourselves, recognizing—and teaching young geographers—something of the breadth of human experience and the complex interplay of relationships bearing on man’s use even of tiny patches of the earth. Perhaps we would even have to admit with Peter Kropotkin, that gentle Russian geographer of another age, that the function of a geographical education is less to enable us to manage than to appreciate mankind.<sup>12</sup>

### The Historical Mind and Contemporary Humanistic Geography

In North America at present, those who call themselves “humanist geographers” are inclined to philosophical reading and methodological writing (witness much of this volume), whereas cultural and historical geographers tend to pursue their old ways no more affected by the new humanism than by the spatial analysis of the 1960s. Many new humanists are from an explicit social science tradition and are accustomed to explicit methodology, whereas the historical mind is not a method in this sense but rather, as we have seen, a loose collection of habits grounded, when most effective, in a good deal of learning. For those whose academic conditioning has emphasized method and technique, it seems a vague and elusive alternative. On the other hand, from the point of view of those who have worked comfortably within what I have called the “historical habit of mind,” there seems little need for methodological soul searching, and there is a good deal of skepticism. Rachel would almost seem to be searching again for children who are not to be found.

But if some historical geographers can be as stuffy as some new humanists are evangelistic, the fact is that a remarkable convergence has taken place. Now, if I read the methodological tracts of the 1970s correctly, some of the historical geographers’ most central predilections—so widely disparaged by the spatial analysts of the 1960s—suddenly have a large geographical constituency. To be sure, the routes of convergence are quite different. The new humanists have not discovered historical geography so much as phenomenology, structuralism, marxism, or even theology. An interest in essences and in social action stems from these connections, giving some of the new humanism ambitions that distinguish it from the historical mind. But there is now wide awareness of the impossibility of separating facts from values and of the importance of contextual studies. The David Harvey of *Explanation in Geography*, proclaiming faith in mathematical calculus and in rigorous deduction, is not the David Harvey who, only four years later, would advocate “a materialist interpretation of ideas as they arise in particular historical contexts.”<sup>13</sup> The historical mind readily accommodates some forms of marxism but not abstract theories of spatial relations—the newer Harvey is as interesting as the older one was arid.

And yet, if far broader assumptions are inherent in much of the methodological writing about geography in the 1970s, I fear that they will be constantly threatened by the temptation to lapse into method, technique, or social engineering. I fear this because, in North America today, humanistic geography is not grounded in tradition or culture but rather in a society preoccupied with technique and management. This

cultural context is as much reflected, for example, in the institutional structure of our graduate programs as in our common tendency to seek bureaucratic solutions for social problems. Let me cite three short examples of what can happen all too easily. We may readily agree that Marx was the most penetrating nineteenth-century analyst of industrial society, a thinker of enormous range and continuing application. The huge corpus of Marx's work undoubtedly has a powerful suggestive relevance to modern thought about industrial society. It is another matter to use Marx deductively. To do so is to identify the "true" Marx—there are many versions—to turn social thought into religion and to confine social analysis within rigid deductive parameters. Marxist geography certainly shows this tendency and in so doing overrides the humanistic side of Marx. Others who would turn away from the methodology of logical positivism seek alternatives in modern philosophy. Encountering Kierkegaard, Heidegger, or the later Wittgenstein, such geographers will quickly confirm their growing suspicion that the models of social science embody covert values that, through planning, may impose yet another tyranny. If such reading seems to unfrock social science, it does not provide an academic alternative; consequently, the most honest of those who follow this path read yet more philosophy, turn to direct social action, or leave the university. In geography, no one illustrates this philosophical quest more clearly than Gunnar Olsson. His latest book<sup>14</sup> seems to me to demonstrate the impasse that can be reached when a sensitive social scientist is exposed to the existential critique of metaphysics and science. Olsson is caught in a particular dialectic—the extreme positivism of the 1960s begetting the extreme reaction of the 1970s—with neither extreme very close to a workable humanistic geography. Solutions are sought where traditions have broken down. Even Anne Buttimer, whose writings I generally enjoy, concludes a recent article with a utopian social vision coupled with space-time studies as a means to get there.<sup>15</sup> How easily her vision becomes technique. These quests for a New Jerusalem are understandable enough, and they will have many successors. They are also indicative of the gulf between much contemporary social science and any humanistic tradition.

Even we historical geographers, for whom the intellectual tradition I have been describing is relatively authentic, have produced more than our share of plodding studies that reveal little enough of the learning and controlled imagination of the mature historical mind. Most of our work is hardly an example for the questing refugee from logical positivism. Fortunately, there is some excellence, and it is well to keep in touch with it, not because it provides a precise model for research—each age, I repeat, writes its own studies—but because it is a reminder of the level of excellence that the historical mind can attain. One of my favorites is Carl Sauer's *The Early Spanish Main*,<sup>16</sup> a wonderfully knowledgeable

book about Caribbean flora and fauna, about the Caribs, and about the early Spanish expeditions and economy that transformed a complex area in thirty years. It is also a lament for a peaceable people and for a mellow relationship between man and land that was overridden and destroyed, a sobering reminder from one of great knowledge not so much of the Spaniards as of ourselves. In a secular age it is a quiet sermon that I appreciate. Yet this study is not the equal of Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World of Phillip II*,<sup>17</sup> the first book of which, in my view, is as brilliant an historical geography as may ever be written. Braudel, an historian steeped in the geographical tradition of Vidal de la Blache, wanted to show why, late in the sixteenth century, the European focus began to shift northward away from the Mediterranean lands; and in so doing he has provided an unbelievably rich, idea-filled picture of the life and rhythms of the peoples and lands of the Mediterranean rim. I appreciate this book because I learn so much from it, page by page, paragraph by paragraph. I admire its audacity and I am overwhelmed by the feat of memory and intellection that produced it. Braudel studied for years in many archives, but in a prison camp during World War II he wrote much of this book without notes, a feat quite as astonishing as the deaf Beethoven's.

We are not Braudels, but it is his learning we lack, not his method. The habit of mind I have been discussing and that I suspect will long continue to underlie much of our best and most humanistic geography, functions better and better as it knows more. To achieve a more richly textured humanistic geography we face, I am sure, a challenge of learning. We must be honest with ourselves. There is no useful disciplinary line separating present from past, space from time. There is no magic formula that will suddenly unlock the door to humanistic geography. There are no shortcuts. There is an immensely rich tradition of scholarship that has a good deal to do with what I have described here as the historical mind, which is open to life as it is, which draws inspiration from both science and art, which depends on the considered judgment of the individual scholar, and which never has constrained the most eccentric brilliance. We need to enlarge our capacity for effective judgment; and for most of us this will mean immersing ourselves in the study of some part of the world and its people—whether the current North American suburb, the medieval city, or the Chinese cultural realm. Methods and techniques we learn along the way will have their useful places, but there is no methodological palliative to replace years of study and creative intelligence, a hard lesson in a society preoccupied with technique. And yet, however roundabout the means, this old and simple truth does seem to be surfacing more widely and, whatever the contrary pressures of our age, it is worth our mighty efforts to sustain.

## Notes

1. Richard Hartshorne, "The Nature of Geography," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 29 (1939): 173-658.
2. The phrase is Alfred Hettner's and it is cited by Richard Hartshorne in *Perspective on the Nature of Geography*, American Association of Geographers Monograph Series (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1959), p. 81.
3. Carl O. Sauer, "Foreword to Historical Geography," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 31 (March 1941): 16.
4. Ralph H. Brown, *Mirror for Americans: Likenesses of the Eastern Seaboard 1810* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1943).
5. Andrew H. Clark, *Three Centuries and the Island* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959).
6. H. C. Darby, "The Problem of Geographical Description," *Transactions and Papers, Institute of British Geographers* 30 (1962): 1-14.
7. Sauer, "Foreword to Historical Geography," p. 10.
8. Marwyn Samuels, "The Biography of Landscape," in D. Meinig, ed., *The Cultural Meaning of Ordinary Landscapes* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).
9. Paul Claval, *Essai sur l'Evolution de la Géographie Humaine* (Besançon: Annales Littéraires de l'Université de Besançon, 1969), p. 59.
10. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946).
11. See particularly the journal, *History and Theory*, and also two anthologies: W. H. Dray, ed., *Philosophical Analysis and History* (Scranton, Pa.: Harper & Row, 1966) and R. H. Nash, ed., *Ideas of History* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1969).
12. Peter Kropotkin, "What Geography Ought to Be," *The Nineteenth Century* (December 1885): 940-56.
13. David Harvey, *Explanation in Geography* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969); idem, *Social Justice and the City* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), pp. 12-13.
14. Gunnar Olsson, *Birds in Egg*, University of Michigan Geographical Publications no. 15 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975).
15. Anne Buttner, "Grasping the Dynamism of Lifeworld," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66 (June 1976): 290-91.
16. Carl O. Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966).
17. Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World of Phillip II* (New York and London: Harper & Row, 1972).

## CHAPTER 9

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# UNDERSTANDING THE SUBJECTIVE MEANING OF PLACES

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EDWARD GIBSON

Let us not waste time debating the definition of *place*. It is understood that any time we speak of geography we are already speaking of places. Places come and go as their significance shifts with changing historical or cultural perspective. This is so not merely because personal recollections vary but because through experience we continue to discover or create different places. Such differences in orientation to the earth are not so much based on time, "place," and human group into which we are born as they are to the range of cultural situations we face and the varieties of other people's places we learn to see. A mind shaped through travel and cultural change will embody in its idea of meaningful places a far greater area of the earth than a mind in the myopia of one locale and a single ideology.

To interpret the meaning of places therefore is to interpret the subjective meaning of persons who act to alter, use, or countervail changes in an area of the earth. Does subjective meaning imply subjectivism? To be sure there is a moderate element of subjectivism in humanistic inquiry. Since complete objectivity and detachment are a delusion, it is well for the humanistic geographer to recognize also that he has a point of view and a historical stance to acknowledge. But we must guard against going beyond this. To interpret the subjective meaning places hold for us is clearly not an exercise in alluding to personal experiences. Humanistic geographers have an obligation to transcend as far as possible a narrowly personal point of view that stands or falls by the mere experience of the observer. Immanuel Kant, philosopher and geographer, understood this in his distinction between autonomy and heteronomy.<sup>1</sup> While he was against unthinking acceptance of an externally imposed code of morals, Kant's principle of the categorical imperative was a constraint on subjectivism: it was a defense against the antihuman consequences of inquiry.

To talk of antihuman consequences is to talk of what is meant by modern humanism, to talk of the humanistic values held in our time. As Martin Heidegger claimed in his thesis on Kant and the *Critique of Pure Reason*, human imagination and the temporal nature of existence are what we see in projecting the meanings of life.<sup>2</sup> Put in simple words, in Western civilization the humanistic themes are the answers we give to the questions, Where did we come from? Who are we? Where is here? and Where are we going? If these questions depend on simple words, the answers given most certainly do not. They vary according to whether we are liberal, socialist, conservative, capitalist, atheist, Jewish, Muslim. Understanding the subjective meanings of places, insofar as this is a humanistic inquiry, includes a preunderstanding or a way of looking at and conceiving things; for our categories determine both our perception and our response. Obviously, there is little room to describe the categories of humanism in this essay, but we are impelled to define the reciprocal interplay between the set of methods we deliver to geographic study and the interpretative categories of their author.

It is useful to treat as best we can an author who is regarded as a major figure in systematic studies of subjective meaning, showing some connections between him and major philosophical movements. There is little doubt that Max Weber is acknowledged as a figure influencing the study of subjective meaning in human activities, although it could be argued that marxists<sup>3</sup> and Schutzian phenomenologists,<sup>4</sup> among other groups, are also sources of significant influence. Be that as it may, there remains a fundamental appeal in the choice of Weber. One reason for the appeal lies in the parallel between Weber's epistemics and the epistemics of the founding father of modern geography, Immanuel Kant. More will be said about this parallel in the next section. Weber's appeal lies as well in the simple fact that he is surrounded by the intrigue of the stranger. Geographers have haunted sociological circles before. With their contacts in the natural sciences there is little wonder that they felt more at home on the positive and not the humanistic side of the circle. No sociologist has been more warmly embraced than Emile Durkheim. Durkheim, through his principle of social morphology, has been acclaimed as the grandfather of American sociology, and to many he would seem to be the godfather of mid-century North American human geography.<sup>5</sup> If Durkheim's relations to North American thought are clear, the same cannot be said of his relations to the French school of human geography. It is acknowledged that there are conflicts between Vidal de la Blache and Emile Durkheim. As significant as these are, it is well to be reminded that there are also similarities. What Vidal de la Blache and Emile Durkheim have in common is their dependence on the milieu as the determinant of the human condition



and as an index of human existence. For Vidal it is the *geographic* milieu and for Durkheim it is the *social* milieu. But for both, a person is viewed as an object whose behavior is determined by abstractions that *stand somewhat apart from human will*. These views were not those of Weber, who spoke of human experience and not of its objectification. In this difference we find an intrigue. When we see Weber's methods as the opposite of Durkheim's and when we also see the debt orthodox methods of human geography owe to Durkheim, we will end up with the possibility of seeing more closely the one-sided scientific rationalism on which orthodox human geography rests. Human geography is not humanistic geography, and on this stands the importance of a brief summary of the principles of Weberian methods.

An idea of how his methods work is also important. But since sociology is not human geography, how can this be done? For one thing, we can learn something from following the cultural historian Jacob Burckhardt, who applied Weberian-like methods in his monumental *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*.<sup>6</sup> However instructive this masterly history is, it fails to illustrate the way we can interpret the subjective meanings of contemporary urban life and its products. Some attention will therefore be given to procedures followed in a 1969 study of Vancouver's landscape, a study that used Weberian-type methods.

### **Humanistic Themes of the Modern Period**

Oddly enough, it is Immanuel Kant who was among the first persons to recognize an attitude of his time as a modern variant of Western humanism. An event of his life, reported by Erwin Panofsky, is a good way to begin a discussion of humanistic themes.<sup>7</sup> Nine days before his death Kant was visited by his physician. Old and ill he rose trembling with weakness. He muttered words that his faithful friend realized meant he would not be seated until his visitor had taken his chair. This done, Kant permitted himself to be helped to his chair. As he gained his strength Kant said, "*Das Gefühl für Humanität hat mich noch nicht verlassen*" (the sense of humanity has not yet left me). Kant and his companion were deeply moved. Though the word *Humanität* had, by the end of the eighteenth century, come to mean in general little more than politeness or civility, it had for Kant and the scholars of his day a much deeper significance, which at that moment served to emphasize humankind's proud and tragic consciousness of self-approval and self-imposed perfection, contrasting with the utter subjection to natural laws and all that is implied by the word *death*. The qualities commonly associated with

it were therefore those of frailty and imperfection: the “givenness” of our finite life.

So from the end of the Renaissance to contemporary thought and its variants of existentialism, humanism is not so much a movement as a conviction that human dignity is founded both on the insistence of a value in humanity (rationality and free will) and on the acceptance of human limitations (fallibility and mortality). Such are the intrinsic meanings in modern life and it is well to keep these meanings separate from the subjective meanings held by persons who change, maintain, or countervail changes in the phenomena of the earth.

In an earlier period there was significant treatment of intrinsic values. To name a few of the important writers who concerned themselves with the “ultimate” meaning of geographic patterns, there were Carl Ritter, Oscar Peschel, Frederick Ratzel, Elisée Reclus, Alfred Hettner, Vidal de la Blache, and Jean Brunhes. Some comment about Carl Ritter will show the approach used.<sup>8</sup>

Men and nations, Ritter believed, possess innate qualities peculiar to them alone, qualities that in their historical unfolding yield true greatness for nations as well as for individuals. Ritter held that the unfolding of their qualities is influenced by their geographic surroundings. And so peoples and nations take a stamp from their surroundings. Human uniqueness is dependent on locale. Yet Ritter was no absolute determinist, for he also said that the inner nature merely *combines* with an existing environment. Elsewhere he concluded that modern humanity experiences a growing dependence on human intellect. Inasmuch as he is commonly dismissed by writers of our age—he was teleological and overtly romantic—it may be surprising to learn that Ritter set about to write his *Erdkunde* in search for a verifiable and a priori truth. He attempted to discuss a priori assumptions about humanity. Through extensive field work he followed the methods of natural science and advanced from observation to observation. In a similar way Reclus proceeded from observation to observation in *L'Homme et la Terre*.<sup>9</sup> The intrinsic or deep meanings of the geographical patterns Reclus described were the human *freedoms* allowed in natural associations of peoples as contrasted with the *limits* imposed by the independent nation state.

No matter how much we read in contemporary human geography, we cannot find a continual concern with the intrinsic meanings of the phenomena studied. It seems clear that this trend is associated with the constraints that natural science methods impose on studies. It also seems reasonable to assume that if human geography were to develop methods capable of interpreting the subjective meaning of geographic phenomena, there would also develop an opportunity to interpret intrinsic meanings.

### The Philosophical Context of Weber's Method

When speaking of methods in human sciences and when trying to adapt the methods of one branch of human science to another, we must always bear in mind that the methods striking us as being the most crucial may take the forms they do because they were designed with intentions that are very different from those we share in our approach to them. Weberian methods were not designed to solve the geographic problems of our time. They were created in the context of Weber's impassioned life. In fact, it would be best not to use the word *created* at all, for Weber's texts on sociological methods are definitely transformations of existing ideas, not new creations. Above all, his methods are derived from Kantian thought. Especially is this so with regard to his theory of knowing. Like Kant, Weber believed that concepts are not the ends of intellectual inquiry but are the means by which empirical data are organized. Yet, Weber was not a blind devotee of Kantian epistemology, for he was far more concerned with the mix of rational and irrational than with the merely rational behavior of human beings that held the attention of Kant. And there, in part, lies the difference between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophical influences on human sciences.

There were other sources of great richness in nineteenth-century philosophy. Between Kant and Weber lived George Wilhelm Hegel, Ludwig Feuerbach, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Karl Marx. Nobody will expect that Weber's approach to human science was hit upon from the single perspective of Kant. The matter is not as simple as that.

We can start from another influence that is common to contemporary Anglo-Saxon geography: the scientific rationalism of classical economic theory. Weber saw that when such economic theory was imposed upon non-Western society, it suggested that primitive economic systems were irrational. He attempted to show that the contrary was the case; that is, for instance, he was able to demonstrate that patterns of primitive resource exploitation when they were described by the persons who were exploiting the resources were indeed "rational" and "understandable." In other words, the models derived by methods that identified the subjective meaning of the resource exploitation yielded better predictions of primitive behavior than could the so-called objective, externalized method of scientific rationalism. It appears that Weber was thereby debunking the dominant theory of the liberal academics of his day. So he was. But he was certainly influenced by them, too.

He both debunked and was influenced by Marx and Hegel. Like Marx, Weber concerned himself with the inhumanity of industrial capitalism; but, unlike the young marxists around him, such as those who

comprised the historical school of German sociology, Weber debunked the idea of single causes in human affairs and of the operations of "laws" in human history. It is thus arguable that Weber was more indebted to than opposed to Marx.

So too with Hegel. For while Weber debunked the dismal and naive idealism of Hegel and Nietzsche, the idea of "intentionality" in human behavior, the idea of an intrinsic relation between a concept and an object, was fundamental to Weber's view. This is important because it is what set Weber apart from Emile Durkheim, and likewise it is what sets humanistic geography apart from human geography.

Finally, one is reminded that Weberian sociology successfully steered clear of the reductionism that crippled Hegelian idealism and its later variants, such as R. G. Collingwood's use of historical imagination.<sup>10</sup> Collingwood and those historians like him held that an adequate history of human affairs must specify the thoughts, motives, and ideas that are present preceding an event. And this is part of what Weber thought. The other part that separates Weber from vulgar idealism is his insistence that this understanding of the event or object be tested against evidence that is intersubjectively accessible to any competent observer. The final difference is that Weberian methods go more deeply than those of Collingwood. Weber would ask himself not only *what feelings an actor had but also why this person had those thoughts or feelings associated with the event or act.*

With this introduction to Weber's philosophical sophistication, the way is now open to examine English translations of Weber's principal essay on his approach, "Die Objektivität sozialwissenschaftlicher Erkenntnis."<sup>11</sup> The methods begin with his comments on meaning, meaningful action, and interpreting meaning; then they treat nonmeaningful phenomena in the explanation of human action; next they give an account of the central importance of understanding and the verification of its certainty; and, finally, as a corollary to understanding, they comment on human motive as a complex of meanings.

### **Methods of Interpreting Subjective Meaning**

Our intention here is to come as close to an actual summary of the English translations as possible without extending their implications to the particular problems of geography. This extension will come in the concluding section. Weber said there are two types of meaning. The term applies to the exact meaning in a given, concrete case for an actual person or to the average meaning for a group of persons. Against this, there is the theoretical meaning conceived by a researcher as an ideal

type of subjective meaning attributable to a hypothetical person or group of persons.

Gradual transitions lead from human *actions*, where subjective meaning may be understood, to mere *reactions* with no subjective meaning. Many religious and artistic experiences are difficult or impossible to communicate between two persons when one is not susceptible to such experiences. At the same time, for Weber, the capacity of a person to imagine himself participating in the action may help, but this is certainly not necessary in the understanding of the meaning.

We can scientifically interpret meaning in the sense that we make interpretations based on verified observations of an action and its verbal communication. The observations may be verified through a comparison with a rational meaning of both logical or mathematical a priori general concepts, or with a priori observer experiences that can yield emotional empathy and artistic appreciation. Rational understanding is possible and desirable in situations where logical or mathematical proportions are observed. In other words, we grasp what a person is doing when that person tries to realize stated goals by the stated means and when those goals and means fit the facts that we ourselves have experienced. Interpretation of meaningful action becomes more difficult the more radically the values of the acting person or group differ from our own. In a sense, then, the more susceptible we make ourselves to the human emotions of anger, ambition, envy, love, pride, loyalty, and all other manifestations of our human condition, the more we can understand the actions growing out of them and otherwise thought of as irrational. The methods of Weber are in this content rationalistic, but to say this is not to say there is a rationalistic bias to Weberian sociology. Quite the opposite: Weberian methods are predicated on the bias that human life is anything but predominantly rational. In other words, Weberian methods are rationalistic, but most of the content of the human actions they seek to understand is assumed to be irrational.

The interpretation of human products of action—such as a building—is also treated by Weber, who claimed that every artifact can be understood only in terms of the intended meanings of its production, use, or continual maintenance. Without knowledge of these meanings (both concrete or theoretical), the object remains unintelligible in its origin. This is not to say these same objects cannot by the methods of history be made intelligible to us in our time.

But processes and conditions—including those that are animate, such as the biological cycle, or inanimate, such as the geological cycle, and those that are human and nonhuman—can influence action. In the last analysis, they are not taken into account if they are not taken as data by the acting person or group.

Going more deeply into the importance of understanding, Weber

commented on two types: First is the direct observational understanding both of rational acts, such as a report of a person making a calculated decision, and of irrational acts, such as anger carried in facial expression or body language. Then there is the rational understanding of human acts that develops from placing an act in an intelligible and more inclusive sociological context. We understand the chopping of wood in terms of something that we add to direct observation. Our understanding depends on our knowing if someone is chopping for a wage, for subsistence, or for recreation.

Verification of interpretation is dependent on the context of the action. All interpretation of meaning can be classified as being in one of three contexts. There is the actual intended meaning; there is an approximation of intended meaning in the case of actions of a group of persons; and there is the meaning that is approximate to a formulated "ideal type" of a common phenomenon, such as pure economic theory (or central place theory), which states what course of action a given person would take if that person were completely rational and directed toward a stated aim. The latter context Weber felt was only rarely applicable.

The most desired verification of subjective meaning is by comparison with the concrete course of events. But this is feasible in only limited cases: those open to actual experimentation. Most commonly, verification amounts to a comparison with the historical and contemporary cases that are similar to the action and context examined. A part of this verification is the process of imagining one's way through events; that is, thinking the motive and following through the most plausible course of ensuing events. It is apparent from what Weber said about the three types of context that the conscious motives may conceal various unself-conscious motives and repressions that are the most important factors. Even honest self-appraisal, therefore, may be only of relative significance and very possibly of no significance whatsoever.

There are also the possibilities that individuals and groups of individuals may be susceptible to conflicting motives—all of which an observer may be able to understand, but none of whose relative importance may be estimated. For these cases one must base judgment on the outcome of the actual conflict.

The seventh and final comment on the interpretation of subjective meaning concerns the difference between what Weber termed an *adequate level of meaning* necessary to interpret a course of action and what he termed a *causally adequate interpretation* of a sequence of events. If an interpretation of a course of action has an adequate level of meaning to be understood, then the component parts taken in mutual relation are formed to constitute a complex of meaning that fits our habitual thoughts and feelings. Whereas, if an interpretation of a se-

quence of events is *causally adequate*, then there is a statistical probability that, according to a verified generalization taken from experience, an event will occur or a product will result. Causal explanations therefore depend on the observer calculating and stating numerically the probability that an action will be connected to another action or an object, produced as a result thereof.

The important point to keep in mind is that if adequacy with respect to meaning is not present, then, regardless of the level of statistical significance, the action is *not* understood.

These methods of understanding are summarized in the belief that it is possible to adapt them to human geography. This is by itself a bold claim not so much because the transfer of methods is hazardous but because Weber's philosophy of human science is now judged to be mistaken on at least one count; and there will be some who, because of mistakes, will want to keep a distance from everything he has developed. Weber thought that the use of these methods and others given in his treatment of *ideal types* would make human sciences value free. Advances in twentieth-century philosophy of science have shown this to be unsupported. But these advances and other qualifications of Weberian thought by philosophers such as C. G. Hempel have in no way touched the methods of interpretation themselves.<sup>12</sup> They have stood the test of application in sociology, where there still exists the Kantian tradition most geographers have long forgotten. For Kant and Weber there is a radical distinction between fact and humanistic value. Humanistic values—in other words, intrinsic meanings—are not *given* in concrete objects nor in the transcendental: human beings create them in actions that differ from nonhuman actions. There is therefore a basic distinction between the order of natural science and the order of intrinsic meanings. The order of natural science is obedience to facts, reasons, and proofs; while the order of intrinsic meaning is free choice and affirmation. Nobody can be forced by scientific proof to accept a value in which one does not believe. As we turn from the methods to their application we should keep in mind that Weber's use of them was never without some consideration of the human conditions upon which they touch.

### **Parallels in Cultural History**

Weber, we have seen, studied the origin and meanings of social events and relations. Only in minor works did he show what the concrete arts could yield should they be interpreted through his methods. For a better view of what might result from their application to the concrete

forms of a humanized landscape, we can examine the cultural and art histories that have paralleled Weberian sociology. It should be clear that many such works qualify in some way as models for humanistic geography. For instance, Panofsky's *Studies in Iconology*<sup>13</sup> or his *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, a collection of edited reprints,<sup>14</sup> come immediately to mind. But these and many other works treat painting, sculpture, or the decorative arts of individual artists. Panofsky does not apply his iconology to the public arts, with which geographers have more familiarity. Certainly, works that treat urban design and architecture are more useful simply because they concern objects that are significant parts of a cultural landscape. There is yet another reason why the treatment of these large-scale public arts is useful to geographers: such objects are produced by human institutions, by the coordinated activities of families, villages, corporations, or governments. It is, of course, the activities of human groups—as opposed to individuals—that have been the traditional concern of geographers.

The cultural histories of Jacob Burkhardt, a contemporary and correspondent with Weber, present just such a treatment. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*,<sup>15</sup> Burkhardt's most acknowledged work, was written with a geographical eye towards buildings, gardens, cities, and nation states. Like Weber, Burkhardt wrote about these human achievements as the artifacts of Western civilizations embodying Western values. It is of interest in this essay to know that the similarities between Weber and Burkhardt reach well beyond this. Like Weber, Burkhardt was heavily indebted to Kantian epistemology; and he was a critic as well as a product of the dominant movements of his time. Such connections with Hegel, John Stuart Mill, and Marx had influences on the methods that both Weber and Burkhardt devised. As we shall see in the next part of the present paper, many of these methodological influences continue in our time. For Weber and for Burkhardt, as well as many scholars after them, there has been an attraction to Marx's positive critique of historical materialism. What this led to in method was the handling of institutionalized ways of doing things as though they are the expressions of elites operating to advance special interests. If the treatment of cultural products such as the creations of identifiable elites is seen in historical writing at all, it is seen with great sophistication in the chapter "Rome, the City of Ruins" in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*.<sup>16</sup>

The path Burkhardt took to find the meanings of Rome's Renaissance landscape in which the ruins of classical antiquity were preserved was the written record of the experiences of the cultured literate class; that is, the records of the elites who served as artists, scholars, and administrators of Rome. On such a study of records Burkhardt was able to base his conclusion that there were subjective meanings held by the



elites who helped to create the municipal landscape. The meanings were of “archaeological zeal,” “patriotic enthusiasm,” and “elegiac or sentimental melancholy”; and in related chapters he described the underlying reasons why elites of the sixteenth century should be expected to share these meanings. The aspects of Burkhardt’s work that ought to be stressed are not his handling of the underlying causes for these meanings but their intrinsic meanings and implications for Western civilization.

In the fashion of Weber, Burkhardt drew comparisons. He compared the intended meanings of the elites and the landscape they created, on one hand, with the succession of meanings and their landscape symptoms that developed subsequent to the Renaissance, on the other. But so doing he was able to also judge the ultimate meanings that the City of Ruins came to embody. So, while it was true that ruins of mighty arches and colonnades half hidden in plane trees, laurels, cypresses, and brushwood symbolized the Renaissance values of antiquarianism and patriotism, their meanings to the human condition were something else. Put simply, such landscapes Burkhardt claimed were symbols of a downward turn in human freedom. He argued this way: The preservation of the ruins demanded civic rights be sacrificed to Roman law. They demanded that the first steps be taken in an unreasonable obedience to authority. Hence, Romans sought and found favor in despots. Burkhardt, of course, never mentioned that the Renaissance humanists intended this downward turn of human freedom in the maintenance of ruins. On the contrary, nothing given in the records suggested this was an intention. The consequences for the human condition took place regardless of intentions. That is just the point. The case of Weberian-type methods presents a striking picture of the irony of human action. Weberian methods offer human geography a radical antithesis to the idea of history as the concretization of ideas or the products of rational efforts. This is not to say that ideas are unimportant but rather that the intrinsic meanings of humanized landscapes may not be anything like the subjective meanings held by those whose activities created them. The ironies are also revealed in North American landscapes of more recent time.

### **Potentials in Urban Geography**

It is not possible to find close parallels to Weberian sociology in urban geography, which, from the beginning of its contemporary expansion after World War II, has seen itself as a current of scientific rationalism.

There has been much controversy about the precise meaning of its self-definition, but few would argue that the behavioral, social space stream and the Durkheim-like geographical milieu streams are anything other than minor variations of the main natural science current to which, for instance, the classical theory of urban central place belongs.

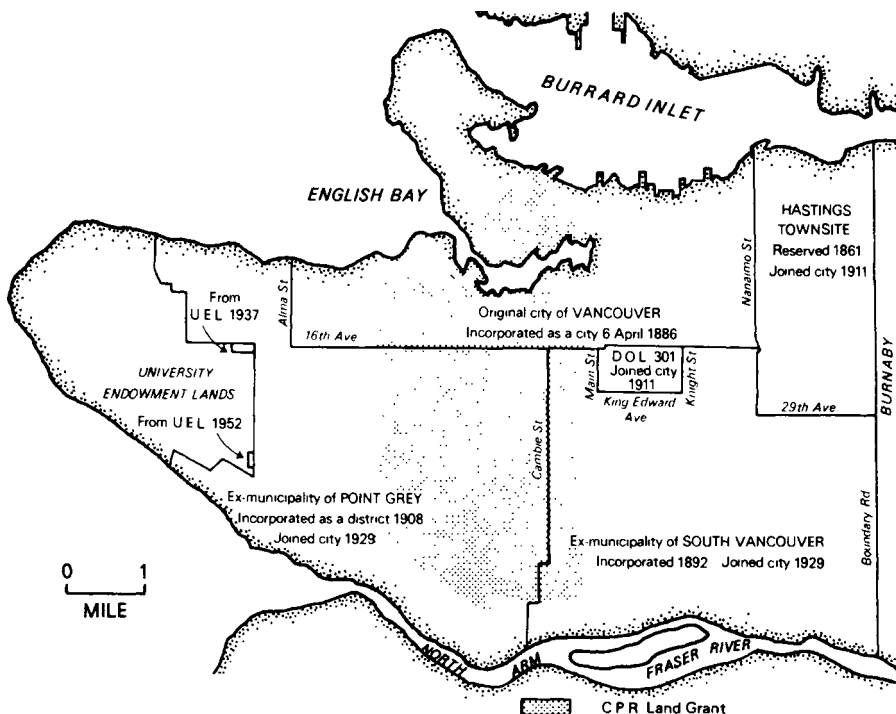
A picture of humanistic urban geography may be built up from fragments of different studies. For purposes of demonstration, however, we can restrict our present examination to two facets of work on the meanings of a specific Canadian landscape: that of Vancouver, British Columbia.<sup>17</sup>

Let us begin by sketching the political and social face of Vancouver as it appeared in 1928, the eve of amalgamation dismantling the historic jurisdictional boundaries in the city, when the set of interest groups and municipal institutions that prevail today began to work the landscape of Vancouver into its present boundaries. In 1928 there were three politically discrete municipalities: Vancouver City, the District Municipality of Point Grey, and the District Municipality of South Vancouver (figure 9-1). The last of these municipalities was crucially different from the other two.

South Vancouver was the residential suburb used by the labor classes that commuted daily to work in the mills, railheads, and dockyards located in Vancouver City. It was clearly different from Vancouver City, where commerce, industry, and residential suburbs were all located and where both labor and management classes lived. It was different, too, from Point Grey, where management predominated and industry was virtually absent. The values of liberal labor, of anarcho-socialists, or of communists who controlled South Vancouver's pattern of streets and buildings were sharply contrasted with those of conservatives, capitalists, and romantics in the other two historical municipalities, where planned streets and parks and "beautified" landscaping were in evidence. In this sense we must understand the subjective meanings of those who created South Vancouver's capricious street and cadastral systems, where shops, homes, and cemeteries could be juxtaposed and tax-faulted vacant lots served as parks (figure 9-2). The records show that those intentional meanings were a mixture of economic pragmatism, industrial democracy, and voluntarism.

The intentions of labor and municipal government elites were twofold. First, they were to preserve the economic independence of labor from the monopoly capitalism of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and other corporations. Second, they were to promote their independence from government control and the conscription to war or industry that this implied for them. We should not, however, be very alarmed to find that this landscape came to carry just the opposite

Figure 9-1. The Historical Dimension of Government Jurisdictional Boundaries of Vancouver, 1886-1978

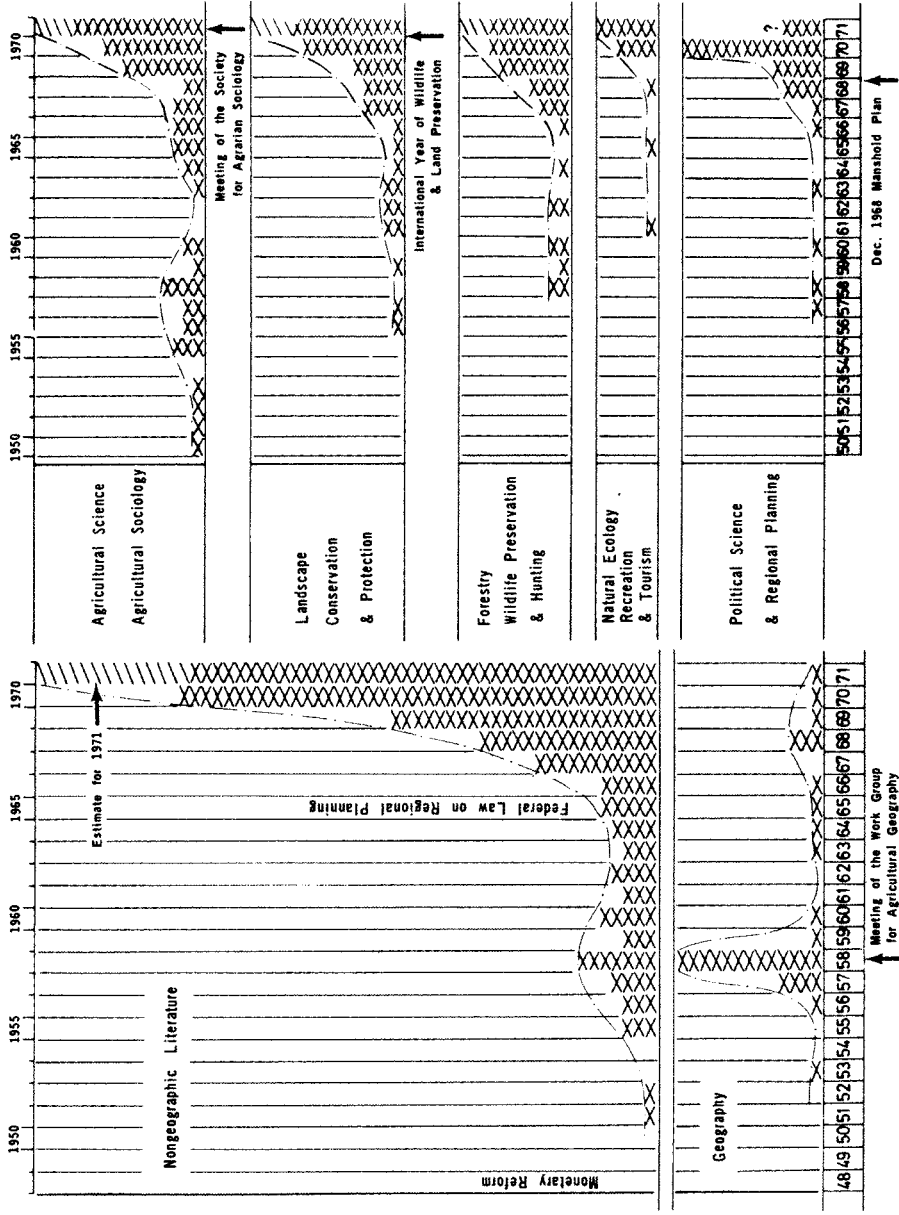


Note Understanding the subjective meaning of modern urban landscapes is easiest in places where government interests are in conflict with those of corporate bodies and individuals. Opposing groups articulate their values as they see them advanced or threatened by physical changes. Like an ethnographer studying cultural production within tribal boundaries, a humanistic urban geographer systematically studies the cultural landscape within jurisdictional boundaries, which in Vancouver as elsewhere have an historical dimension.

meaning to the citizens of Vancouver. It has come in our time to represent a downward turn in economic and political independence. In the boom-and-bust capitalism of western Canada at the close of the nineteenth century, South Vancouver was threatened with bankruptcy, a direct consequence of its development policies. Its charter was temporarily taken over by the government of British Columbia and in 1929 the municipality became part of the city of Vancouver. The de facto political alienation of our time may be measured by the low electoral turnout of voters that prevails in South Vancouver, lower than that of any other suburb of the metropolitan Vancouver area.

The way in which we have outlined methods of interpreting the meaning of places conveys the idea that the distinct mark of geography as a humanistic study is its historicity. It is true that history is important to the humanities; yet, it would be quite wrong to say that humanistic geography is confined to historical perspectives. With additional meth-

Figure 10-1. Diffusion of the Term "Social Fallow"



After Gertrud Steinhauser.  
 NOTE: This graph is a quantitative analysis of 223 titles of Bibliography no. 25, Bundesanstalt für Vegetationskunde, Naturschutz und Landschaftspflege, Bonn-Bad Godesberg, 1971.

observer be loyal to all interest groups? That is an ethical question all humanistic geographers must face.

From this type of relationship with interest groups there can emerge an understanding of what places mean to these elites and hence, by inference, to the members-at-large. But it requires time. For some it may take months of relationship; for others, years; and for some combinations of observers and groups it may never emerge. One should indicate at this point that street politics for some interest groups were important parts of strategy, and for these groups it was feasible to interpret the placards as much as it was the written briefs. It remains true in Vancouver, however, that most interest groups make records of their intentions in the minutes of their meetings. Any note taking by an observer can be checked in part by confirming one's notes with those of the group secretary.

If these methods appear to be those of either social or cultural geography, this would be perfectly accurate; for Weber, unlike Durkheim, made no distinction between social and cultural sciences. Nor in the interest of a better position for humanistic geography should such a distinction be made.

This argument for learning what landscapes mean by becoming part of the drama (or comedy) of making or perpetuating them is a good point on which to close this essay. We see the urban patterns of our time being changed or preserved, or we see them merely continuing according to the will of interrelated interest groups and the material conditions involved. We learn to see the relationships among interest groups, the values they pursue, and the consequences of this in the form and meaning of places. We locate our values in this process and thus recognize our own existence as actors making, maintaining, or countervailing changes. For an instant we may see the drama of making a place in the image of our interest group. But then we perceive the great gulf between the places we can thus idealize and those in which we live. There can be irony and at times comedy in the view across the gulf. In seeing it we come to understand who we are, where we are, and what can or cannot become of us. And so, too, we understand the justification of a more humanistic geography.

## Notes

1. Bertrand Russell, *Wisdom of the West* (London: Rathbone Books, 1959), pp. 239–42.
2. Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. J. S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962).
3. Erich Fromm, ed., *Socialist Humanism* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1966).
4. Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann, *The Structure of the Life-World*, trans. Richard

- M. Zaner and Tristrom Egelhardt, Jr. (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973).
5. Harlan H. Barrows, "Geography as Human Ecology," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 13 (March 1923): 1-14. From the time of Harlan Barrows' address up to and including our time, orthodox human geography in North America has been influenced by human ecology, hence the methods of natural, not humanistic, sciences.
  6. Jacob Burkhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, 2 vols., trans. S. G. Middlemore (1860; New York: Harper & Row, 1958).
  7. Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1955), p. 1.
  8. William L. Gage, *Geographical Studies by the Late Professor Carl Ritter of Berlin* (Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1863).
  9. Elisée Reclus, *L'Homme et la Terre* (Paris: Librairie Universelle, 1905-8).
  10. Robert G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (1939; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), ch. 10.
  11. The English translations of this essay vary. Those used in this review were from Theodore Abel, *Systematic Sociology in Germany* (1929; New York: Octagon Books, 1965), ch. 4 and from Gloria B. Levitas, ed., *Culture and Consciousness* (New York: George Braziller, 1967), pt. 2.
  12. Charles G. Hempel and P. Oppenheim, "The Logic of Explanation," *Philosophy of Science* 15 (1948): 135-75.
  13. Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (1939; New York: Harper & Row, 1972), ch. 1.
  14. Idem, *Meaning in the Visual Arts*.
  15. Burkhardt, *Renaissance in Italy*.
  16. *Ibid.*, vol. 1.
  17. Edward M. Gibson, "The Impact of Social Belief on Landscape Change: A Geographical Study of Vancouver, British Columbia" (Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 1970).

## CHAPTER 10

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# THE LANDSCAPE INDICATORS SCHOOL IN GERMAN GEOGRAPHY

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ROBERT GEIPEL

Translated by Philip Wagner

Relatively little information has reached the English-speaking academic community concerning developments in German geography of a social science character since World War II. Although Joseph Hajdu has surveyed the ideas of leading German social geographers like Wolfgang Hartke, Hans Bobek, and their students for English-speaking readers in a review article, "Toward a Definition of Postwar German Social Geography,"<sup>1</sup> and this was followed by a further discussion among Hajdu, Bartels, and Peucker,<sup>2</sup> the most recent names of German authors that might be recalled in the English-speaking world would still be those of Christaller and Loesch. In Germany Christaller has not received such recognition; in the classical terms of being officially accepted—with title and tenure, in his own institute, with a professional staff and membership on a recognized faculty—Christaller was always a "nonperson" for official German academic geography. Whenever he appeared at professional meetings a halo of respect and awe would develop around this man so honored abroad and so unsuccessful at home, but there would also be surprise that he, who was so brilliant scientifically, could be so politically naive, allowing himself to be taken in by the opportunists of the Nazi period as well as later by those of the half of Germany that went to the Communists. Until shortly before his death, he did not fit the spirit of the times in German geography. It was only with the quantitative revolution that he was accorded his due standing as one of its ancestral figures—something that had never been in doubt in the English-speaking world.

Meanwhile, scholars in anglophone countries are coming to regard the quantitative revolution not only as a fruitful epoch and above all one that enriched the scientific tool kit but also as a development not immune from a further paradigmatic change. It is giving way in turn to a "behavioral revolution," a concern for questions of perception, in which, although none of the recently acquired techniques need fall into

oblivion, a geography of values and a higher degree of social engagement than before are nevertheless given much more prominence.

The behavioral environment focus—as well as the “landscape” focus that has been exposed recently in Germany (especially by Hard<sup>3</sup>) as the ideology of a whole generation of scholars—are coming into repute again in the literature in English. As authors like Lowenthal and Yi-Fu Tuan publish on English landscape tastes or personal encounters with the landscape, it may be timely to point out how strong the undercurrent of social and behavioral emphasis was in German social geography of the 1950s and 1960s, when Hajdu was able to see only the dangers of selling out to sociology and a “danger of social determinism.”

Indeed Hartke, for instance, included the term *Verhalten* (behavior) in the title of an article in 1959, “Gedanken über die Bestimmung von Räumen gleichen sozialgeographischen Verhaltens.”<sup>4</sup> This “behavior” is guided by cognition. Research is thus concerned less with objective measures of geographical factors during man’s decision-making process than with the perceived meaning for the individual and the group that is attributed to a given factor. Literally and in a detailed quotation, one can read this in the original:

One part of this work process of human beings on earth is registered in what we call landscape or, more narrowly, cultural landscape. Into these processes that occupy mankind’s earthly existence enter all the available or recognized geofactors and their characteristics, as early as the stages of speculation and motivation. They do not, however, simply take their role in speculation and motivation as determined by some one or another absolute property, such as can be scientifically established for many physical geographic factors. The role of geofactors in motivation is determined rather by *the value system obtaining at the time* among the social groups involved. The place of geofactors in this value system—how they are evaluated—can therefore vary greatly in practical terms under different circumstances, for characteristics that remain objectively unaltered. Properties that vary with time or regionally in the way they enter into the speculations of social groups may correspond scientifically to the “real” ones, but they can also just as well be *wholly or partially imagined properties*. They do not forfeit thereby any of their reality for landscape forming processes<sup>5</sup> (emphasis added).

The phrase “imagined properties” is particularly important in this text. The word *imagined* contains the kernel of the perception approach and of a program for investigating mental maps, but its promise



could still not be fulfilled using only the methods of the fifties and early sixties. The question of “imagined properties” was never followed through experimentally. It first had to serve for nearly twenty years as a figure of speech, a formula for representing a point of view valid among colleagues of that period, before enough material had been amassed to support a controversial position. Typical, too, is the context of Hartke’s revolutionary conception of 1959. His article begins with the words, “The landscape is the surface that is the subject of all geographic science [and deals with] processes that impress themselves on landscape.” To be sure, Hartke and his Frankfurt students, also under the influence of Horkheimer and Adorno, were primarily interested in man and in perceptions and values specific to given human groups. This interest could be manifested, however, only according to the rules of the game peculiar to German geography in the fifties, in some declared connection with the landscape. Such emphasis on the landscape and the particular indicators in it that are identifiable by social geography as pointing to underlying social processes was maintained in order not to challenge the social consensus held by the majority of professional colleagues in geography who hold traditional views. One points out indicators like “social fallow” (*Sozialbrache*<sup>6</sup>) or differences of intensity between rural and urban forms of land use; one maps frequencies of shop window displays, malls, and parking meters or studies specialty crop farming, all as visible elements of agricultural or city landscapes attesting to ongoing social processes, even though these elements provide only an alibi for research interests of a more strongly social scientific orientation. The linguistic isolation of anglophone geographers has hindered such ideas from becoming fruitful earlier in perception research in England and North America.

### **A Trend in German Social Geography, 1950–1960: The Identification of Indicators**

In a time of increasing dissatisfaction that geographers are dealing only with the isotropic surfaces of ahistorical landscapes or with trend surfaces that suppress local irregularities and context, while the other social sciences are just beginning to rediscover the environment for themselves,<sup>7</sup> it is fitting to take another look at a trend of German geography of that period, a trend dealing with what was “visible.” At this moment persons in Germany are busy catching up on a ten-year time lag behind the Scandinavian and Anglo-American work in the newer quantitative research. In this respect we thus have nothing new to offer. The interest in social problems became so acute during one of

its earlier phases as an aspect of landscape study, however, that the landscape henceforth provided only the pretext for reflecting upon man in his imprisonment in status-governed behavior.

The designation "the Indicator Approach" is employed for this trend in a detailed study of the history of the discipline.<sup>8</sup> This approach became possible, Thomale thinks, because the human ecological school of Park and his successors grew out of urban sociology and was not able to lure away any interest from what German geographers called the "cultural landscape" (*Kulturlandschaft*), which became the research domain of classic German scholars like Schlüter or Passarge from which generations of German geographers did not dare depart.

The most fundamental and the sharpest analysis of this fixation of generations of German geographers on the "cultural landscape" has been provided by Hard in numerous articles. In a varied series of writings ranging from studies in linguistic philosophy (or etymology as a form of thought<sup>9</sup>) to the analysis of the diffusion of concepts,<sup>10</sup> Hard succeeds in tracing the drift of this central idea through separate disciplines by means of a massive content analysis and in revealing its strategic importance as a unifying research paradigm. The landscape concept became known to American colleagues only in a rather muted version by way of the school of Carl Sauer, with its concern to explain the human occupancy of an area in a relatively traditionless continent, so that its object of investigation provided only slight historical depth. In areas with a much longer tradition of settlement, however, it was harder to alter the paradigm of "landscape."

Such a paradigmatic shift as that from landscape geography to regional science has followed through all the phases described by Kuhn.<sup>11</sup> The new theory has to "... attack the central concepts of the conservative orthodoxy ..."; it must "... have a new outlook, bestow new and confusing names on old concepts, make elder academic colleagues insecure and arouse the intellectual interest of the younger ones, being difficult enough to scare off the more stupid and easy enough to attract the sufficiently gifted." Whereas the battle is in full swing in Germany and many of the elders are driven to frustration while talented younger people have become curious about new things, in the anglophone world the next paradigm shift seems to be in evidence as there are calls for a humanistic geography. It might therefore be timely to reassess some of the beginnings of German social geography like the indicator approach, which tried to open the eyes of professional colleagues, preoccupied with what could be apprehended visually to the social processes concealed behind the observable reality. In this undertaking it was largely rural landscape elements whose social genesis was examined.

The rural landscape was especially important because the dominance of natural factors, above all soil and climate, seemed in these

cases self-evident, so that it promised to be most rewarding to mount the assault against geographic deterministic concepts there. In addition, the dismantling of the notion of "a people bound by space" (*Volk ohne Raum*) was aimed at the repudiation of the conceptual baggage of "Blood and Soil," a National Socialist paradigm that had virulently infected geopolitics.<sup>12</sup> Finally, a kind of factional dispute between physical and cultural geography is evident in the interest in agrarian land use. One group, devoted to research in apolitical subjects, survived Hitler's Reich better than did the other, among whom far fewer of the older people were able to come through the Nazi period without having to give at least lip service to the regime. These few attempted to reinforce their positions by aggressions upon physical geography; that is, by tracing back to their social origins certain elements of the rural landscape whose natural determination seemed certain. A few examples in what follows will substantiate this claim.

### 1. The Discussion Concerning Social Fallow (*Sozialbrache*)

In many densely populated parts of Germany, it was noted after the currency reform in the 1950s that fertile soils were no longer being farmed. Only a few years earlier the most intensive sort of cultivation had attempted to wrest from them a food supply for a hungry population. What was responsible for such a process of land falling fallow was not exhaustion of the soil or "climatic determination," i.e., physical geographic factors, but rather a change in values among the classes controlling the land. Faced, as occupational status was shifting, with the alternatives of either continuing as farmer-factory workers or becoming full-time workers without farming activity, farmers adopted the values of an industrial society in their endeavor to secure a livelihood. Depending on income levels, pressures toward social conformity in the different areas, and hesitancy because of "bad conscience" and the conflict with traditional norms, the more enterprising farmer-workers disengaged themselves from an agrarian condition that had become burdensome and damaging to their prestige. The occurrence of "social fallow" could thus be seen as a visible indicator of altered values, and this knowledge could help avoid expensive errors in investment such as the consolidation of agricultural parcels in areas where most landholders were no longer prepared to continue as farmers. Here, furthermore, one can see the planning orientation that was established early in the "Frankfurt-Munich School" of social geography. Irreversible social processes were under way in areas with a high proportion of social fallow. Thus, for example, the cultivation techniques necessary for agricultural activity were already falling into oblivion among the next generation. Today people in vacation areas are anxious to conceal the disturbing and unesthetic impression of uncultivated and unweeded land from

visitors who come hoping to find a wholesome world in the countryside. The concept of “social fallow” soon leads into a discussion of nature conservation and landscape esthetics. Figure 10-1 shows that after the monetary reform in the Federal Republic of Germany the phenomenon of social fallow set in. Hartke’s article of 1953 (see note 6) opened the discussion and coined the term *Sozialbrache*. This term made its way through various disciplines: landscape conservation, for instance, took it up in 1956; forestry, in 1958; the literature on recreation and tourism, in 1961. Influential in the diffusion of the term was the conference of the working group in agricultural geography in 1958. The Manshold plan for the agrarian development of the countries of the European Community in 1968 catapulted the discussion into high politics because the overproductivity of agriculture demanded that the less productive parts of the union (mountain areas, etc.) be taken out of production. But what to do with the new wastelands?

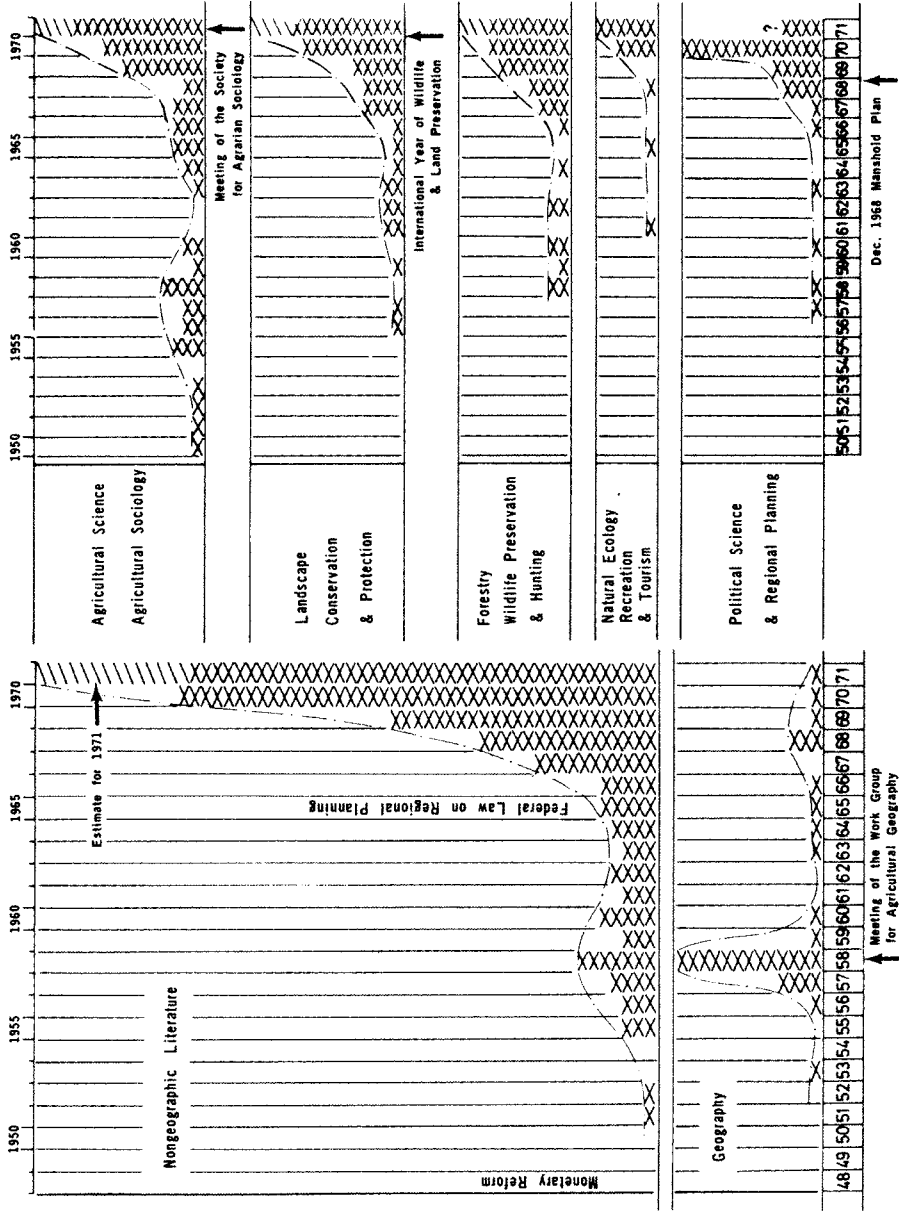
This situation is today the object of new legislative proposals that seek to get rid of this interference with tourism by imposing obligations to tend and care for the land and to legitimize agricultural subsidies in new ways. Typically, the first constituent *Land* of the Bundesrepublik to apply such a law was Baden-Württemberg, the country of cleanliness and neatness and of a Puritan work ethic, where uncultivated land was seen as an affront to the moral injunction of Goethe, “*Was du ererbt von deinen Vätern hast, erwirb es, um es zu besitzen*” (You must earn by hard work what you have inherited from your fathers, if you would truly possess it). Under the motto, “*Eigentum verpflichtet*” (Property Imposes Obligations) the landowner is expected either to keep his parcels in a “clean” condition or to pay a landscape caretaker to do so. This infringement of the rights of property (unthinkable in a country like the United States, with its waste-making society) follows from a certain moralistic conception of landscape and, so, is in the last analysis a problem of environmental perception and an element in a geography of values.

## 2. Variations in the Intensity of Landscape Use

Observations that attribute an existing land use not to fundamental natural potential but to the persistence of social values might also be mentioned as examples of the role of societal values and attitudes. The present author has, for example, been able to show how in a traditional vine-growing region, the abandonment of vine cultivation in Protestant districts and its retention in the Catholic districts followed a preestablished denominational boundary that could not be traced to any ecological differences.<sup>13</sup>

No doubt wine making enjoyed a higher standing among the Catholics than among the Protestants, who had become cider drinkers, in-

Figure 10-1. Diffusion of the Term "Social Fallow"



After Gertrud Steinhauser.  
 NOTE: This graph is a quantitative analysis of 223 titles of Bibliography no. 25, Bundesanstalt für Vegetationskunde, Naturschutz und Landschaftspflege, Bonn-Bad Godesberg, 1971.

an example of humanistic geography at its best. The question from his discomfited colleagues, Is this geography? could never dissuade Hartke from pushing the frontiers of the profession farther and farther into social realms.

### 3. The Indicator Approach in Urban Geography

It was typical of the indicator approach in German geography in the early 1960s that it attempted first to expose processes of the social genesis of landscape phenomena as they appeared in the *rural* landscape. Behind social fallow, the “greening” of the landscape,<sup>19</sup> afforestation,<sup>20</sup> or so-called “specialty farming” lay the motive forces of change in occupational status, upward mobility, reinvestment of profits, and occupational prestige.<sup>21</sup> In order to recognize these it was necessary to go more and more deeply into the mental and motivational structure of social groups. Accordingly, the investigator, in order to explain his observations, always had to borrow theories from sociology, social psychology, and ethnology. Geography provided only the stage on which these disciplines appeared as the actors. The study regions were drawn from the Rhine-Main district and the rest of South Germany under the influence of the Frankfurt metropolis: the American city of West Germany where every process evolved especially rapidly and with the clarity of a laboratory experiment. When Hartke moved from Frankfurt to Munich, his school turned from problems of landscape to problems of townscape. The compulsion to depict “landscape expression” was softened and gradually dropped. As a result, this branch of German social geography did not greatly differ any longer from the human ecology approach of Park and his Chicago school.

At first the search for “visible evidence” for the underlying value systems of decision makers was again undertaken. Thus the shopping mall (*Passage*) as an element of urban geographic form—an expansion of merchandising space in the central business district (CBD) through the incorporation of interior courtyards, the building of passageways lined with shops, and the development of rights-of-way through apartment blocks—was considered as an indicator for certain types of investment by capital interests.<sup>22</sup> The mall was connected with a particular urban geographic situation; it could be developed profitably only where a strict limit was placed on vertical growth of the CBD by land use regulations. In Munich a traditional restriction of the number of stories to protect the city’s silhouette from any kind of “Manhattanization” forbade the erection of skyscrapers that could have overtopped the landmark towers of Frauenkirche, Munich’s cathedral.

But the craft of motivation research was harder to practice on such examples. It became evident that the methods of empirical social research that Hartke’s school introduced into German social geography

could indeed trace down the motives for landscape-shaping behavior on the part of decision makers like farmer-workers, part-time cultivators, vineyardists, and so on, who were responsible for social fallow and specialty farming; but it was immediately much harder to gain insights into the decisions of major bankers, insurance companies, real estate concerns, and other CBD landowners. Using as clues to the advance of commercial functions into residential areas, indicators like (1) shop window densities, (2) the number of parking meters, (3) the occurrence of illuminated signs, and (4) the vertical expansion of business functions upward from the ground floor until they filled a whole building (after the example of Frankfurt's prime business street, the *Zeil*<sup>23</sup>), Hartke carried on in Munich on the basis of his pioneering work in Frankfurt. But the business of "visible evidence" was less and less satisfying as the decision makers became increasingly anonymous. Again, a later attempt in the 1970s to apply the morphological methods, taking the refinishing of facades as an indicator of an intention to preserve buildings in the zone in transition, failed in its early stages. Restoring the *Jugendstil* facades of patrician streets in Munich, as in the Marxvorstadt or Lehel districts, as indicators of a certain "nostalgia" may have amounted to something more during the preparations for the Munich Olympics than merely estheticism joined with civic vitality (beautification schemes on the part of the city). The spatial extent of such facade renewal might also, for example, have stood for the determination of home owners not to let certain districts fall victim to the pressure of CBD expansion. Given more pressing problems in the city, such aspects could be treated simply from the standpoint of architectural sociology; and they promised no great contributions toward theory building. The curiosity of a younger generation among Hartke's students furthermore could no longer be satisfied by a morphological approach. The works of Ruppert, Schaffer, Ganser, and Maier followed processual and functional formulations. Political electoral behavior,<sup>24</sup> educational behavior,<sup>25</sup> mobility behavior,<sup>26</sup> tourism,<sup>27</sup> and also crime<sup>28</sup> could not be analyzed using "visible" indicators.

### **Methods of the Landscape Indicators School**

As mentioned, it was the intention of Hartke and his school to emphasize the landscape-forming decisions of social groups and, indeed, of individuals.<sup>29</sup> This called for very small, disaggregated areal units (field parcels, vineyards, city lots) and the development of social mapping as the most important method. Land use maps no longer contained, as they formerly had, data covering only variables such as crops, crop rotation,

and the frequency of rotation but also indications of the social status, occupation, age, and family status of the owner or user of the lot. Ownership or usufruct conditions, the size of enterprises, and other salient factors were likewise mapped,<sup>30</sup> including particular variables such as the place of origin of the persons working the land parcels; for example, the outpost settlers (*Ausmärker*) from neighboring districts.

Criticism has been directed at the micro-scale of such a geography, but it could not be denied that important new insights into man-environment relations could be gained in this fashion. Above all, concepts like "soil quality," "locational advantage," and the like were exposed as dependent on human standards of evaluation and revealed to be incorrect as a simple statement of geographic determinism. It was indeed part of the programmatic objective of Hartke and his school to refute definitively concepts like "the urge toward spatial growth" (*Raumzwang*) that had been such a baneful threat to geography in the geopolitical phase during the Nazi regime.

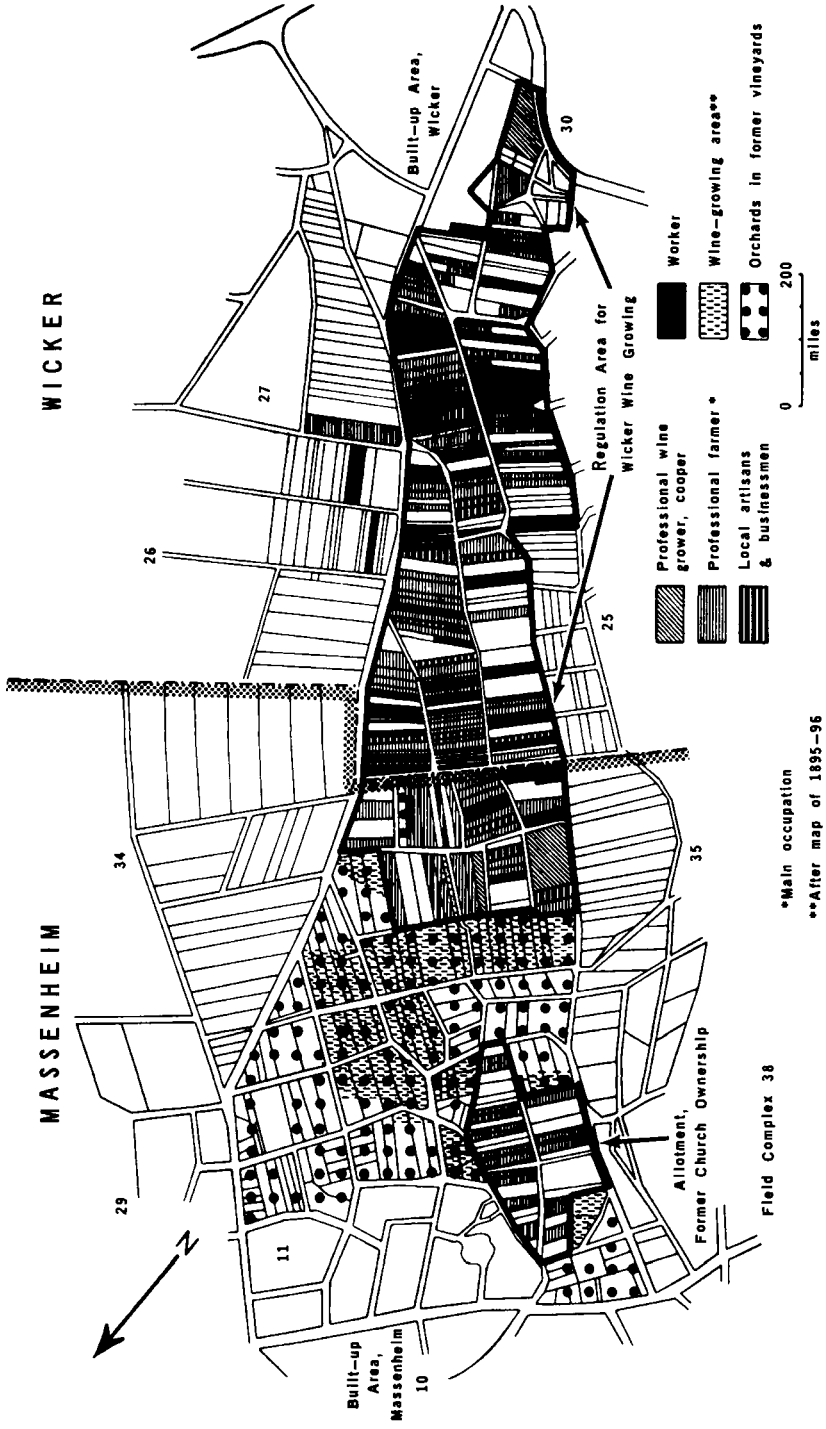
A map by the present writer from the earlier phase of the landscape indicators school<sup>31</sup> may be taken as representative of many such mapping efforts (figure 10-2).

In the Rhine-Main region between Frankfurt and Wiesbaden two cantons, Protestant Massenheim and Catholic Wicker, adjoin on a southwesterly inclined marly slope north of the Main along an old territorial and denominational boundary between Hessen-Darmstadt and Kurmainz. The district limit is also the boundary of two systems of evaluation in land use decisions. For each parcel a record was made as to whether the cultivator was a professional wine grower, professional farmer, local artisan, or worker. The small circles show how, in Massenheim, less labor intensive fruit farming has pushed out and displaced the more labor intensive wine growing. In Wicker the parcel structure follows a stricter pattern (at right angles to the slope) prescribed by established regulations for wine growing.

In the field area of Massenheim, in contrast, parcels are also aligned to the slope and are juxtaposed with newer stands of fruit trees. The individuality of the landholders will not permit any coordinated allotment pattern to be prescribed. The social group of workers is excluded from use of the more favored sites, the *Kirchenstück*, where the church was the landowner in former times; whereas in the Catholic canton parcels of workers, vineyardists, artisans, and farmers are spatially mixed in their landholdings. In Wicker, wine growing has even reached over to plots 26 and 27, the level fields on the far side of the road that connects the villages of Wicker and Massenheim. This clearly shows that neither the location on the marly slope nor a southwesterly exposure to the sun alone determines whether wine grapes will be grown, in isolation from membership in a society with compatible values.



Figure 10-2. Social Mapping of the Massenheim-Wicker Wine-growing Area



always operated in the same direction for a territorial unit contribute over time to a characteristic impress on the land. Max Weber's famous essay, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, contains, for the present writer, a challenge to inquire into the materialization of a concept like the "economic spirit" in the form of a cultural landscape. Weber's theory came from external sources, and the local area was studied as a laboratory to confirm the theory on the basis of local elements that fell within its range.

At the same time, an existing "geographic theory" could be refuted, that which pronounced a common identity for phenomena with a similar appearance. Even phenomena morphologically the same, vineyard parcels on a slope, could *mean* different things genetically, functionally, and processually. The hypothesis of a single meaning for cultural geographic features consequently had to be rejected. The relative form of the vineyards in a comparison between Wicker and Massenheim represented only an instantaneous "snapshot" of a process that grew out of various roots and led to varied outcomes but happened to be for a given moment morphologically similar.

## Conclusion

The Massenheim-Wicker study mentioned above was published in 1952. By the early sixties it probably could no longer have been written. In the meanwhile social geography had developed subtler methods for investigating social processes than documenting them by way of morphologically conspicuous indicators. Four causes were responsible for the gradual decline of this approach:

1. Since important social-spatial processes that may not leave any mark in the landscape exist, the effectiveness of the landscape indicator approach is severely restricted.<sup>34</sup>
2. Because not all conspicuous material forms allow unambiguous reasoning from cause (process) to effect (indicator), their relationship finally remains ambivalent.
3. The indicator approach largely rests on intuitive theory and may demand too much interpretation. It is usually subjective, and measurement is elusive. It is not necessarily a reliable instrument for prediction, such as planning would need.
4. The indicators approach is often uneconomical. If one wishes to isolate the effects of changing occupational patterns on the incidence of social fallow, it would be more practical to investigate the changes in attitudes and daily life lying behind this phenome-

non directly with a questionnaire rather than to approach it over the long detour of possibly ambiguous visible indicators in the appearance of a landscape. "To be sure, the 'landscape' is often more sensitive, more immediately intelligible, and sometimes also a more precise register than are official statistics, but it is more ambiguous and not infrequently in its turn less sensitive than various social science methods."<sup>35</sup>

Has the indicators approach been dismissed as worthless and obsolete by these four judgments? At least two considerations speak to the contrary:

1. The social indicator in early studies already contained a mandate for social action (e.g., in the case of foster children, above). Whenever urban graffiti as territorial markers are used today by youth gangs<sup>36</sup> or social maps are prepared of street art and wall inscriptions or of houses marked for demolition, these methods furnish danger signals of inner city degenerative processes. In this manner the method of visible indicators may be applied in a very appropriate way for social planning purposes.
2. If geography does not wish to become an exotic discipline purely for specialists and instead wants to open the eyes of persons in child and adult education to problems and processes that stand in the way of a humane development of our society, it must command easy ways of communication in order to make itself understood. "To see with one's own eyes" convinces better than simple verbal procedures. In discussions about ecological questions the early warning function of indicators, especially with regard to man-made hazards, is being resurrected.

To this perhaps can be added the key value of the indicator approach for the paradigm of environmental perception. The formerly prevalent chain of reasoning, "environment-man-behavior," has received a new component in the introduction of concepts of perception and imagery, one that makes it possible for us to look at man-environment relationships more realistically. The image is decisively marked by the value system that guides individuals or social groups in their assessment of a given environmental "fact." If Downs asks, "What factors do people consider important about their environment, and how, having estimated the relative importance of these factors, do they employ them in their decision-making activities?"<sup>37</sup> the social geographic school of Hartke in West Germany already had some, if certainly not all, of the answers to such questions in the 1950s.

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## CHAPTER 11

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# REFLECTIONS ON EXPERIENTIAL FIELD WORK

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GRAHAM D. ROWLES

*One must learn  
By doing the thing; for though you  
think you know it  
You have no certainty until you try.*

SOPHOCLES

I have spent several years exploring the “geographical experience,” defined as “involvement within the spaces and places of their lives,” of a small number of older persons living in Winchester Street, an inner city neighborhood of an eastern United States city.<sup>1</sup> The work has involved conversations in their homes, at local bars, at community meetings and a sharing in everyday life experiences through shopping trips, local walks, and visits to their friends. I have attempted to become part of their lives and to establish an authentic relationship with them not merely as a researcher but as a fellow human being, subject to the same intemperance, frustrations, weaknesses, joys, and sorrows. In reality, of course, such friendships emerge; they are not created. I rarely talk of the older persons with whom I was unable to establish a rapport.

This quest for authenticity is the essence of *experiential field work*: the approach—perhaps more accurately, the attitude—I wish to share. With the help of my elderly friends, I try to monitor and to present in an historical, environmental, and social context the wholeness and raw coherence of their experience; for images that do minimal violence to the subtlety and integrity of individuals’ lives are crucial for understanding how they cope with a changing milieu. From such experientially grounded descriptions, I attempt to distill generalizations providing an accurate translation of essential geographical themes. As will become apparent in the following pages, the approach seeks to move beyond conventional participant observation by emphasizing close personal relationships and an unconstrained process of mutual discovery. My observations are not intended to generate a new orthodoxy nor to provide a “how to” manual (a contradiction in terms, given the nature of the research process to be described). Rather, the

objective is to describe and perhaps provide some perspective on several unarticulated themes in contemporary geographical research methodology that, until recently, have constituted little more than restless ground swell within the discipline.

### **Field Work Within a Humanistic Tradition**

Geography has traditionally been a field discipline. Yet the 1960s witnessed withdrawal from exploration of the world beyond the academy. Concern for "scientific" precision in the use of "uncontaminated" information resulted in the separation of both data and interpretation from the experience to which it pertained.<sup>2</sup> Social activism in the early 1970s represented brazen reentry into the world beyond the ivory tower, but it has principally been with the recent emergence of a humanistic emphasis that more gentle inquisitive concern with environmental experience has evolved.<sup>3</sup> For all its eloquent promise, however, humanistic research thus far has only encouraged partial reentry into the field. Reliance upon introspection and anecdotal or literary evidence in part reflects a reluctance to engage in experiential field work. It also stems from uncertainty concerning appropriate methodology.<sup>4</sup> There is a need to embrace a *new style of field research*, one facilitating the exploration not of exotic, faraway lands but of the complex landscapes of persons' experiential worlds. Explorers in other disciplines and a few brave souls in our own have gone before.<sup>5</sup>

### **Philosophical Underpinnings**

To place experiential field work in context requires distinguishing alternative ways in which the geographical experience of a person may be known.<sup>6</sup> First, it is known *subjectively* and implicitly. Marie, eighty-three years old, possessed a sophisticated awareness of the inner city space she had inhabited for fifty-five years. There were the familiar paths she traversed, the distinctive zones of cognitive space she distinguished, the affective meanings with which significant locations were imbued, and the rich mosaic of reminiscences and fantasies the milieu could evoke. Marie did not consciously conceptualize in these terms; rather, her involvement expressed her being within a largely taken-for-granted lifeworld. Such complex intimacy was recast and refined in an implicit internal dialog during the ongoing flow of her everyday experience. Marie could not articulate this knowing, this dynamic transaction



within her physical and social context; and I could not experience it, for I was not she. I had not been shaped by the setting, nor had I infused my being into the milieu over five decades. Subjective knowing is ultimately solipsistic.

Second, Marie's geographical experience may be known or, rather, represented *objectively*. Following the tenets of logical empiricism, it is possible to abstract from the richness of her involvement within the Winchester Street environment and develop a characterization of her experience (activity spaces, mental maps, etc.) that meets criteria of acceptance mutually agreed upon by members of a scientific community. Such criteria comprise a formal logic defining what is consensually acceptable as "true."<sup>7</sup> An important feature of such objective knowing is the necessity for operational definition far beyond the inherent abstraction of language. Herein lies a disquieting paradox. Operational abstraction is necessary to achieve generalization; it enables us to say more about all the Maries in the city. At the same time, this reductionism impoverishes our sensitivity to the uniqueness and, particularly, the existential meaning of her experience. We may become deluded into considering the abstractions as the reality.

So we are presented with a dilemma: subjective knowing is ultimately inaccessible and objective knowing often overly abstracted. There is, however, a third mode of knowing—*interpersonal knowing*:

Examples, not always reciprocal, are a friend knowing a friend, two persons loving each other, a parent knowing a child, or a child knowing a parent, a brother knowing a brother, a therapist knowing a patient, etc. In such a relationship it is characteristic that the knower is involved with what he knows. He is not distant; he is close. He is not cool about it; he is warm. He is not unemotional; he is emotional. He has empathy, intuition for the object of knowledge, i.e., he feels identified with it, the same as it, to some degree and in some manner identical with it. He cares.<sup>8</sup>

If I am able to come to know Marie well, I can gain a special sensitivity to her geographical experience. Together, we may develop a shared awareness, almost communion, from mutual exploration. In such a relationship there is constant feedback as each of us uses the other as a referent in exploring "hypotheses" we develop about each other. More than revelation is involved. Creation of a nonthreatening milieu for interpersonal dialog facilitates the development of commitment involving, in a sense, a becoming of the other. Thus I come to know her because I know myself and her experience becomes a part of mine.

The three modes of knowing are not mutually exclusive. Traces of the social scientist's subjective knowing, albeit diluted according to his introspective capabilities and conditioned by his limited range of experience, find expression in objective representations of geographical experience. Given that we seek sophisticated insight into other people's (non-social scientists') geographical experience, then objective representations are useful only insofar as they unveil and express taken-for-granted aspects of *their* subjective knowing. We have already noted, however, that the subjective knowing of others is not directly communicable. Is this an impasse? Not if we acknowledge that subjective knowing is infused within interpersonal knowing. An alternative presents itself: the generation of experientially grounded descriptive facsimiles of subjective knowing through an intermediary process of developing interpersonal knowing. This is the essence of experiential field research. The quest for interpersonal knowing requires immersion in the everyday worlds of those with whom we study, drawing close to people rather than holding back. It entails developing personal relationships and learning to translate from the "text" of the experience that results. Such requirements have important implications for the research process. In my study I was able to develop some perspective on several of these implications.

### **An Exploration**

My exploration of older persons' geographical experience and, I suspect, all research of this nature are not conceptually elegant, well ordered, or parsimonious. They reflect a fumbling for meaning within an intensely consuming personal experience.

Substantive expectations regarding older persons' environmental experience, culled from scholarly and journalistic literature and supplemented by a personal conception of the aging process, formed a background for my research. The intention was to clarify apparent confusion—existing in the literature and reflected in public policy—regarding the older individual's relationship with the environment. A prevalent image of a progressively shrinking geographical lifespace with advancing years attended by increasing attachment to a local setting was clearly a gross oversimplification. On the other hand, some limitations undoubtedly occur, and so to abandon totally the existing perspective would be equally foolish. It was clear, moreover, that the older person's changing relationship with space involved not only physical mobility dimensions but also perceptual and symbolic components. In-depth study of older persons was needed to explore their relationship with environment from an experiential perspective.

Posing this problem was personally opportune, for I was becoming disenchanted with the abstraction of many environmental cognition studies currently in vogue. There was a gap between the methodologically sound but often trivial conclusions of these studies and the subtle richness and complexity of the perceptions they purported to represent. Yet in anthropology, sociology, and psychology, poignant insights into environmental experience were emerging from participant observation and humanistically oriented "clinical" studies.<sup>9</sup> I resolved to adopt a comparable approach and spent some time exploring a fairly extensive literature concerned with such methodologies.<sup>10</sup> Naively, I considered such preparation would provide appropriate "expertise." Thus armed, I developed a preliminary research strategy and marched expectantly into the field.

### Enlisting Participants

What I had anticipated as a one- or two-month process of enlisting participants took six months; and even then, I was able to secure only five participants. My first visit to each older person, accompanied by a caseworker from the local neighborhood center or by a mutual acquaintance, was invariably successful. After a self-consciously detailed explanation of my research intentions, the somewhat bemused older person would generally acquiesce to my request to visit frequently and "get to know" him or her.

The problems emerged when I contacted them to arrange a second visit. With distressing frequency, the older person would profess to be busy, unwell, or unable to see me for some apparently legitimate reason. Often I would be encouraged to call again after two or three days. Every subsequent visit or telephone call generated a new excuse, however, reflecting polite but firm, slightly embarrassed avoidance. I gained the impression that if all I had wanted was an hour to complete a questionnaire there would have been few problems in assembling a large, cooperative sample. But a long-term commitment to reveal oneself to a stranger whose intentions are somewhat incomprehensible is distinctly more threatening. In retrospect, given the intensity and time-consuming nature of the relationships that eventually developed with the five individuals, Stan, Marie, Raymond, Evelyn, and Edward (whose initial reaction was benign tolerance), my anxiety provoking "failure" turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

### Developing Relationships

Difficulty in enlisting participants paralleled a second mistake arising from failure fully to internalize the implications of an experiential approach. Instead of allowing interpersonal relationships to form naturally

and insights to emerge from the flow of events, I found myself imposing unnecessary structure on the process. First this stemmed from fears about my ability to establish rapport. Particularly during our early meetings, it was difficult to deal with awkward silences, the disjointed mumbblings, the stressful tensions that inevitably arise as persons from different worlds seek to establish some basis for dialog. Surely my research could not be legitimate if I felt so uncomfortable. Too often instead of allowing these tensions to work themselves through I would resort to the shield provided by conventional research methodology, where the questioner's expertise and subject's passive role as respondent are defined by accepted protocol. So I found myself asking questions with the appropriate air of authority.

Second, I was constrained by a neophyte's trepidation concerning the effectiveness of a totally unstructured approach in generating sufficient "data." Having assured a participant of my concern for learning his or her point of view, I would immediately initiate a "guided" conversation to elicit dimensions of activity space or, even worse, produce a blank sheet of paper for a mental-mapping exercise. This Janus-like stance was more than an expression of intellectual insecurity; it conveyed a fundamental mistrust, a demeaning implication that I considered the participants incapable of expressing themselves without formal prompting. Persons do not reveal themselves to individuals they cannot trust. The outcome was reinforcement of distance between us.

There were three styles of reaction from the study participants. Some, perhaps sensing my uncertainty, perhaps simply more committed to their own concerns, merely withdrew. Others, like Stan, a stoic sixty-nine year old, sought to play my game, to conform to my expectations. "What questions do you want to ask?" "I've got nothing to hide," "Go ahead if you want to," "Whatever you like" were phrases I remember.

Fortunately, a few of my contacts displayed a third reaction, born perhaps of their stubbornness but also, I suspect, of a genuine desire to help me. Marie was typical: she fought me, and when she finally got through to me the impact was devastating. My research had evolved on an internalized premise that I was studying the restrictions, withdrawals, and tragic deprivations of impoverished older persons trapped in a socially alienating and physically deteriorating inner city transitional zone. We were discussing a Christmas dinner provided by a local church for the elderly and disabled:

"We had a big banquet. There was over two hundred people, two hundred and forty people. We all bought our tickets. We had a caterer."

"What about the poorer older people?" I interjected.

"The poor ones?" she replied incredulously. "There's no

more poor. Don't talk about poor people. The old people? There's no more of that. The old people now live better than the young ones because they have pensions. They have good pensions, too. So they all live like millionaires now," she concluded emphatically.

The more I pondered this unsettling exchange the more apparent it became that Marie's image of poverty, framed by conditions during the depression, was completely different from my own. Gradually I came to internalize rather than merely to acknowledge that the world she inhabited was a different "Winchester Street," not the run-down environment I could view.<sup>11</sup>

The conversation with Marie, almost six months into the research, was typical of several exchanges with different participants. It was a time of personal anxiety regarding my work, as the protective superstructure that could guarantee "findings" was dismantled and I was forced to do what had been the original professed intention: record and interpret from raw experience. In the following months I was never able to divorce myself totally from my preconceptions; indeed, such an achievement would have constituted a denial of who I was. My anxieties were nonetheless gradually resolved in the emergence of more intimate relationships with the participants. The research process became less stilted and divorced from the experience, more defined by the situation. I began to appreciate the value of three-hour conversations in which little of apparent geographical relevance was revealed. They were crucial for understanding environmental experience in the context of the whole person. A new, more relaxed attitude facilitated a form of sharing in which I came to know and care about the participants and they appeared to come to know and care about me.

Such intimacy sometimes posed a personal dilemma of involvement. I vividly recall my confusion as I stood by Stan's deathbed. He sensed he would never leave the hospital alive. "I'm not getting out of here," he informed me repeatedly. "I hope I go in my sleep." I was embarrassed and did not know what to say. I had not bargained for this kind of experience when the research started. Sitting by his bed, my mind would be a welter of thoughts and emotions. Sometimes I experienced anger. "Damn it. You can't die now. I haven't finished my research." Immediately I would be overtaken by feelings of self-revulsion. Did our friendship mean only this? Thus I would engage in a conflict between my human sensibilities and my scholarly purpose.

### Framing Questions

Most persons, when pressed, can provide a general articulation of their views on racism, the family, or other everyday issues often considered

in participant observation studies. Discussing one's geographical experience is a much more amorphous proposition. It was a problem for both the participants and me. From the participants' perspective, it represented a challenge to identify and articulate implicit dimensions of experience for which they often possessed no appropriate language. Stan's initial puzzlement at my questions was only partly a reaction to my bumbling approach. It also reflected genuine confusion regarding what I meant by terms like *spatial*, *geographical*, *environmental*, and so on. Like most people, his everyday experience did not entail verbalizing such abstract concepts. Yet he experienced space and after only a few meetings professed he could sense a kind of legitimacy in my quest. The problem was one of translation, a difficulty accentuated by my inability fully to articulate my own conception. I could not tell him what I wanted to know, what was relevant, or how *environment* was to be defined. The outcome was that we "fumbled" together, evolving a shared "language," framing questions rather than generating answers, developing a dialog. This was the creative part of the process and occurred, albeit in slightly different form, with each participant.

### Emerging Themes

As the field work progressed fascinating perspectives on geographical experience began to emerge. Intimate affinities with neighborhood space were unveiled. Through poignant personal testimony I came to appreciate the meaning of the local cemetery, final resting place of many friends and a favorite walking place to legally blind eighty-year-old Edward. There were no fast-moving vehicles to trouble him in this haven where he had played as a child. I learned the significance of seventy-six-year-old Evelyn's benign surveillance of events in the narrow zone she could view from her home. There was a rationale behind the regular path of Stan's daily excursions to several bars he patronized; failing physical and cognitive capabilities dictated use of a familiar route. A thriving network of elderly age peers was discovered, providing physical assistance to each other and mutually sustaining through their conversations an image of the neighborhood in its more auspicious past. Gradually, I came to appreciate not only the courage and creativity involved in contrasting adjustments to personal circumstance but also a distinctive form of communal resilience and inventiveness in accommodating to growing old in the changing Winchester Street milieu.

Some of these findings could have been anticipated, but they were the tip of the iceberg. Over months of conversation additional new themes began to surface. At first these appeared as seemingly anomalous individual idiosyncrasies. Marie would animatedly describe trips she had taken to Florida many years previously. She would discuss in elaborate detail the current activities of a granddaughter in Detroit, a

thousand miles distant. Stan would muse on a Polish farmstead he had left in his youth. Raymond, a spritely sixty-nine year old, talked of a garden at his daughter's home in Arkansas:

“See, they got like a playground. There's a fence here and then, there's the other fence. Now in between this fence and that fence *we* make the garden on the right hand side. And they dig sand and everything else. And there's swings just like the playgrounds. On the other side is where *we-they* keep a horse and cow. And these are all trees. There's twenty-three trees with grass.”

On his mantle a clock that told the time in Tokyo would stimulate reflection on his son's current sojourn in the Orient. Also, all the participants spent much time fondly reflecting on the neighborhood that had been. On the other hand, there was surprisingly little reference to physical restriction, to spending more time at home, or to problems of abandonment in a transitional inner city neighborhood. Such reticence was puzzling.

### Making Sense

Slowly, evidence accumulated as I compiled a massive dossier on each person, comprising reams of notes, sketch maps, photographs, many hours of taped conversation, and a rich reservoir of personal impressions. The problem now became making sense of the data. Two processes were involved.

Perhaps the most important was simple *description*, the presentation of raw experience in an account of the participants' lives and what had transpired among us. In our eagerness to dissect, to categorize, to interpret, we often forget that each life has an integrity of its own. Inevitably, even in description there is editing and categorization in the use of words and selection of material for inclusion in a written record. How does one choose? How can one express the dynamic unity of a person's being within his milieu without violating its holistic integrity? Admittedly, I may have failed to establish sufficiently intimate relationships, but there was no mystical emergence of self-evident truths through intuition. Instead the process involved a critical sifting of material and assembling a representative vignette on each individual. Each observation, impression, and potentially relevant segment of recorded dialog was transcribed onto a three-by-seven-inch card. For each individual I developed a set of hundreds of cards. Then many hours were spent sorting and resorting the cards into piles representing emergent themes. Thus a preliminary framework for a descriptive vi-

gnette was evolved. A draft was prepared. In three cases this was composed partly and in two, almost entirely of statements or phrases transcribed from our taped conversations, organized according to apparently consistent themes, and linked by brief descriptive commentary. The manuscript was subsequently discussed with the participants (with the exception of Stan, who had died) in a feedback process intended to extend their involvement into a phase of research from which conventionally they would be excluded. With Edward this entailed a reading of the manuscript, followed by lengthy debate and considerable modification, so that the outcome was a mutually generated artifact. In most cases, however, lack of familiarity with writing as a medium for expression seemed to stimulate passive acquiescence to much of what I drafted. Sadly, the creation was too much my own.

The desire for order invites comparison among individuals and the quest for *generalization*. Thus in addition to the raw description of individuals' geographical experience, I sought to organize the material within a conceptual framework that could incorporate the new themes emerging from my friendships. This translation was no "Eureka!" phenomenon characterized by flashes of blinding insight but a laborious, fuzzy process of ongoing interpretation firmly grounded in the "text" of the field experience. I cannot describe the process in detail beyond noting that it involved a succession of conceptualizations that were explored, refined, critiqued, and often rejected.<sup>12</sup> The details of what finally crystallized have been presented elsewhere.<sup>13</sup> Here it is necessary to trace only the broad outlines.

The participants' geographical experience expressed a subtle meshing of space and time, embracing not only physical and cognitive involvement within a contemporary setting but also vicarious participation in temporally and/or spatially displaced environments. A synthesis of four overlapping modalities—action, orientation, feeling, and fantasy—seemed to provide a useful lexicon for describing geographical dimensions of the participants' being within their lifeworlds.

Action, defined as "physical movement in space," entailed patterns of activity on scales ranging from the individual's immediate proximal setting, through routine service, social, and recreational trips, to occasional long-distance excursions to visit family or vacation. Orientation was used as a designation for the cognitive differentiation of space, forming a backdrop to actions and consisting of an array of mental schemata. A personal schema provided basic psycho-biological orientation, an awareness of left and right, horizontal and vertical, back and front. Refined discrimination of the characteristics of oft-traversed routes formed the basis for a series of linear "specific" schemata. Finally, the participants' orientation could be summarized in relation to an underlying differentiation of the environment into annular spatial zones



of progressively less-refined cognitive definition away from home. Feeling, a third modality, expressed emotional attachments to place, both affective commitments to locations of highly personal significance and the more socially defined shared aura of a "field of care" sustained among a set of elderly peers.<sup>14</sup> Each of these modalities had been identified, albeit under numerous designations, in previous research. It was, however, the crystallizing of the fourth modality, geographical fantasy, that accounted for the observations I had initially been unable to explain and that provided the key to integration of all the modalities.

Marie's reflections on Florida and involvement in her daughter's world, Stan's musings on a Polish childhood, Raymond's garden in Arkansas and his participation in an Oriental city, and all the participants' cherished reminiscences on the neighborhood of a past era could be understood as expressions of geographical fantasy. Participation in events of the past or in worlds of faraway relatives and friends implied *vicarious immersion in the places of the past and in displaced contemporary locations*. Two forms of such fantasy were isolated: (1) reflective geographical fantasy involving reminiscence, a selective vicarious immersion in environments of the past and (2) projective geographical fantasy, involving vicarious participation in contemporary, although spatially removed, geographical settings. Indeed, in their reveries the participants immersed themselves in a wide range of settings linked to their life histories.

Identifying this modality was a prelude to appreciating the role of time within the participants' geographical experience. It also explained the relative unimportance of the deteriorating contemporary physical setting in their lives. Geographical experience for these older persons was not merely behavioristic locomotion through a timeless Cartesian space. It was complex dynamic immersion in a "lived space" with temporal depth and meaning as well as spatial extent. I began to see more clearly why a prevalent societal image of a progressively shrinking geographical lifespace with advancing years was such a demeaning oversimplification.

From here it was but a short step to the elaboration of a dynamic person/environment transactional model involving a changing emphasis within and among the modalities of geographical experience. Could it be that as individuals age and actions become more constrained, there is a related expansion in the role of geographical fantasy? As this occurs would it not be logical to expect the kinds of adjustments in orientation and in feelings about space that the participants acknowledged they had made? Certainly, as I explored these ideas with my elderly friends, there was general consensus that such an interpretation was a useful initial hypothesis.

The purpose here, however, is not to discuss concepts emerging

from the study but rather the process through which they were derived. Is it possible to generalize from this experience, to come up with consistent themes that guide the conduct of such research? Acknowledging the danger of developing enslaving tenets of a methodological creed, insensitive to the situational realities of each unique field experience,<sup>15</sup> it is useful to identify aspects of the approach that may be helpful to fellow explorers.

## Elements of Experiential Field Work

### Involvement with Participants

The most critical feature of experiential field work is the type of relationship developed with participants. In traditional survey research, most exchanges are structured to become little more than an exercise for the respondent in guessing a priori preconceptions of the researcher. The phrasing of questions and limitation of response categories provide the necessary guidance in making appropriate assessments. In essence, the researcher has decided what the respondent thinks before he enters the field. In contrast, an experiential approach requires that, instead of remaining aloof and apart, the researcher endeavors to establish viable open relationships with those he studies. No attempt is made to minimize the “contamination” of intervention in an existential situation.<sup>16</sup> Emphasis is placed on interpersonal knowing through dialog rather than observation. The relationship grows beyond empathy and supersedes the exchange of individual worlds. Through “cooperative dialog” it becomes a mutually creative process:

Not only does the subject studied receive valuable feedback from the observer, but the observer also obtains valuable clarifying knowledge regarding what he observed from the experiential report of the person studied regarding his own experience. Both the person researched as well as the research-person are thus being changed through the existential research method—they change each other.<sup>17</sup>

The outcome is a “*text transcending the prior experience of both participants*”<sup>18</sup> in which previously taken-for-granted aspects of experience (constituents of subjective knowing) are revealed.

The quest for such rapport is easy to profess, more difficult to achieve. It necessitates permeating barriers of class, race, education, personality, sex, and, in my own work, age. As Evelyn remarked on one

occasion, much to my chagrin: "You, you're young. You look like a child." Overcoming such barriers involves entering social and perceptual territories we are often ill-equipped to explore. This requires patience in evolving a common language, in establishing a comfortable intimacy; for, experientially, down the street may be a thousand miles away. Sometimes a professed willingness to share cannot be actualized because participants (and I include the researcher here) are unwilling or unable to reveal themselves in seeking common ground. The development of productive relationships entails investment and commitment from both parties.

"Going native" represents a contrasting hazard, a problem of success to the point where involvement becomes counter-intuitive.<sup>19</sup> With Stan, for example, it was as if we had established a separate reality. I began to talk and even to think within a different framework, using his phrases and his terse style of interacting with his barroom friends. It became increasingly difficult to pull back from the experience, to think critically, and to interpret. This, of course, is the fundamental dilemma. Without being inauthentic or risking invidious manipulation, how does one establish a balance between a level of commitment encouraging participants to reveal themselves and one facilitating the translation and communication of insights in language intelligible to one's academic peers? One learns to lead a somewhat ambivalent existence.

### Lengthy Time Investment

Building a trustful, nonthreatening relationship takes time. In general, increased duration of interaction and a leisurely pace enhance interpersonal dialog and result in more subtle insight:

It turns out to be most efficient in the long run to give up active concentration and striving to understand quickly. The danger here is of premature explanation or theory, which, furthermore, is likely to be too much one's own construction or creation.<sup>20</sup>

Concern for the person's existential reality dictates that participants be granted freedom to influence the duration of an inquiry and be encouraged to express themselves in their own way, however long this may take. Often problems with articulating complex or inchoate impressions are such that important themes are exposed only in fleeting moments of communion embedded within the flow of everyday conversation. Thus, after we had known each other for over six months, a chance remark from Marie concerning a firearm she possessed resulted

in conversation producing significant insights into the fear that suffused her image of neighborhood space.

Clearly, such leisurely research does not align well with the rigid temporal constraints of grant or contract research. It also can lead to other practical difficulties. Participants are not always available over an extended period. The visit of a long-lost relative or a sudden illness may temporarily curtail an exchange. It may be necessary to reestablish the intimacy of a close friendship before further insights can be developed. More seriously, participants may lose interest and choose to withdraw. Finally, the chances of involuntary withdrawal are significantly increased, as in the case of my own work, where Stan and Edward died before the research was completed. Problems of withdrawal are especially acute because of the necessarily limited number of participants.

### Small Numbers of Participants

Lengthy time investment coupled with the intricacies of intensive involvement militates against large samples. Breadth of generalization is sacrificed for depth of insight.

Small study panels generally evolve; they are not defined a priori in a process that is only partially systematic. In my own work this involved first developing an inventory of elderly Winchester Street residents. The listing was compiled with the assistance of local churches, social agencies, and community informants. This process also facilitated coming to know several local residents, who introduced me to likely candidates. The presence of these individuals eased the stresses of initial contact and, in the eyes of potential participants, seemed to "legitimize" the research.<sup>21</sup> Even so, there was a high attrition rate. Of twenty-six individuals initially contacted, only five remained in the final study panel. My relationship with Edward, one of the five, developed moreover from a meeting that could not have been predicted. In response to a community newsletter feature on my work, he volunteered for the research. Study participants often arise not through diligent search but from chance encounters with individuals who turn out to be willing informants. An extensive initial dragnet produces a small catch.

Study panels tend to be self-selecting. They are not samples in a statistical sense.<sup>22</sup> Personal judgment is involved in initial selection, and only the more "resilient" individuals who are willing to accept the onus of a long-term commitment survive the early stages. Does this not render of limited worth the resulting insights? There is a danger here of stumbling into one of the snares of adherence solely to an objective mode of knowing: the need for all statements to be framed within a consensually agreed-upon definition of acceptability. Clearly, an orientation towards description of the "whole" person, as an individual,

renders this a moot issue. On this scale every person represents himself. Having described, however, we do try to make generalizations. Surely our "sample" is invalid here? If we are concerned with verification, the answer is yes. But experiential research is not concerned with verification except on an interpersonal level: it is concerned with *discovery*, with developing new insights that cannot be derived within the constraints of traditional protocol. Intersubjective verification by an audience of peers comes at a later stage in the research process.

### Inductive Inference

An important feature of an experiential approach is its emphasis on induction. Insights may stem from interpretation of events or facets of experience mutually explored by the participants. The dialog itself becomes data, reflecting an inductive process as two individuals seek consensual expression of their interpersonal knowing. This data is subsequently inductively edited in developing descriptive vignettes.

A second phase of inductive inference is postinteraction reflection during the process of translating and interpreting the experience for an audience of disciplinary peers. This requires a degree of physical and emotional distancing (much of my writing was undertaken a hundred miles from Winchester Street) and critical sifting of the "text" to identify consistent geographical motifs. The conclusions that emerge from this process are obviously those of the researcher, but to project an aura of authenticity they must represent both persons involved in the relationship. The researcher becomes the translator. He is successful only insofar as he can effect a translation imparting the essence of the participant's subjective knowing as revealed in the interpersonal exchanges that transpired.

It cannot be logically inferred that any interpretation derived in this manner is necessarily applicable to another context or even another person. Comparison with other studies may point to similarities or may be just as effective in highlighting differences among individuals or groups. This does not mean that the research can contribute only to a mammoth pile of unrelated case studies; rather, such inquiry facilitates critique,<sup>23</sup> the identification of original themes, and the posing of new questions. The generalizations that result are "suggestive," even speculative, but they are necessary precursors of grounded theory.

### Alternative Modes of Presentation

Geographers, as distinguished from psychologists and social workers, tend to be more interested in the substantive findings of a study than in the nature of personal relationships between the researcher and other participants. Nonetheless, insights emerging from experiential field work are best presented in a format emphasizing the humanistic

and creative aspects of the inquiry. This normally implies not formal logic or statistical indexes but a subtle sensitivity of expression allowing the reader to identify with the experience and a detailed explication of the process through which conclusions were reached. This entails autobiographical presentation of what has been called the “natural history” of the enterprise.<sup>24</sup> What was the process and how were myriad observations melded into the coherence of the conclusions? Use of the first person, as in this essay, often enhances such an account by more directly communicating the researcher’s role within the research experience. As Bridgeman notes:

When I make a statement, even as coldly (*sic*) and impersonal a statement as a proposition of Euclid, it is I that am making the statement, and the fact that it is I that am making the statement is part of the picture of the activity. In the same way, when you quote a proposition of Euclid the fact it is you who quote it is part of the picture which is not to be discarded. And when I quote you it is I that am doing the quoting.<sup>25</sup>

Often, a novelistic style provides an appropriate medium for expressing the continuity and richness of the field work. Standing by a grave and sharing quiet reminiscences with an elderly man whose friends and relatives lie nearby yield a special kind of interpersonal knowing. The phrases, the tone of voice, even the pauses and periods of silence—all are revealing. I could not know Edward’s experience, but I developed an awareness of his involvement with that place, an awareness that transcended mere knowledge that he had once played there. The difficulty arose in attempting to communicate this sense. Ability to accomplish this is highly dependent on writing skills: it is necessary for the geographer to become poet. And herein lies the rub, for few are so gifted. In agonizing over appropriate phrasing, in the frustration stemming from clumsy efforts to convey mood, and in the process of attempting to project a sense of the experience, the problem of translation was clearly revealed. Problems of accurate representation are common to all inquiry, but they are accentuated when the emphasis is upon subtle nuance. There are no models for writing, no rules to follow apart from the constant striving for authenticity.

A comprehensive account of the research process not only provides a vibrant image of the relationships involved but also furnishes a basis for assessment of the conclusions by the reader. “This is what happened and the sense that was made of it,” it suggests. Credibility is not artificially determined by criteria unrelated to the experience.

## On Attitude: Ethics and Integrity

My observations have focused on operational aspects of experiential field work. In one sense they are deceptive, for the success of such work is usually more dependent on attitude than procedure. The researcher must resolve or at least develop a personally conscionable perspective on a series of ethical issues. The quest for intimacy requires assuming the responsibilities inherent in any personal relationship. If participants are to be engaged as equals, commitment must be reciprocal and mutually satisfying. This raises the specter of exploitation. There are many invidious manifestations of exploitation in the guise of exchange. These range from a veiled promise syndrome, for example, implying that "If you cooperate I can improve your situation," to the sometimes demeaning but often conscience-salving promise of some token pecuniary reward ("Now you're obliged to tell me all you know").

There is an equally real danger that, in a desire for equity, the researcher exploits by *never* allowing a participant to give of himself without direct compensation. In so doing he can reduce an interpersonal relationship to an empty formal transaction. Stan would buy me drinks. When I insisted on always returning the favor, he seemed mildly offended. Eventually, I learned to accept his kindness with more humility. Often a ride to the supermarket or some other small service, proffered not as a bribe but as a natural component of a human relationship, provides sufficient compensation. Sometimes merely to listen and to receive is the greatest gift.

Many ethical dilemmas are avoided by an attitude of scrupulous *honesty* in relationships. There is no place even for benign pretense. The purposes of the research, even if (to the researcher's embarrassment) they can be only vaguely articulated, must be communicated to prospective participants in language they have some likelihood of comprehending. Because such expression may be perceived as threatening or may result in failure to live up to the image of an "all-knowing" social scientist, this may mean difficulty in securing participants. But being honest extends beyond this. It involves developing authentic, often extremely complex, relationships in which mutual dependency may develop. In such relationships reciprocally expressed emotions ranging from love to disdain, from sympathy to anger may be manifest at various times. Some ethical considerations, of course, cannot be resolved through honesty. Problems in the phasing of relationships are among the more intractable.<sup>26</sup> In any human relationship parting can be painful and emotionally draining. Eventually, even if withdrawal is gradual, it is necessary to retreat from the field. We can only rationalize in the

hope that for most participants the benefits accruing from the friendship compensate for the stress of parting.

Ethical concerns are also involved in presenting findings. Detailed consideration of small study panels increases the potential for identification of individuals from careful interpretation of the final report, however much care is taken to insure anonymity through the use of pseudonyms.<sup>27</sup> The necessity of employing maps to display geographical information adds a further dimension to this problem. Inverting or reversing maps and changing place names are only a partial solution here because, due to the necessity of preserving spatial relationships in presenting geographical information, there always ultimately remains the possibility of identification of the location through careful interpretation. There is the problem of misrepresenting the participants. More serious, however, are potential effects stemming from accurate portrayal. To be truthful can also be hurtful when it exposes individual vulnerability. Intellectual integrity may directly conflict with personal responsibility. Unfortunately, there is always a measure of "irreducible conflict."<sup>28</sup>

Resolution of these issues is largely a matter of individual judgment within what is ultimately an intensely personal venture conducted in a personal style and presented as a personal statement. Maintaining the integrity of the experience requires embracing the field work as something beyond the mere collection of data. In this process there lurk attitudinal blinders to snare the unwary. There is danger of romanticism in an exaggerated view of one's significance to participants, in the temptation to eulogize and thus reduce to sentimental banality descriptions of complex lives, and in an ever-present tendency to make unwarranted moralistic inferences. Arrogance, manifest in the delusion that the intensity of one's "method" has generated "truth" rather than a fresh perspective, is another hazard, even more myopic than the naïveté of romanticism.

## **Perspective**

Certainly, there is an element of postresearch rationalization in this essay. I am myself not sure of the extent to which some themes express what I wish I had done rather than what I actually did. Even if it were possible, a litany of all the errors in my study would be embarrassing and largely uninformative, for the situation often defines the mistakes. Overall, however, the strategy adopted was successful in providing fresh insight into geographical experience. In contemporary humanistic geography we profess concern with probing beyond the superficial, with revealing the meanings, values, and intentionalities permeating



existence in space. Yet there is a regrettable paucity of empirical work in this realm. It is time for more of us to venture forth into the field. We can contemplate our navels only for so long.

## Notes

1. Graham D. Rowles, *The Prisoners of Space? Exploring the Geographical Experience of Older People* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978).
2. Anne Buttimer, *Values in Geography*, Association of American Geographers Commission on College Geography Resource Paper no. 24 (Washington, D.C., 1974).
3. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977); Anne Buttimer, "Grasping the Dynamism of Lifeworld," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66 (1976): 277-92.
4. J. Nicholas Entrikin, "Contemporary Humanism in Geography," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66 (1976): 627-29.
5. Elliot Liebow, *Tally's Corner* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967); Robert Coles, *Children of Crisis*, 3 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1964, 1967, 1967); Sharon R. Curtin, *Nobody Ever Died of Old Age* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972); David Ley, *The Black Inner City as Frontier Outpost* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 1974); David Seamon, "Movement, Rest, and Encounter: A Phenomenology of Everyday Environmental Experience" (Ph.D. diss., Clark University, 1977); Michael Godkin, "Space, Time and Place in the Human Experience of Stress" (Ph.D. diss., Clark University, 1977).
6. These observations are modeled on Carl Rogers' succinct consideration of contrasting bases of knowing. Carl R. Rogers, "Toward a Science of the Person," T. W. Wann, ed., *Behaviorism and Phenomenology: Contrasting Bases for Modern Psychology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 109-33. In addition, the discussion draws on insights provided by Maslow. Abraham H. Maslow, *The Psychology of Science: A Reckonance* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1969), especially pp. 102-18.
7. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Doubleday, 1966).
8. Maslow, *Psychology of Science*, p. 103.
9. Coles' work, for example, provides penetrating insight into the "apartness" from environment, the uprootedness pervading the geographical experience of migrant farm workers' children. "Migrant children see everything as temporary. Places come and go, as do people, schools, and fields." Robert Coles, *Uprooted Children* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 91. The image is even more vividly conveyed in a first grader's incredulous observation after his first week in school. "They told me I could sit in that chair and they said the desk, it was for me, and that every day I should come to the same place, to the chair she said was mine for as long as I'm there, in that school—that's what they say, the teachers, anyway." *Ibid.*, p. 35.
10. Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (Chicago: Aldine, 1967); Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969); George J. McCall and J. L. Simmons, *Issues in Participant Observation: A Text and Reader* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969). In addition, many studies include useful sections on method. See for example, Herbert J. Gans, *The Urban Villagers* (New York: Free Press, 1962); Liebow, *Tally's Corner*; Coles, *Children of Crisis*.
11. Gans records a similar, although more gradual, coming to awareness of the environment "inhabited" by the residents of Boston's West End. "I developed a kind of selective perception, in which my eye focused only on those parts of the area that were actually being used by people. Vacant buildings and boarded up stores were no longer so visible, and the totally deserted alleys or streets were outside the set of paths normally traversed, either by myself or by the West Enders. The dirt and spilled over garbage remained, but, since they were concentrated in street gutters and empty lots, they were not really

harmful to anyone and thus were not as noticeable as during my initial observations." Gans, *Urban Villagers*, p. 12.

12. The recordings I had made proved invaluable in this process, for I found that listening and relistening to tapes often revealed nuances I had been unable to sense in the original encounters. I was able to return to the field and both corroborate and further elaborate new themes that emerged in this manner. Some researchers are reluctant to employ tapes because, in addition to technical problems of transcribing many hours of irrelevant material, they feel that the presence of a tape recorder constrains conversation. These writers prefer to record the contents of an exchange by making postinterview notes. After a three-hour exchange I was often in no shape to embark upon an intensive effort at recall. I am also somewhat skeptical regarding the accuracy of such selective transcriptions. I found that, moreover, after a very brief period of adjustment, the participants became oblivious to the small black box on the table. The presence of a tape recorder is probably only a constraint where the duration of contact is limited.

13. Rowles, *Prisoners of Space?*

14. Yi-Fu Tuan, "Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective," Christopher Board, Richard J. Chorley, Peter Haggett, and David R. Stoddart, eds., *Progress in Geography*, vol. 6 (London: Edward Arnold, 1975), p. 236.

15. Richard J. Hill, "On the Relevance of Methodology," *Et Al.* 2 (1969): 26-29, reprinted in Norman K. Denzin, *Sociological Methods* (Chicago: Aldine, 1970), pp. 12-19.

16. When researchers become involved in the experience they are exploring, there is inevitably considerable "contamination" of the outcome. In recent years geographers, perhaps even more than most social scientists, have recoiled from such influence. Today the inevitability of observer effects in all research is more generally acknowledged. Far from being undesirable, such "contamination" is an integral component of experiential research.

17. Rolf Von Eckartsberg, "On Experiential Methodology," Amedeo Georgi, William F. Fischer, and Rolf Von Eckartsberg, eds., *Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology*, vol. 1 (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Duquesne University Press/Humanities Press, 1971), pp. 75-76.

18. Thomas J. Cottle, "The Life Study: On Mutual Recognition and the Subjective Inquiry," *Urban Life and Culture* 2 (1973): 344-60.

19. Raymond L. Gold, "Roles in Sociological Field Observations," *Social Forces* 36 (1958): 217-23.

20. Maslow, *Psychology of Science*, pp. 98-99. Erikson, citing Freud, eloquently explores this phase of "free-floating attention." Erik H. Erikson, "Verstehen and the Method of 'Disciplined Subjectivity,'" Leonard I. Krimmerman, ed., *The Nature and Scope of Social Science* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969), pp. 721-35. Further elaboration is also provided in Blumer's discussion of "exploration" as a distinctive component of the research process. Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, pp. 40-42.

21. Most researchers undertaking this kind of work have also found that community informants, or contact persons, often acting almost as coresearchers, have been important sources of local historical and social background information. In addition, a third party who knows the participants can often provide illuminating perspective on these persons as individuals, a perspective gleaned through having come to know them well over many years.

22. Such panels may, however, form the basis of what Glaser and Strauss term *theoretical sampling*. Theoretical sampling, in contrast with statistical sampling, is not based on any "preconceived theoretical framework"; rather, it is premised on the "saturation of categories," which, in order to facilitate the elaboration of important themes within an emerging theoretical framework, involves the careful selection of participants reflecting the widest possible range of experience. Glaser and Strauss, *Discovery of Grounded Theory*, pp. 45-77.

23. Entrikin, "Contemporary Humanism in Geography."

24. Howard S. Becker, "Problems of Inference and Proof in Participant Observation," *American Sociological Review* 33 (1958): 660.

25. P. W. Bridgeman, *The Way Things Are* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 4.

26. Robert W. Janes, "A Note on Phases of the Community Role of the Participant Observer," *American Sociological Review* 26 (1961): 446-50.
27. The names of all individuals and locations referred to in this essay have been changed.
28. Howard S. Becker, "Problems in the Publication of Field Studies," Arthur J. Vidich, Joseph Bensman, and Maurice R. Stein, eds., *Reflections on Community Studies* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964), pp. 267-84.

## CHAPTER 12

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# LITERATURE AND GEOGRAPHY: IMPLICATIONS FOR GEOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH

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YI-FU TUAN

From time to time geographers have asked the question, What is the relationship between literature and geography? *Relationship* is a vague word, and answers to the question have not been satisfactory. Answers tend to be of three kinds: geographical writing should have greater literary quality, literature is a source material for geographers, and literature provides a perspective for how people experience their world. Throughout there is the tacit assumption that we know the purpose of literature and the modes of expression appropriate to it.

### **Literature**

Literature in the broad sense is written material: it includes everything from handbills and newspapers to collected poems and the contents of scientific journals. In geography, it includes the topographical poem and the regional novel as well as the works of academic geographers. When we require of the graduate student that he know the “geographical literature,” we are thinking of those works that, for reasons that the sociology of knowledge seeks to understand, have come to be canonical in the discipline. There is “literature,” and there is “professional literature.” Both are geographical in the sense of embracing themes such as space, place, nature, and environment. What is the relationship between them?

The relationship between art and science is much clearer in the sister discipline of sociology. Robert Nisbet has clarified the degree to which sociology draws from the same creative impulses—rooted in history—as the modes of representation found in the arts. Quite often art anticipated science. Consider the city. In the West in the nineteenth century, the city came into its own as a social and cultural landscape.

French impressionists favored it: they painted innumerable pictures of public squares, cafes, street corners, city parks, and congested streets. Novelists of the time—notably, Balzac, Dostoevsky, Dickens, Zola, and Stendhal—frequently chose the city as a setting. Later came the sociological works of Tönnies, Weber, and Durkheim. Balzac's *La Comédie Humaine* depicted Paris in dense detail; he populated the metropolis with colorful individuals but also with social types—the same ones that can be found in the sociological treatises of the period. Marx appreciated Balzac's work for its first-rate social documentation and as excellent reading. With regard to the industrial landscape, Nisbet wrote: "Nowhere [are] the underlying historical unity of sociology and the artistic consciousness of the nineteenth century more vividly displayed . . . than in the renderings of the industrial landscape which issue from literature, painting, and sociology alike in that age."<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to sociology, academic geography evolved apart from artistic impulses and movements. Our roots in the humanities are shallow. Following Kant, geographers study natural processes and the "external" aspect of human phenomena. By "external" aspect Kant meant the human world of houses, fields, and customs and the population characteristics that are accountable by physical and biological laws.<sup>2</sup> Excluded from geography are the "internal" aspects that make people quintessentially human; namely, intention and will, ideas and symbols. In comparison with anthropology and sociology, geography has been less influenced by the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment and more by government and commerce: institutions that have at best only a marginal—that is, decorative—interest in literature. Not surprisingly, geography's concern with the arts has been largely decorative. We feel that exposure to the arts will make us more sensitive, that reading literary works will improve our writing style, and that just as pictures (not all strictly necessary) add to the esthetic appeal of our product, so will a few choice quotations from D. H. Lawrence. I am not against decorations, though they incur obvious risks. Thus a plodding but honest style becomes purplish rather than sensitive; that is, "precise," as when we speak of a sensitive scientific instrument; and literary excerpts impede the flow of thought or hide its absence.

## Pictures

There are many kinds of literature and they differ greatly in character. What do they have in common? This question needs to be explored

before we can see how the more purely literary works might enrich the geographer's enterprise. Literature may be said to pinpoint or frame experience, which is made up of innumerable perceptions, acts, and environmental impingements. Experiences are concrete, yet in retrospect they are curiously elusive. At the end of a day or a lifetime, one may well ask, Where has it all gone? The purpose of literature is to present concrete experience (including the kind we have every day) and, in so doing, give us *an* experience of the concrete, which is a very different matter. To discover what our experience has been really like, we must reconstitute it. A major function of speech is to reconstitute experience: we do this each time we tell a neighbor what has happened on a shopping trip. Literature, because it appears in written form, is simply a more formal way of articulating this universal human need.

Both art and science abstract from the total inchoate flow of experience. They segment reality and make pictures of the world. These more-or-less abstract pictures, paradoxically, enable us to grasp the concreteness of experience. Ordinary speech—the kind of talk we engage in with friends over a cup of coffee—is strung with pictures of the world. They are, however, so conventional and incoherent that they fade from memory almost as fast as the concrete experiences themselves. Artistic and scientific pictures of the world differ from those of ordinary speech in their far greater coherence and originality. A common response to a work of art is, "That's what life is really like"; and a common response to a work of science is, "That's how nature really works." These pictures tend to endure in our memory. By stabilizing experience they make reality feel more stable.

How do artistic and scientific pictures of the world differ from each other? A short answer might be, The one strives for completeness, the other strives for clarity. Einstein puts the perspective of the scientist as follows:

The theoretical physicists' picture of the world is one among all the possible pictures. It demands vigorous precision in all the description of relationships. Therefore the physicist must content himself from the point of view of subject matter with "portraying the simplest occurrences which can be made accessible to our experience"; all more complex occurrences cannot be reconstructed without the necessary degree of subtle accuracy and logical perfection. "Supreme purity, clarity, and certainty, at the cost of completeness."<sup>3</sup>

## Road and Garden

An artist like Tolstoy seeks completeness; a physical scientist like Einstein seeks clarity and analytical precision. The difference in aspiration can be put in another way. Dorothy Walsh writes: "A linguistic composition is, or aspires to be, artistic insofar as it is nonteleological and moves towards closure, whereas it is nonartistic insofar as it is teleological and moves towards conclusion." The nonartistic ideal is teleological because it is the ideal of progressive development to an end. "This end constitutes the element of prime importance for the sake of which everything else exists, and the structural pattern may be roughly symbolized by a line along which one moves. The artistic ideal is different. It is more properly symbolized by a circle than by a line, for the purpose is not to reach a conclusion but to achieve a total presentation." Walsh then varies her metaphor by saying that a general difference between nonliterary and literary types of work is comparable "to the difference between travelling along a road to a destination, on the one hand, and, on the other, exploring, though according to a controlled order or sequence, an enclosed garden."<sup>4</sup>

If one strives for clarity and conclusion, then the ideals of completeness and closure must be sacrificed. But the reverse is not necessarily true. A road, after all, can be built within the garden. A road that winds among the rocks and water of the garden may nonetheless contain a straight stretch that is teleological in character. In other words, a literary composition can contain scientific analysis without damaging the ideal of closure. Melville can introduce technical matters on whaling in *Moby Dick*; and Mann, discourse on natural history and evolution in the *Confessions of Felix Krull*. Even a short story is able to accommodate scientific exposition in small measure; for instance, in the short story *Young Archimedes*, Huxley shows how the Pythagorean theorem is solved by a precocious child.

## Style

C. S. Lewis makes the following wise remarks on style:

The way for a person to develop a style is (a) to know exactly what he wants to say, and (b) to be sure he is saying exactly that. The reader, we must remember, does not start by knowing what we mean. If our words are ambiguous, our

meaning will escape him. I sometimes think that writing is like driving sheep down a road. If there is any gate open to the left or right the readers will most certainly go into it.<sup>5</sup>

What exactly do we want to say? “Exactly” is perhaps a counsel of perfection, but it is obvious we must be fairly clear as to what we want to say before we can try to say just that. When a geographer asks a student to read literary works in order to improve his style for geographical writing, he surely speaks loosely and out of ignorance. To develop a better style for reporting on climatological research, the student should study the best scientific papers rather than, say, the works of Charles Dickens.

An important stylistic difference between literary and nonliterary compositions lies in their degree of explicitness. A literary work implies, even when it appears to be simply stating; whereas a scientific work—with its narrowly defined goal—should only attempt to state. In an achieved piece of literary work the implications are intended; in scientific writing they appear unsought and they cannot be wholly avoided so long as one uses ordinary language.

Metaphor and simile differ in degree of explicitness, and the relative frequency of their use in texts should be a measure of the texts’ literary or scientific aspiration. A dictionary definition of *metaphor* is: “The application of a word or phrase to an object or concept which it does not literally denote, in order to suggest comparison with another object or concept, such as ‘a mighty fortress is our God,’ ‘alluvial apron,’ and ‘motherland.’” *Simile*, by contrast, is a figure of speech in which two unlike things are explicitly compared; e.g., “the brain is like a computer.” Both metaphor and simile exemplify creative thought, which is the power to see semblances and connections among dissimilar phenomena. Whereas metaphors belong to a literary work they should be excised in favor of the explicit simile in scientific composition. The reason is that a literary work is complex and does not aim to conclude: the hinted relationships of one metaphor are balanced by those of another. A scientific work does aim at conclusion, which may be wrong if the ruling metaphor is not explicitly recognized. A scientist, for example, may start with the idea that society is somewhat like an organism. In the text, however, he may analyze society as though it were an organism and conclude that it *is* an organism.

“It is always more difficult to write, say, four sentences in one, as in literature, than one in one, as in philosophy.”<sup>6</sup> Thus Jean-Paul Sartre explains why it is more laborious for him to do literature than to do philosophy. He compares a sentence from Descartes with a sentence



from Stendhal. "I think, therefore I am" can have infinite repercussions in philosophical discourse, but as a sentence it possesses the meaning that Descartes gave it. In contrast, when Stendhal writes, "As long as he could see the clock tower of Verrières, Julien kept turning around," the sentence, by simply saying what the character does, also tells us what Julien feels, what Mme de Renal feels, the significance of the clock tower, and so on. Stendhal was an author who could, by merely stating facts, both suggest underlying social relationships and evoke a world of feelings.<sup>7</sup>

Rules for solving mathematical equations can be taught, but none exists for the invention of a mathematical idea. Clear expository prose can be taught, but no one can tell another how to create a single new metaphor. In scientific and philosophical writing clarity is the chief virtue: a good style is one that leads the reader undeviatingly from premise to conclusion. In literary works, the depiction of complex and tenuous relationships as they exist simultaneously calls for a language that is subtle and richly suggestive: the writer must be able to write "four sentences in one," and he will be dependent on images that synthesize dissimilar ideas—in other words, metaphors.

### Literature and Facts

A historical geographer might wish to examine literary compositions for facts. What was Ch'ang-an like in the T'ang dynasty? The poet Po Chü-I, long resident of the imperial capital, wrote:

Hundreds of houses, thousands of houses—like a great chess-board.  
The twelve streets like a huge field planted with rows of cabbage.  
In the distance I see faint and small the torches of riders to court,  
Like a single row of stars lying to the west of the five gates.<sup>8</sup>

These lines give an essentially correct image of Ch'ang-an in the early part of the ninth century. The city had a simple geometric pattern and its broad streets, oriented north to south and east to west, partitioned the city so that it resembled "a great chess-board." Darkness and quiet reigned at night, and as dawn approached one could see "faint and small the torches of riders to court." If a short poem offers useful facts to the historical geographer, then a long prose work would prove a much richer mine. Few scholars of Victorian London fail to quote from the works of Charles Dickens, and this not merely for embellishment: the works provide an abundance of physical and social facts.

But were there twelve streets in T'ang Ch'ang-an or only eleven, as

other kinds of evidence suggest? Was the London of Dickens geographically accurate in all details? When Charlotte Brontë mentioned granite in her description of the moorland scenery in *Jane Eyre*, she was surely wrong because the Pennines had wide exposures of Millstone Grit but not of the igneous rock.<sup>9</sup> Accuracy in factual detail has never been the aim of literary art. What, then, is its aim?

### **Modes of Experience**

Actual experience can be only lived. Any attempt to present it—from gossip and novels to the scientific treatise—is an abstraction. Actual experience is particular; of necessity we report it in generality. Literary art is more particular than general discourse, far less particular than the moment-by-moment sensations, thoughts, and impacts of living. An aim of literary art is to present possible modes of experience. What is it like to be a gas station attendant in the Chicago of the 1920s? We may know because of the accuracy and subtlety with which the novelist has drawn the intricate web of feelings, actions, and interactions of that particular world. Such accuracy is one of relationships in context rather than of isolated facts. The question is not whether State Street is two or three blocks from Michigan Avenue, but, Given this set of conditions, will persons behave thus?

The human reality presented by a talented novelist is much more complex than that of which a social scientist is normally aware. When a geographer or historian studies the Great Plains, he is likely to organize facts into traditional categories such as the physical environment, Indians, the Cattle Kingdom, the search for water, and so on. What other modes of experience might he consider? Turning to Rölvaag's *Giants of the Earth*, he becomes acutely aware that the story of the settlement of South Dakota was not only that of Per Hansa but also that of his wife Beret and their children. True, the data on women and children are not readily available. The scientist nevertheless needs to be reminded that his understanding of male behavior on the Great Plains is incomplete because his model has failed to take into account the presence or absence of women and children.

The social scientist can learn to ask questions and formulate hypotheses from literary works, which are often highly venturesome "thought experiments." In a novel, for example, a country house was accidentally burned down. Before the event, squire and villagers had one type of relationship. After the event, what changes in the relationship might reasonably occur? Suppose it were discovered later that the disaster was

not an accident but the work of an arsonist: How will that knowledge affect the community? A novelist is forced to think through in detail the effects of events and initiatives on the densely textured world he has created. A planner wants to know the impact of a new highway on the community it traverses. The type of mind required to envisage all the possible human consequences of such a change is that of a novelist. Technical formulations of specific causes and effects appear at a later stage. How many planners have the imagination of a novelist as well as the scientist's skill for explicit analysis of defined problems?

A major challenge to the social geographer is to know what to observe. Here works of literary art are often helpful. They focus the attention of the scientist on things he may miss, however long he stays in the field. Consider, for example, the important task of trying to understand the nature of neighborhood. Who are the neighbors? How do they relate to each other? Is talk essential to the social bond or can it be established by common activity with utilitarian gestures that also communicate at a personal level? In a poem entitled "Neighbors," David Evans describes a couple who live alone together, "she with a wide hind and bird face / he with his hung belly and crewcut. / They never talk but keep busy."

Today they are  
washing windows  
(each window together)  
she on the inside  
he on the outside.  
He squirts Windex  
at her face;  
She squirts Windex  
at his face.

Now they are waving  
to each other  
with rags,  
not smiling.<sup>10</sup>

### **Perceptions of Reality**

Literary compositions provide the geographer with evidence of how persons in the past and in other cultures perceive reality. What we designate as "professional geographical literature" is a highly specialized type of environmental awareness. More widely shared among the

literate members of society are the perceptions of the imaginative writer. What role does the physical environment or nature play in the human world? A dominant one, to judge from Anglo-American writers in the nineteenth century. "We have almost forgotten," Mary McCarthy wrote, "that descriptions of sunsets, storms, rivers, lakes, mountains, valleys, used to be one of the staple ingredients of fiction, not merely a painted backdrop for the action but a component evidently held to be necessary to the art."<sup>11</sup> An author's skill was demonstrated by his descriptive prowess: much admired were Dickens' London fogs, Emily Brontë's moors, Hardy's heath and vales, Melville's Pacific. Geographers naturally tended to stress the physical environment and to assign it a pervasive influence on the human drama, but the same bias was discernible among literary artists of the nineteenth century. "In the old triad of plot, character, and setting, the setting, comprising Nature and her moods, supplied the atmosphere in an almost literal sense; it was the air the novel breathed, like the life-sustaining air surrounding Mother Earth."<sup>12</sup>

A work in regional geography usually begins with a lengthy description of the physical environment, a description that has little to do with the human scene that follows. In a similar way, the set descriptive pieces in fictional writing could often be skipped without affecting the sense of the plot; though not always, obviously, for nature is sometimes a principal actor, and in stories of the sea it is inevitably the prime antagonist. In many works of fiction, physical objects and settings are intimately woven with human moods and behavior, as they are in real life. When we study the writings of Joyce and Faulkner we should attend to these intimate pacts between persons and setting rather than isolate the setting with the purpose of seeing whether a particular street or river is accurately located.

### Geography as Art

Sociology and art, we have noted, often drew on the same source of inspiration. French novelists like Stendhal, Flaubert, and Balzac aspired to portray social reality. They pretended to tell what society was really like. Stendhal's *The Red and the Black* was subtitled *Chronicle of the Year 1830*, and Flaubert's masterpiece bore the subtitle *Moeurs de Province*, as though it were a sociological treatise. Not only individual characters but social types filled the vast canvas of Balzac's *La Comédie Humaine*.

To understand natural phenomena external description suffices. This is not true for human phenomena. Alfred Schutz explains why:

The world of nature, as explored by the natural scientist, does not “mean” anything to molecules, atoms, and electrons. But the observational field of the social scientist—social reality—has a specific meaning and relevance for the human beings living, acting, and thinking within it. . . . The thought objects constructed by the social scientist, in order to grasp this social reality, have to be founded upon the thought objects constructed by the commonsense thinking of men, living their daily life within their social world. Thus, the constructs of the social sciences are, so to speak, constructs of the second degree, that is, constructs of the constructs made by the actors on the social scene, whose behavior the social scientist has to observe and to explain in accordance with the procedural rules of his science.<sup>13</sup>

What kinds of reality do ordinary men and women construct as they go about their business? Novelists and short story writers are at home with these subjective realities. Social scientists have to take them into account and did so in the early, imaginative phase of the discipline’s history. In trying to depict reality the novelist encountered a fundamental problem that was and is also that of the social scientist; namely, how to combine the subjective with the objective.

### **The Subjective-Objective Problem**

Geographers know how to describe and manipulate objective space and time, and so do fiction writers. In the nineteenth century for the first time fiction writers became acutely aware of the need to balance the subjective and objective realities. As Robert Langbaum put it, “Novelists established their reality through exact notations of historical and quotidian time. But Victorian novelists are increasingly preoccupied with the problematical nature of time, with the disparity between psychic and clock or calendar time.”<sup>14</sup> For the same reason they show increasing concern for the problem of synthesizing “points of view” with objective reality. “The Victorian novelists are unwilling to *settle* for the point-of-view novel. Yet points of view are what they introduce through their multiple perspectives even while they try to maintain objective reality as a separate interest.”<sup>15</sup>

What is objective reality? It is God’s view of the world and, in the case of the novel, that of the omniscient narrator. If the omniscient narrator is too visible in the novel the characters will seem like puppets with no freedom and will of their own. Such a work resembles a socio-

logical treatise or a geographer's well-intentioned attempt to portray a region. On the other hand, if multiple perspectives prevail *the* world disappears in the proliferation of separate worlds. The scale at which reality can be presented diminishes. A novelist or social scientist, for example, may want to describe Minneapolis; but the city as an entity dissolves if he or she spends too much time on communities and communal viewpoints. Likewise, the community dissolves if individual points of view are overemphasized.

In the twentieth century, fiction writers, like social scientists, gave up the attempt to balance the subjective and the objective and sought instead to follow either one approach or the other. In the subjective approach, objects and objective reality become mere symbols of psychic states; examples appear in the expressionist novels of Kafka and Beckett. In the objective approach, not only the psychic states and viewpoints of the characters in a fictional work disappear, but the narrative structure itself disintegrates because the structure reminds one of the existence of the narrator, a manipulator. In the works of Robbe-Grillet the narrative is so externalized, so absorbed into the surface of things that metaphors are eschewed in geographical description, since they seek to join objects to inner states. William Barrett so interprets this stand:

We cannot say, "The village slept in the curve of the valley," for that is already an attempt to assimilate an external physical fact into our human world of waking and sleeping. The village happens only to be located in the valley. That is the bald physical fact, to which we are to hold if we are to evade illusion.<sup>16</sup>

## Synthesis

It is ironic to note that some of the shoddier specimens of geographical description bear a superficial resemblance to French novels of the "New Wave." In geography texts, we have all encountered the dry itemization of streets, shopping centers, and other land use patterns as though they somehow add up to a living portrait of the city. At the other extreme, the interest in viewpoints and perspectives may be carried so far that it dissolves the external world and makes it impossible to depict a unit larger than the fragmented worlds of the committed individual actors.

The model for the regional geographer of humanistic learning is neither Beckett nor Robbe-Grillet but the Victorian novelist who strives

to achieve a synthesis of the subjective and the objective. The geographer must consider both psychic time and calendar time, both "points of view" and objective reality. In portraying a region the ideal geographer introduces individuals with proper names as well as social types, thus following the example of Balzac. The geographer prepares the stage and adopts an overview, which may appear at the beginning of the book as in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*. The first chapter of this classic, only two pages long, is a masterful description of the physical and social setting. The geographer discusses his philosophy of reality and his analysis and understanding of a situation, just as George Eliot did in *Adam Bede* and *Middlemarch* (put in the mouth of a reflective character) and as Tolstoy did in *War and Peace*. In other words, the Victorian novel and its twentieth-century progenies show how it is possible to combine in one work individuals and social types, the inchoate density of living and explicit analyses, points of view, and an objective reality that, in human terms, is simply the writer's best intelligence.

Literary art serves the geographer in three principal ways. As thought experiment on possible modes of human experience and relationship, it provides hints as to what a geographer might look for when he studies, for instance, social space. As artifact it reveals the environmental perceptions and values of a culture: it serves the geographer, who is also a historian of ideas. Finally, as an ambitious attempt to balance the subjective and the objective it is a model for geographical synthesis; for geography is a garden that contains the road, an art form capacious enough to include analysis.

## Notes

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2. J. A. May, *Kant's Concept of Geography and Its Relation to Modern Geographical Thought*, University of Toronto Department of Geography Research Publication no. 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), pp. 114-15.
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4. Dorothy Walsh, *Literature and Knowledge* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1969), pp. 37-39.
5. C. S. Lewis, *Underception* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1971), p. 219.
6. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Life/Situations: Essays Written and Spoken* (New York: Pantheon, 1977), p. 8.
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8. "Climbing the Terrace of Kuan-yin and Looking at the City," in *Translations from the Chinese*, trans. Arthur Waley (1919; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), p. 257.
9. A. E. Trueman, *Geology and Scenery in England and Wales* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Pelican, 1949), p. 164.
10. From D. A. Evans, "Neighbors," copyright 1971 by Washington and Lee University,

reprinted from *Shenandoah: The Washington and Lee University Review* (summer 1971), with the permission of the Editor and the Author; also reprinted in Lucien Stryk, ed., *Heartland II* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976).

11. Mary McCarthy, "One Touch of Nature," in *The Writing on the Wall* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970), p. 189.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers*, vol. 1 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), p. 59.

14. Robert Langbaum, "The Art of Victorian Literature," in Josef L. Altholz, ed., *The Mind and Art of Victorian England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), p. 30.

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16. William Barrett, *Time of Need* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1973), p. 59.



INTRODUCING  
THE CARTOGRAPHY  
OF REALITY

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DENIS WOOD

The recent interest of behavioral geographers in cognitive maps and cognitive mapping has highlighted the disjuncture between the everyday perception of distance and space and the cartographic standard that serves to represent them.<sup>1</sup> While the map maker's metric itself may be arbitrary, its fixed scales often fail to coincide with the variability, contingency, and fluidity of cognitive assessments.<sup>2</sup> This paper introduces some preliminary propositions for the development of a cartography of reality based upon the anthropocentric notions of distance and space we all know in everyday experience.

A cartography, a geography, of reality cannot be based on unsuspected and unsupportable abstractions of the *n*th degree but must be rooted in palpable daily human experience. Unlike contemporary academic cartography, a cartography of reality must be humane, humanist, phenomenological, and phenomenalist: humane because it must be founded in an unflinching respect for people and the reports they make of their experience; humanist because it must concern itself with the conditions and qualities of being human rather than being a yardstick or camera; phenomenological because it must embrace the totality of human experience of space with considerations of objective reality and purely subjective response left temporarily out of account; and phenomenalist because it must be underwritten by the radical prepositivist empiricism of David Hume.<sup>3</sup> It must reject as inhumanly narrow both the data base and subject matter of contemporary academic cartography and repudiate the untenable distinction currently drawn in the behavioral geographies between the world within the head and the world without.

Three principles will enable the translation of these intentions into maps of the real world. The primary given is that individual experience is the only valid measure of the world. Implied by this is the second principle, that the real world is accessible only to each of us alone. True

in the sense that each of us has a unique autobiography—a unique fund of experience out of which to construct the world—this is further true in the sense that these experiences are of worlds literally unique. It is not so much a matter of our experiencing unique slices of a common world as it is the existence of a multitude of worlds to only one of which each of us alone has access. Bertrand Russell reached a similar conclusion in his attempt to derive the space of physics consistent with the great traditions of empiricism and logical analysis. After arguing that “. . . it does not appear probable that two men ever both perceive at the same time any one sensible object” and that all position is relative, he concluded that:

. . . it follows that the space of one man’s objects and the space of another man’s objects have no place in common, that they are in fact different spaces, and not merely different parts of one space. I mean by this that such immediate spatial relations as are perceived to hold between the different parts of the sensible space perceived by one man, do not hold between the parts of sensible space perceived by different men. There are therefore a multitude of three-dimensional spaces in the world.<sup>4</sup>

With respect to time Russell similarly urged that, “The one all-embracing time, like the one all-embracing space, is a construction; there is no direct time-relation between the particulars belonging to my perspective and particulars belonging to another man’s.”<sup>5</sup> The isolates of individual experience so completed, private time imbricating private space, are of course none other than the real worlds the cartography of reality seeks to portray.

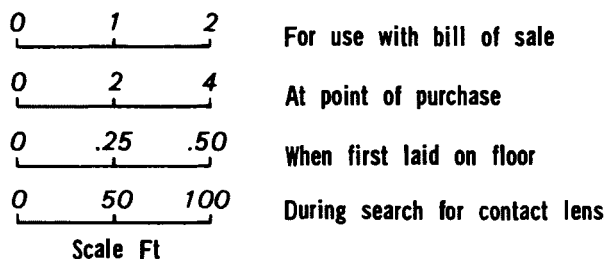
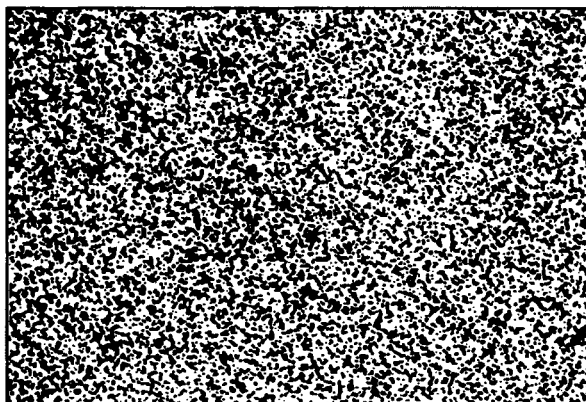
It goes without saying that little is known of the structures of these worlds—after all, little enough is known of the structure of the imaginary world. As Russell put it, “The truth seems to be that space—and time also—is much more complicated than it would appear to be from the finished structure of physics.”<sup>6</sup> It follows, then, that no a priori structure can be adduced for mapping the real world, and from this follows the third principle. The geometry of maps of the real world must be a natural geometry; and, as A. S. Eddington has put it, “Natural geometry is the theory of the behavior of material scales.”<sup>7</sup> But it follows from the first principle that these scales will be constituted solely of individual human experience, since, from the second principle, this is the only means of access to the real world; and thus it follows that the geometry of the cartography of reality will be a theory, or description, of the nature of individual human experience. While it might seem

reasonable, given the style of contemporary geography, to hypothesize a geometry for the real world, such as any of those employed in the conventional cartography, and to test it against experience, upon further reflection it seems infinitely wiser to say with Newton, "*Hypotheses non fingo*" and allow the accumulating data of experience to speak for themselves in the fashion of classical empiricism.

The three principles of the cartography of reality, (1) that individual human experience is the only valid measure of the real world, (2) that the real world is accessible only to each of us alone, and (3) that the structure of the real world must be a natural geometry based on individual human experience, mean that the cartography of reality is likely to remain more a method, or a groping for a method, for encountering and embracing reality than it is to remain a generator of products like maps and atlases; yet its validity as a process for grappling with reality will depend precisely on its ability to produce genuine artifactual maps of that reality. A method for making maps that cannot make maps is indeed an empty method! While it is obvious, from the second principle, that each of us must be, in essence, his own cartographer, there is nothing to preclude a sketch of some potential solutions to some potential problems in the cartography of reality.

Consider a young couple who have frugally saved their pennies to purchase a rug for their living room floor. Due to inflation they can just manage a "huge" six by eight foot shag. Elated with their purchase, they elect to carry it home themselves, but no sooner do they get the rug on the floor than they regret the entire business. The huge rug they bought has shrunk to a tiny rag, and the tears shed over this by the young lady cause her contact lenses—floating on an invisible film of tears—to come unstuck and fall into the forest of the shag. Falling to their knees the two are shocked: their tiny rug has miraculously assumed Saharan proportions! You may say it only "seemed" so, but I shall credit your estimation only after you too have searched a shag for a pair of contacts. Asked to draw the rug prior to purchase, the young lady might have shown it filling the room, give or take a foot or so to reflect the size of her purse; after getting it on the floor she might have shown it as a postage stamp on the proverbial infinitely extensible plane; during the search, she would have shown the rug as this extensible plane, overlapping the very confines of the room itself. While each of these images would have reflected the size of the rug, there is another reality that would not have been reflected in any of these individual images; namely, the fact of the change itself. The rug really changes size: how can this fact of reality be graphically portrayed? One solution, employing a number of scales, each to be used in the appropriate context, is presented in figure 13-1.<sup>8</sup> A more general solution, in which the rug is of no—that is, any—size, is presented in figure 13-2.<sup>9</sup> A combination of these two solutions, a

Figure 13-1

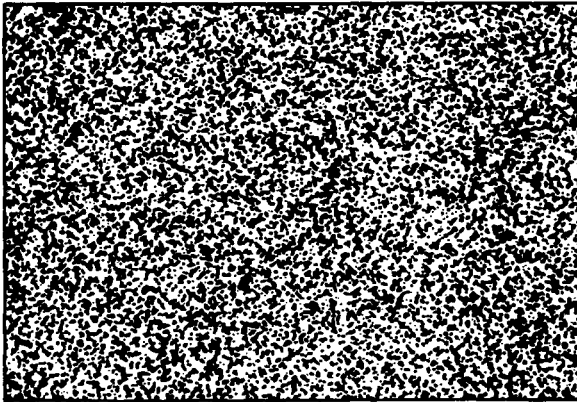
**A SHAG RUG**

specific indication of past sizes coupled with an indeterminate scale (or set of scales) for future use, should probably be regarded as more fruitful than either alone.

An identical approach might work for the distance between two points like work and home, as sketched in figure 13-3. At first glance it seems not terribly different from the combined shag rug solutions; that is, it presents some scales useful for mapping past realities, while it leaves a few blank for future events. A couple of the scales, however, represent new wrinkles. The first two are obvious: for this traveler the road is shorter than it appears on the road map when he is unexpectedly let out from work early. But the third scale shows that road distance varies with distance traveled, at least on the way home from work on the last day before vacation. Thus in the beginning of this particular journey, the road is longer than shown on the road map, but the road continuously grows shorter and shorter as the traveler approaches his goal. In contrast, after an especially long day at work, the road grows progressively longer as the goal is approached, so that the closer the traveler gets to home, the longer each road segment becomes.

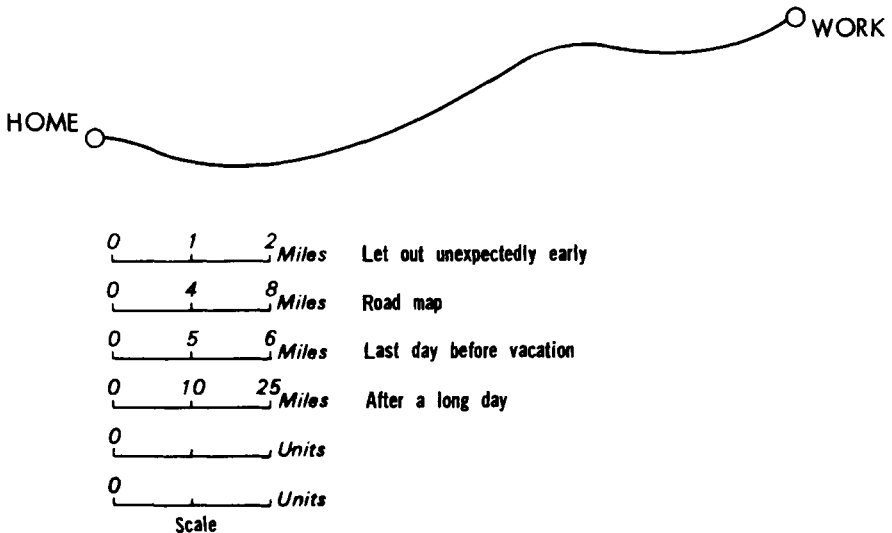
Figure 13-2

### A SHAG RUG



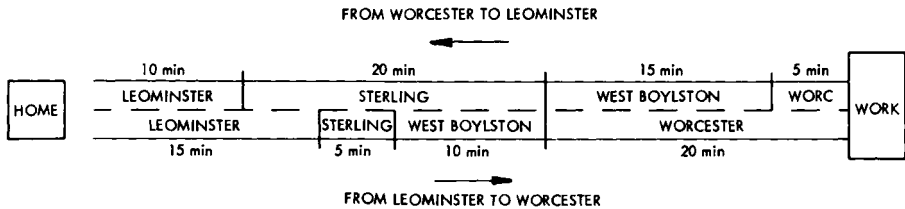
In figure 13-4 the road between home and work is represented as composed of segments that vary in length depending on the direction of the trip.<sup>10</sup> The total length of the trip or road is, however, the same in either direction.<sup>11</sup> This represents a situation different from that

Figure 13-3



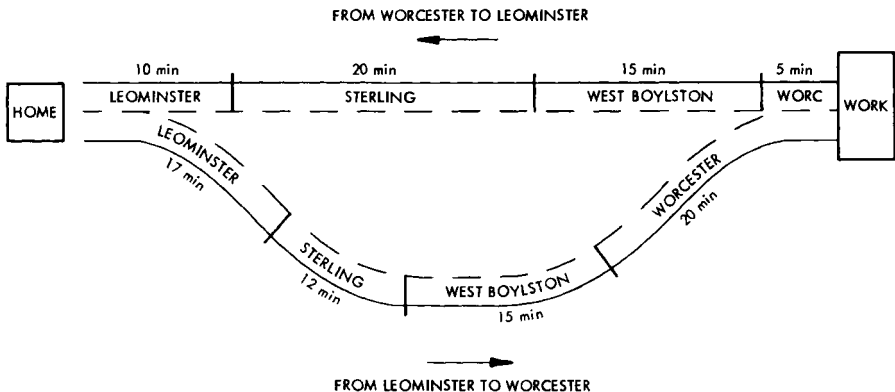
encountered above, for no matter the day or situation, depending solely on the direction of travel, different portions of the road assume different lengths. The distance in figure 13-4 has been expressed in temporal rather than spatial units. The choice is purely arbitrary, since life is lived in space and time together. "Nobody," Minkowski pointed out, "has ever noticed a place except at a time, or a time except at a place."<sup>12</sup>

Figure 13-4



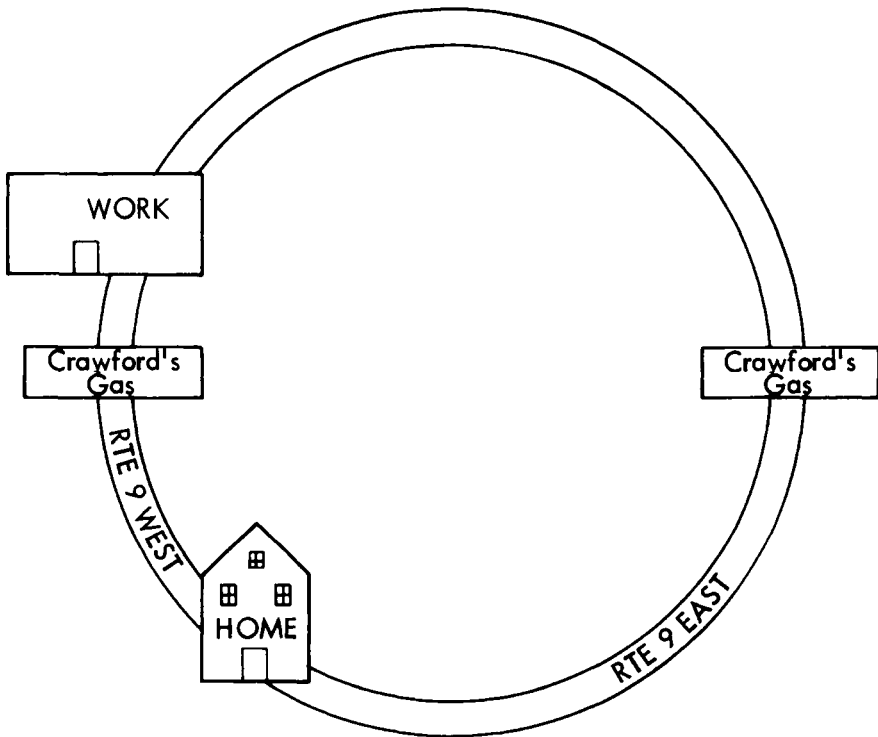
In figure 13-5 the *total* road length and its segments vary with direction. The map shows not two different roads as might at first appear but rather two lanes of a single highway with the time from home to work sixty-four minutes and the time from work to home, fifty. It was again decided to represent the distance in temporal units, although conversion to spatial units is simple (you could, for example, call each minute a mile) and does no violence to the significance of the map. The blank space appearing to separate the two lanes is an artifact of the map not an attribute of the road portrayed.<sup>13</sup> In an attempt to obviate this convention, the map shown in figure 13-6 was devised. This is a noncommutative route map showing the trip from home to work to home to work and so on. It may be read only in a

Figure 13-5



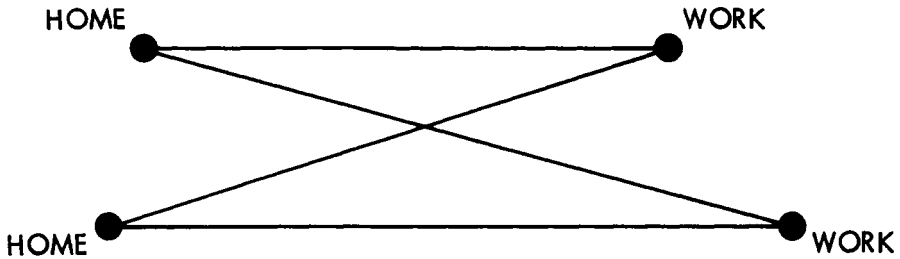
counterclockwise direction. Since what is represented here is the different lengths the road assumes depending on the direction of travel, there is only *one* Crawford's Gas *represented*, though it appears twice on the map.<sup>14</sup> The trade off, then, is an apparent duplication of roadside features for the absence of the blank space between the lanes of the road. These last two figures dramatically reveal the phenomenalist possibilities of the cartography of reality, distinguishing it thoroughly from the imaginary cartography we are used to.

Figure 13-6



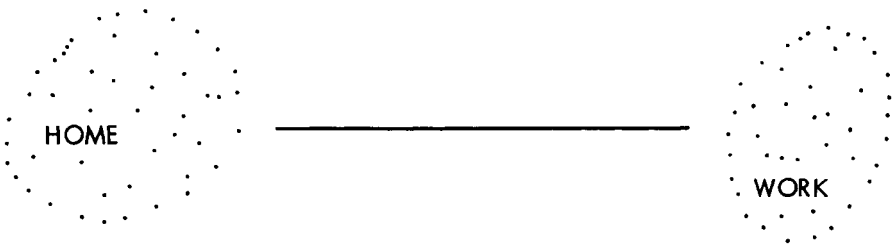
So far the length of the road has been treated as if it were independent of the locations of its end points. It is just as easy to hold that if the length of the road varies it does so because of *changes in the locations of its end points*. This line of reasoning leads to a second family of solutions, the simplest of which is sketched in figure 13-7. The change in the length of the road is here revealed to result from a change in location of home, work, or both. Continuing this line of reasoning we find that in figure 13-8 variation in route length results from variation in goal locations, where goal locations comprise infinitely large sets so that no member of either set may be distinguished from any other

Figure 13-7



member of that set or from the set as a whole, except as a function of the distance between any two specified members of both sets. Such a road map becomes a pure statement of spatial indeterminacy especially if the clouds of locations are merged into a single spatial bee swarm.

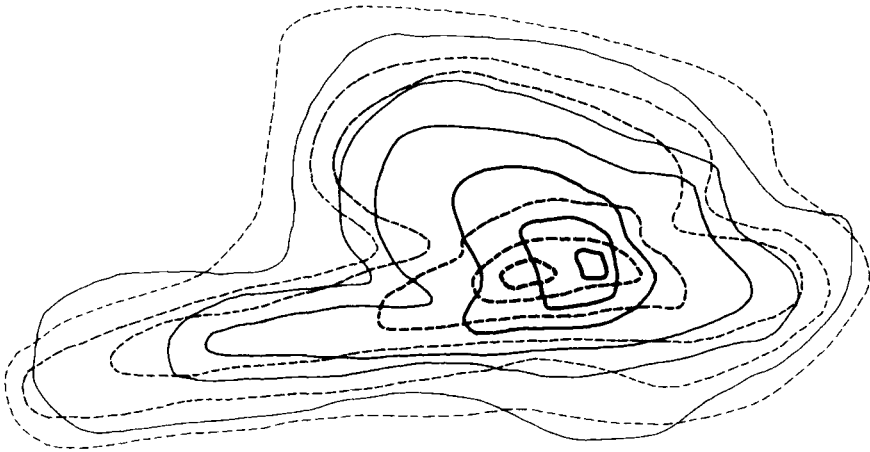
Figure 13-8



Since the real world is not two dimensional, consider the problem of a child out sledding.<sup>15</sup> As the child drags his sled up a high hill, his spirit is bolstered by the thought of the equally unending return slide back down the hill. Sad to say, he discovers that the hill is nowhere nearly as long coming down as it was going up. Nonetheless he starts up again only to discover the hill higher than before and considerably steeper. But as soon as he slaps his sled off the top of the hill, it flattens right out to nothing. Eventually the hill becomes so high as to preclude his reaching the top again, and he goes home to supper. In figure 13-9 two different hills are *shown* to emphasize the fact that there are *at least* two different hills in the real world; though, as the scales reveal, there are many, many more. One set of scales is provided for those who climb the hill once; another set, for those who do so more often. A whole plethora of hills is indicated in this last set. Alternate approaches could indicate one hill with contour lines, another with shading.<sup>16</sup> The possibilities are as endless as the final hill is high.



Figure 13-9



FOR ONE ASCENT  
AND DESCENT

Descent — Contour Interval  
10 Ft

Ascent ---- Contour Interval  
15 Ft

FOR SEQUENTIAL ASCENTS  
AND DESCENTS

Contour Interval — Descent: Subtract 1  
10 Ft additional foot per descent  
from interval, up to five  
descents. Add ½ foot  
per descent to last figure  
for descents 6 to 9. All  
additional descents remain the same.

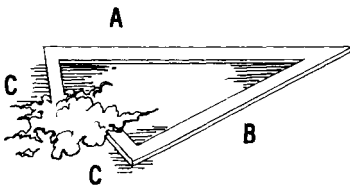
Contour Interval ---- For second ascent,  
15 Ft multiply by 2; for third,  
by 4; for fourth,  
by 16. Continue until tired.

So far we have dealt only with the simplest of the problems in the cartography of reality; the representation of the distance between two points as a changing or indeterminate function. There are as many others as there are attributes of reality. The last one to be treated here, however, simply takes one further step in the abolition of the metric. Take the reality of intransitive distance. A transitive relation is one such that if *A* has this relation to *B*, and *B* to *C*, then *A* has this relation to *C*. If distance *A*, for example, is longer than distance *B* and distance *B* is longer than distance *C*, then distance *A* is also longer than distance *C*. In an intransitive relation this does not follow, and distance *A* would not be longer than distance *C*. Intransitive relations in general are quite common. I like you, for instance, and you like her; but *I* do not like her or *she* does not like me. Or take another case: Harry, the chessplayer,

always beats Joe, and Joe always beats William; but Harry never beats William. The mathematician Stanley Ulam recounts his discovery of intransitive relations:

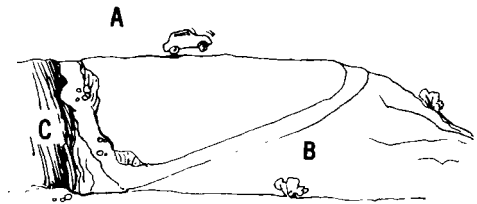
I remember that at the age of eight or nine I tried to rate the fruits I liked in order of "goodness." I tried to say that a pear was better than an apple, which was better than an orange, until I discovered to my consternation that the relation was not transitive—namely, plums could be better than nuts which were better than apples, but apples were better than plums.<sup>17</sup>

The "to my consternation" is appropriate, for intransitive relations, as Ulam recognized, are generally messy and confuse simplistic attempts at ordering things. The merest thought of intransitive distance is enough to curl the edges of all the conventional maps in existence.



An Intransitive Relationship

Figure 13-10



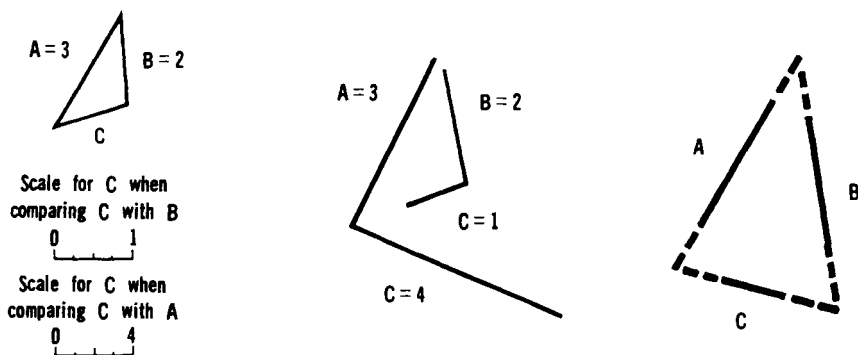
Another Intransitive Relationship

Figure 13-11

To visualize the spatial problem of intransitivity consider that it means that, given a scalene triangle, side one is longer than side two, which is longer than side three, which is longer than side one. To argue that this is not a triangle *is* preposterous: three sides intersect in pairs in three points resulting in three angles. But how can this intransitive triangle be represented? For those who would raise the specter of subjectivity I can say with Russell only that "it would puzzle those who use this glib word to say what they mean by it."<sup>18</sup> But in any case, since each of these expedients violates the first principle of the cartography of reality—to trust your experience over all else—each must be dismissed. The real world *can* be represented.

Actually, as soon as the problem has been admitted as genuine, solutions begin to appear. Each line representing the three distances,

Figure 13-12



for instance, could be provided with individual pairs of scales: one of the pair to be used when comparing its line to one of the other lines, the other of the pair to be used when comparing its line to the remaining line. More radically, the third line could be represented by two different lines, one longer than the first line, the other shorter than the second, each to be used in the appropriate context. All three lines could be allowed to fade out as they approach what would have been their termini, which could be represented by eloquent blanks, thus rendering any measurement possible and so freeing the lines to be any length at all. The possibilities are endless. The immediate sensation that each of these conventions is counter-intuitive soon enough wears off, especially when it is realized that all cartographic conventions are just that, conventions, and in most cases not counter-intuitive themselves simply because habit has inured us to their presence. Nothing, for instance, in the real world could be more counter-intuitive than the shape Australia assumes in a north polar equidistant projection of the conventional world; nothing, that is, except the way, on the same projection, the South Pole miraculously transforms itself into a circle circumscribing the whole of the earth. If enough naive attention can be summoned to an examination of the maps of conventional cartography, the whole ensemble of conventions suddenly acquires an entirely unreal quality.<sup>19</sup> But just as habit tramples this into a mundane and acceptable semblance of "reality," so habit will all too soon rob the conventions of the cartography of reality of any hint of counter-intuitiveness.

A completed cartography of reality will consist of a full set of reality conventions capable of transforming the reality of individual human experience in its spatial entirety to two-dimensional graphic form, though these conventions will develop over time, as have those of the conventional cartography. Three earlier papers have explored a num-

ber of conventions for the representation of real distances and real directions, though these have been but tentative forays and no maps of complex experiences have been produced.<sup>20</sup> Only as the completed set of reality conventions has been put to the service of the production of atlases of individual human experience will the cartography of reality really begin to fulfill its promise.

## Notes

1. The range of this literature is illustrated by Roger Hart and Gary Moore, *The Development of Spatial Cognition: A Review*, Clark University Department of Geography Place Perception Research Report no. 7 (Worcester, Mass., 1971); Roger Downs and David Stea, *Maps in Minds* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).
2. This is, of course, not unknown to cartographers. See Arthur Robinson and R. D. Sale, *Elements of Cartography*, 3d ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1969), ch. 1; J. K. Wright, "Map Makers Are Human," in *Human Nature in Geography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966). For further discussion, see Arthur Robinson and B. Petchenik, *The Nature of Maps* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); Waldo Tobler, "The Geometry of Mental Maps," in Reginald Golledge and Gerard Rushton, eds., *Spatial Choice and Spatial Behavior* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 1976), especially p. 69; David Stea, "The Measurement of Mental Maps," in Kevin Cox and Reginald Golledge, eds., *Behavioral Problems in Geography*, Northwestern University Studies in Geography no. 17 (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1969), pp. 228-53.
3. In an attempt to avoid a sectarian strife, the definitions of *humane*, *humanist*, *phenomenological*, and *phenomenalist* were derived from those in *The American Heritage Dictionary* (Boston: American Heritage and Houghton Mifflin, 1970).
4. Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1957), p. 133.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 135. In Alexander Durrell's *Balthazar* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1958), p. 14, a character puts it like this: "'We live' writes Pursewarden somewhere, 'lives based on selected fictions. Our view of reality is conditioned by our position in space and time—not by our personalities as we like to think. Thus every interpretation of reality is based on a unique position. Two paces east or west and the whole picture is changed.'" I have no doubt that Durrell was strongly influenced by this essay of Russell's.
6. Russell, *Mysticism and Logic*, p. 138.
7. A. S. Eddington, "What Is Geometry?" in J. J. C. Smart, ed., *Problems of Space and Time* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), p. 170.
8. This particular solution to the problem was suggested by Gordon Hinzmann, a geographer residing in Bogota, Colombia, in a personal communication dated March 16, 1973.
9. This modification of Hinzmann's solution is the present author's.
10. This solution is due to John DeLisle of Leominster, Massachusetts.
11. That is, the whole trip is commutative, while its parts are not.
12. H. Minkowski, "Space and Time," in Smart, *Problems of Space and Time*, p. 298.
13. It is, of course, only custom that stops us from blinking significantly at the blank space appearing on most maps. I have yet to see any part of the earth's surface that is blank, and yet since I am so inured to the convention I do not rebel. The case in hand is at once merely unconventional and yet at the same time more radical in its significance than the merely unfamiliar would be.
14. This solution is due to Thomas Oram of Marlboro, Massachusetts.
15. This solution is due to Stuart Howe of Worcester, Massachusetts.
16. This solution is due to Norman Carpenter, who is also responsible for figures 13-1 through 13-9.
17. Stanley Ulam, *Adventures of a Mathematician* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), p. 91.

18. Russell, *Mysticism and Logic*, p. 138. Once a description has been labeled (castigated) as subjective it can be dismissed, at least as something important. This holds for all experiences modified by “seemed to be,” for if something only *seemed* to be, then it really *was not*; and if it was not, why bother with it? Father Brown makes the same point when he says:

What's the good of words? . . . If you try to talk about a truth that's merely moral, people always think it's merely metaphorical. A real live man with two legs once said to me: “I only believe in the Holy Ghost in a spiritual sense.” Naturally I said, “In what other sense could you believe it?” And *then* he thought I meant he needn't believe in anything except evolution, or ethical fellowship, or some bilge.

He makes the remark in an extended and brilliant passage in G. K. Chesterton, *The Father Brown Omnibus* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1951), p. 638.

19. This is to say that no matter how unlikely the conventions of the cartography of reality seem to be on first acquaintance, they are rarely as bizarre as the conventions of conventional cartography; and of these, few are more bizarre than those that transform points—such as the poles—into lines and, in the case of the Mercator projection, into lines of infinite length. That some other feature of the world is thrown into brilliant highlight by the insanity of this convention is too subtle a point for most teachers: they label the whole map “real” and thus render it entirely imaginary.

20. The three earlier papers, listed in the order in which they should be read, are “What Color Is the Sky?” (Paper distributed at the 1978 meetings of the Association of American Geographers); “The Cartography of Reality” (Paper presented at the 1973 meetings of the National Council on Geographic Education); and “The Geometry of Ecstasy” (Paper distributed at the 1977 meetings of the Association of American Geographers). In terms of the conventions developed, the first deals with the issue of transitivity; the second, with commutativity; and the third, with real directions. All three are available from the present author upon request. Bob Klute drew figures 13-10, 13-11, and 13-12.

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## Some Research Directions

**OVERVIEW.** In illustrating its substantive contributions, we see the limitations of the label "humanistic geography." It suggests, like other forms of hyphenated geography such as social geography or economic geography, a systematic field with its own subject matter, one that can carry on in isolation from other subareas. But this is neither the present state nor the intent of humanism in geography. Its concern is not to set up yet another systematic branch in the discipline, one with its own research agendas to be later institutionalized into specialized journals. Fundamentally, humanism brings a new viewpoint to existing problems; it provides a *perspective* rather than a program.

To speak of research directions in humanistic geography is scarcely to limit the existing range of human geography itself, so that the essays in this section can be illustrative only of the problems to which humanistic insights might be applied. But if such research may not necessarily be defined by its content, it is readily definable by its emphases and style.

Most of the authors in this section would concur with a traditional definition of geography as the study of the earth as the home of man. Better still, they might well argue that theirs is a preoccupation with *man's place*, for the several nuances of this phrase more adequately express the range of substantive work. A concern for man's place intimates a relational perspective, a reciprocal interplay between groups and their geographic milieu. Whereas places are inescapably humanized, they are human constructions that may yet act back on their creators; the personality of place and the identity of man are closely intertwined.

In humanist terms, the relations between man and environment are contingent, so that man is not bound by necessity, by the physical and the economic determinisms that have been so pervasive in social science research in this century. The humanist regards man as an active agent and not simply a passive ideal type molded irrevocably by the environment in which he finds himself. As the essays in this section demonstrate, man has a certain freedom to act, to conceptualize, to name, to build. Man's intentions, his consciousness are taken seriously. Values and ideas do have a creative role in the development of places, whether they are

incorporated in a religious ideal, a contemporary social movement, or a great man in history. That such a self-evident claim is no longer a truism is a measure of how far man's creativity has been suppressed in geographic explanation in favor of some transcendental structure, be it "the environment," "the market," "culture," or, most recently, "capitalism." Each of these reified concepts requires only some pallid human puppet who obligingly and chameleon-like takes on the characteristics of the setting in which he is placed, there to act out the script written for him by the theorist.

But this view of human freedom is not the whole story, for if it were we would be left only with some fuzzy and whimsical idealism. There are contextual constraints upon action, constraints of two different types. Most conspicuously there are the acknowledged constraints of milieu, whether this be physical or social. The givens of our world ground a facile idealism in a concrete setting of brute facts, facts that include human needs, finite capabilities, scarce resources, and asymmetric social relations. The humanist view of society is not therefore, as some have claimed, one of consensus and harmony; for tension, competition, and conflict are also part of its character.

But the view of power and authority must itself be demystified and shown for what it is: a human construction. Some years ago the sociologist Florian Znaniecki commented that even as inert an institution as the Bank of England had its "humanistic coefficient," its set of sustaining values, goals, and conventions.<sup>1</sup> Structures, no matter how monolithic, are not authorless; they are the product of somebody's values; they are therefore somebody's responsibility. The displacement of Coloured people in Cape Town is only mystified by explanation that adopts ideological labels like "racism," "facism," or "capitalism." The displacement had an author in a dominant group whose self-promoting measures of social distance were institutionalized and realized in the apparatus of government that the author(s) controlled. The landscape fact of displacement with its attendant suffering is the product of values, realized by power. Humanistic interpretation aims to increase our understanding by throwing light on the values and actions of men, which lie antecedent to a discernible landscape fact.

Humanistic interpretation has a further objective. Besides the recognized constraints on action already discussed, there are unself-conscious, taken-for-granted constraints. The tourist's unreflected, taken-for-granted expectations of vacation areas are fulfilled in what J. B. Jackson called "other-directed places," landscapes of collusion constructed to perpetrate the fantasy so that his expectations are never revealed as questionable. Similarly Chinese communism, for all its reverence of Western intellectuals, is heavily imbued with traditional Chinese cultural values, a taken-for-granted context that colors the policies of the state molded by at least one man, Mao Tse-tung. In its revelation of the subjective and unquestioned in the midst of an explicit materialism, humanist interpretation poses a fundamental question mark that rarely leads to dogmatic certainty either in

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1. Florian Znaniecki, *On Humanistic Sociology*, ed. Robert Bierstedt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).



theory or in practice. Its style, rather, is reflective and even reflexive. The logical conclusion of its questioning stand is a self-questioning; so too its ultimate promise is not only understanding but also self-understanding. This is the final ambition, as Yi-Fu Tuan recently commented, "of humanistic enterprise: to increase the burden of awareness."<sup>2</sup>

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2. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 203.

## CHAPTER 14

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# THE CONCEPTS OF "PLACE" AND "LAND" IN THE JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITION

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JAMES M. HOUSTON

The myth of the global village assumes that modern man's place in the world has little or no relevance to his identity. It used to be that a man was described as the son of so-and-so, from the place X. Then his vocation was enumerated; that is to say, he was "placed" in a threefold manner: personally, topographically, and culturally. Today, in the technological society, the tendency is to homogenize the globe with one artificial culture, the place becoming immaterial and the assumption being that the job defines a man's identity. No wonder the quintessence of the technological society, the city, is described by Harvey Cox<sup>1</sup> and others as marked by anonymity and mobility, the source of anomie and human anxiety. Edward Relph in his interesting study of *Place and Placelessness* defines the modern phenomenon of "placelessness" as the weakening of the identity of places by the powerful processes of technology, such as outer- rather than inner-directedness, uniformity, standardization, impermanence, and destruction.<sup>2</sup> Thus we are witnessing whole landscapes of city and suburbia processed and manufactured by *techne* today.

Placelessness is, however, much more than a topographical phenomenon. It is symbolic of the placelessness of man's own spirit in a world where the human scale and human values are being subordinated to the dictates of technocracy. When the value of a person is defined in terms of his income and social role, then the vast majority of the human race is condemned to be defined as "nobodies" in placelessness. This is also vicious, for in glorifying precisely these goals and desires of technocracy, the integrity of man and the basis for a peaceful, wholesome society are being undermined. *Place*, defined as "space meaningful for man," must therefore have a double entendre. It is a topographical reality that also symbolizes the need of man's whole harmony within the universe. Thus the current loss of, and hunger for, a

sense of place belies the coziness of the global village as an inauthentic symbol of our times.

### Levels of Place

Placelessness is thus the modern metaphor of human alienation. As Martin Heidegger has said, "homelessness is becoming a world fate."<sup>3</sup> Peter Berger and his co-authors go further, describing modernity as the spirit of homelessness.<sup>4</sup> Loren Eiseley also speaks movingly of man as "the cosmic orphan."<sup>5</sup> Thus no longer can the geographer speak unreflectively of man's relationship to his environment, for we are increasingly unsure both of man's identity and, therefore, of what environs him. This will generate revolutionary changes in geographical thought unless geographical science rests content with topography and loses the content of its central interest, man himself. We therefore have the choice of accepting unreflectively a placeless geography as a science of space or else of developing a geography of significant places. This relates ultimately to the choice that separates mankind today, not the old ideologies of capitalism and communism but the more fundamental division between the technocratic and the humanistic spirit, which is the burden of the essays in this volume.

Landscapes of place reflect upon landscapes of the mind. The world's landscapes are but the screen on which the past, present, and anticipated cosmic vanity of mankind is written. Land is the palimpsest of human need, desires, meaning, greed, and fears. We are therefore discerning the meaning of place at different levels. These we may broadly discuss as the ecological, cultural, and ontological levels.

At the ecological level, we speak of perception of the environmental crisis not as an alarmist-critical situation of immediate doomsday but certainly of the Greek *krisis*, "judgment."<sup>6</sup> It is a judgment reflecting industrial civilization's intrinsic disjunctions with the physical environment of the earth.<sup>7</sup> It is becoming increasingly apparent that man's infinite capacity to desire—which he cannot clearly distinguish from his legitimate needs and his basic wants<sup>8</sup>—are on a collision course with the limits of the biosphere. For man's technical abilities to transform the earth, his indisposable wastes,<sup>9</sup> set in the context of insatiable appetites,<sup>10</sup> are at speeds vastly in excess of the self-renewal cycles of the planet.<sup>11</sup> At the ecological level, man is not "in place," in the *oikos*, or "household," of the earth. Since, however, Lynn White<sup>12</sup> and others<sup>13</sup> have blamed the Judaeo-Christian tradition for the environmental crisis, it is necessary to understand what the biblical view of land and place really is.<sup>14</sup>

At the cultural level man's struggles with his rival for living space also continue but with far more destructive weapons. The evolution from tribalism to nationalism in Africa, quite apart from the rivalries of Russian and American influences there, will doubtless continue to engender strife over fluid frontiers and territorial claims. The fierceness with which Jews and Arabs have fought for territory in the Near East suggests that much more is at stake than the merely horizontal pressures of political ambitions. Is this territoriality merely animal or is man's need for land also a deep, spiritual one?

This leads us to question further whether place has ontological meaning for man. What is the cosmic significance of man's contemporary sense of alienation? Why is he not "in place"? Is the marxist interpretation of alienation essentially that of man's work, or is it more than that?<sup>15</sup> Does man need basically more convivial tools, as Ivan Illich suggests,<sup>16</sup> or is the remedy to be the restoration of the human scale in economics, as E. F. Schumacher prescribes?<sup>17</sup> Or is man's basic need of being "in place" far deeper than these prescriptions, involving a more complex understanding of man's spirituality?

As geographers, we too are caught up in the issues of our times and divided by marxist, humanistic, or empirical ideologies. What is clear to us is that space is not place.<sup>18</sup> *Space* is the arena of freedom that has no accountability, no commitment, no meaning other than a mathematical one. It is the temptation of technocracy to trade in space. It forgets that terrestrial maps are made by celestial observations. *Place*, on the other hand, has human context: space with historical associations where vows are made; encounters and obligations, met; commitments, fulfilled; limits, recognized. Place implies belonging. It establishes identity. It defines vocation. It envisions destiny. Place is filled with memories of life that provide roots and give direction. Place provides human specificity for the embodiment of the human will. There is thus a verticality as well as a horizontality to place that space does not have, for the former embodies the verticality of human values and human needs. Man walks upright, Salvador de Madariaga has reminded us,<sup>19</sup> which quantification as a technical tool can never envisage.

### **Research Trends About Place**

Beyond the topographical interest in place, diverse disciplines are now pointing us toward taking the significance of place more humanly. While Alvin Toffler predicts the abolition of geography, saying "Never have man's relationships with place been more numerous, fragile, and

temporary,"<sup>20</sup> yet others see the increasing meaningfulness of place. Ethologists, biologists, and anthropologists are giving rich data on territoriality for both animals and man. In his popular book, *The Territorial Imperative*, Robert Ardrey perhaps makes too much of man's animality as a territorial being, although he does distinguish between the closed instinct of the lower forms of life and the open instinct of some of the higher animals.<sup>21</sup> He highlights the territoriality of man with some force, although he perhaps overgeneralizes. More subtly, Edward T. Hall in his book, *The Hidden Dimension*, applies territoriality to the cultural differences of man.<sup>22</sup>

Psychologists and psychiatrists, too, have been concerned with examining man's experience of private space in his self-consciousness; that is, his *Eigenwelt*. Minkowski has shown that disturbances in spatial relationships are connected with psychic disorders such as schizophrenia.<sup>23</sup> There is the reality of "lived space," he argues, which gives man either "spatial fullness" or its deprivation. Paul Tournier has also illustrated the personal needs of man to live in places, for "All our experiences, emotions, and feelings are indissolubly linked in our memories with places."<sup>24</sup> For "At every moment of our lives an ineffaceable network of correlations is being set apart between our inner world and the external world." Such are places of singing and crying, menace and reassurance, hurt and consolation, testing and struggle, decision and commitment. "My place consists of all the things I incorporate into my person."<sup>25</sup>

In the study of comparative religion, attention is being given to the significance and meaning of sacred space. Yi-Fu Tuan has summarized some of these symbols of transcendence.<sup>26</sup> Since the 1955 Rome conference, "Le Symbolisme Cosmique des Religieux," attended by Eliade, Daniélou, and Lévi-Strauss, a wide interest in the subject has grown. The writings of Eliade,<sup>27</sup> Callois,<sup>28</sup> Kramisch,<sup>29</sup> Scully,<sup>30</sup> and Wensick,<sup>31</sup> among others, have aroused a growing interest. In part, at least, this may also be associated with a growing concern with mysticism and naturalism. For if secular man has the fantasy that he can recreate man, then why not also create his own gods or at least return to the ancient gods for the symbolic world of which technology deprives us? So writers like Jonathan Z. Smith<sup>32</sup> and Rabbi Richard L. Rubenstein<sup>33</sup> would like us to resacralize places and declare them holy—paganly so.

Philosophers too have become interested in the existential reality of man's need to be "in place." This is what Heidegger and others have meant by *dasein*, "to be there," in place. Man is *Homo sapiens* precisely because he is the creature that needs to be "in place," since he is neither pure spirit, nor is he wholly instinctual. To existential and phenomenological philosophers like Edmund Husserl (*Ideas*) and Martin Heidegger

(*Being and Time*), the phenomenology of place is of fundamental significance to modern man, who lives beyond nihilism and the death of ideologies. " 'Place' places man in the ground of self-consciousness, it confirms him in the world in a unique way. 'Place' reveals our being here, our human reality."<sup>34</sup> Perhaps we can see in the history of Western culture the oscillation of the demonic possibilities of man to be either Apollonian man (*Homo faber*), the manipulator and squanderer of his environment, or Dionysian man (*Homo ludens*), subsumed within nature and the natural. The former seeks to be as God; the latter is forgetful that man is not a beast.

There is also the new interest of theological scholars in the biblical motif of land, long a neglected subject but now becoming prominent. First, with the writings of Lohmeyer,<sup>35</sup> Lightfoot,<sup>36</sup> and Marxsen,<sup>37</sup> there was the interest in a theological geography of the Gospels. Then there has been the Old Testament interest in this motif and its links with contemporary Zionism. W. D. Davis, *The Gospel and the Land*,<sup>38</sup> and Walter Brueggeman, *The Land*,<sup>39</sup> trace in outline the central symbolism of the land in the Judaeo-Christian faiths.

Robert Ardrey has a curiously negative argument about man and the land in Jewish culture. He dismisses the "Jewish personality" as nothing but "a bundle of mannerisms preserving the identity of a de-territorialized man." He sees the schizophrenia of exile for the Jews of the Diaspora as providing the traits of what is "Jewishness."<sup>40</sup> It is true, as Maurice Samuel has analyzed: Yiddish—the folk language of the European ghetto—is unlike all other folk language, for it has no base in nature.

It is poor, almost bankrupt, by comparison with other languages in the vocabulary of field, and forest, and stream. . . . Yiddish has almost no flowers . . . [is] almost devoid of trees. . . . The animal world is almost depopulated . . . the skies are practically empty of birds. . . . There is likewise a death of fish . . . there are no nature descriptions to be found anywhere in Yiddish prose or poetry.<sup>41</sup>

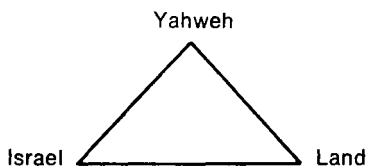
In general, the ghetto Jew was far more familiar with the flora and fauna of Palestine than he was with the neighboring fields of Poland. Once the Jew settles in Israel, argues Ardrey, he emerges with non-Jewish traits; for in the land of Palestine itself, his "Jewish" personality vanishes. Davis has argued how false this generalization is,<sup>42</sup> ignoring the whole history and theology of Judaeo-Christian tradition, to which we now turn.

## The Promised Land

Biblical views of "place" and "land" seem light-years removed from modern secular man; for mankind has taken two great leaps in its history concerning nature: from nature as magic to nature as profane, and from nature as profane to nature as commodity. In the primitive world of magic, all reality is consubstantial, sharing the same plane of being, with no distinction between idea and actuality, word and thing. It was language and faith that helped the Hebrews to be released from the pansacrality of life,<sup>43</sup> but this desacralization of the world was anything but a desecration, for the close relationship between God and His creation was upheld. And "... in no earlier or contemporary religion of the ancient Near East," asserts Moriarty, "can we find a comparable reevaluation of nature and human activity."<sup>44</sup> It was science and its progressive secularism since the seventeenth century that eclipsed man's perception of creation, causing him to view nature as manipulative and merely the outcome of "natural processes." The Judaeo-Christian perception of the land thus lies between these two poles of magic and secularism, nature as demonic and nature as anthropocentric. The Judaeo-Christian faith saw the world as theocentric: God given and God centered.

There is no word, no concept of "nature" in Hebrew thought. Yahweh is the transcendent sovereign of all creation to whom is attributed all of reality. This set man within a moral equilibrium with his environment,<sup>45</sup> an orientation that is totally lost under secularism. It claimed that the ultimate reason for the world's existence is not mechanical but personal and rational. It also claimed that the physical universe is not the whole of reality. The world was not seen, therefore, as a closed system of mechanical causation but as a world that reflected both the rationality and morality of a righteous and merciful God. The dilemma of the modern scientific worldview is that the intelligibility of the physical universe has eclipsed any sense of morality in the phenomenal world. It appears quaint to us to think the Hebrews believed that God blessed in rain, cursed in the drought, spoke in the wind, judged in the earthquake, or that "the heavens declare the glory of God."<sup>46</sup>

In such a world, no holy place could be confused with Yahweh. An Israelite sanctuary was "where Yahweh will put his name" with no innate sanctity, so its holy places were a celebration of events not a reverence for primordial holiness *per se*.<sup>47</sup> Without Yahweh there could be no holiness, no people, no land. A triadic relationship bound Yahweh in covenant with his people and the promised land.



You are to pass over the Jordan to go in to take possession of the land which the Lord your God gives you; and when you possess it and live in it, you shall be careful to do all the statutes and ordinances which I set before you this day.<sup>48</sup>

This was not a utopian blueprint of abstract ideals; but, like any ancient Near Eastern covenant treaty of a suzerain lord, it was to be obeyed, simply and realistically so.

The land was to be managed in stewardship, for it belonged to Yahweh not to Israel.<sup>49</sup> A balance between food producers and law givers was to be maintained, so that the Levites as the administrators were forbidden to own land. There was to be redistribution of wealth to the poor by tithe, the gleaning laws, zero interest rates, and emancipation of slaves every seventh year. Capital accumulation within the community was thus controlled.<sup>50</sup> It was a society orientated towards a leisure-work ethic, celebrated by the Sabbath day and the sabbatical year.<sup>51</sup> The earth was viewed as a vast farmyard over which Yahweh presided as a cosmic farmer.<sup>52</sup> His bounty implied personal obligations: "Take care that the land be able to support you when your days and your children's days are multiplied."<sup>53</sup> In the Mosaic code specific ecologic injunctions were included concerning discernment in selecting trees to be cut down, in taking a bird's eggs, as well as in details of sanitation and fertilization.<sup>54</sup>

At first the land was managed in covenant community and under judges; but this system apparently broke down with the Philistine crisis of the eleventh century BC, when kingship appeared to offer more security.<sup>55</sup> But it is the temptation of kings to view land for self-indulgence, and David himself was a poor example of a land manager. The land as symbol of security, self-satisfaction, and materialism dulled the memory of a people whose existence depended upon their being a covenant people. "To forget" was to cease to be such a community, as the prophets reminded the people constantly. Prophets, like Hosea and Jeremiah, saw clearly that the misrule of kings and the "mourning" of the land went together.<sup>56</sup> Jeremiah, as the great poet of the land, em-



phasized this fully: as with the infidelity of people, so with the wastefulness of the land.

Following the Exile of the sixth century BC, in Judaism there was no one doctrine of the land. Instead, there was a multiplicity of ideas, spiritualized in various ways and suffused with eschatological expectations, just as today Reformed Judaism and Zionism reflect differing perspectives. Indeed, in the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and Qumran writings there was comparative infrequency of references to the land. Martin Hengel suggests that the Hellenization within Judaism itself, as well as in the Diaspora, was so intense that urbanism dominated the spirit of the people.<sup>57</sup> For after Alexander, Jerusalem was located at the center of imperial disputes and not in the periphery, as it had been under the Babylonian world. The Hellenistic program of a cultural and intellectual enlightenment was antithetical to Hebrew faith, not denying Judaism but nevertheless changing its outlook in subtle ways. Maccabean peasantry did fight for their land, and Phariseeism did emphasize the land; nevertheless, the focus was on Jerusalem and its Temple; and land interests were urbanized and rites were made more liturgical.

In the New Testament, scholars have frequently assumed that the transference of Christian hope was from an earthly to a heavenly Jerusalem. The person of Christ, argued John's gospel, transcended the land, cleansed the Temple, and embodied Jerusalem.<sup>58</sup> Mark's gospel suggests new places become sacred places: Galilee as well as Judaea, Cana as well as Bethlehem. Yet its history and theology demanded that the *realia* of Judaism, entailed in times and places, should be embraced in the *realia* of Christianity also. But Christianity as a largely gentile movement demoted the land motif, and Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles emphasized rather that the Christian's place was truly to be "in Christ." The zeal of the Crusaders in the Middle Ages and of the Zionistic sympathies of contemporary fundamentalists would focus all on Palestine. But the poetic sentiment of Francis Thompson, that of Christ walking on the waters, "not on Genessareth but Thames," and the artistic presentation of Stanley Spencer's "Resurrection," set at Cookham-on-Thames, have demonstrated a new perspective on sacred places.

Throughout the medieval and later history of the Diaspora, Jewish sentiment for the land of Palestine has varied with temperament and thought.<sup>59</sup> There were the national thinkers who, as philosophers, emphasized the historical importance of the land, as reflected in the Halakhoh. There were the mystics, as expressed in the Kabbalah, who from the thirteenth century onward reverted to the pagan mysticism of Jerusalem as the sacred center of the cosmos.<sup>60</sup> There were the various

messianic movements, which raised the eschatological expectations of the common people in the land.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, there was born modern Zionism, an amalgam of Western nationalism and Eastern mysticism. It has been fed by contrasted sources of expectation. The first source is represented by Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, who was much influenced by the Kaballah, which he sought to revive; for he believed the "soul" of Jew and the "land" of Palestine were uniquely different.<sup>61</sup> A second contribution is the Hassidic tradition, which Martin Buber represented, emphasizing the holistic needs of man-land-God in the new transformation of working the soil of Israel.<sup>62</sup> He saw the moral dangers of nationalism and of secularism, insisting the land must be built upon justice and goodness. A third influence, voiced by men such as Abraham Joshua Heschel, relates time—past, present, and future—with the state of Israel. The eventfulness of Israel must ever be relived in the celebration of festival, for the Sabbath acknowledges God as lord of time.<sup>63</sup> Fourthly, there have been various secularist influences, including marxism, which have founded on the principles of land and labor some of the first *kibbutzim*. A. D. Gordon is such a pioneer. All have been united by the event of the Holocaust, seeing no hope for Jewry without a homeland. The creation of the state of Israel in 1947 and the repossession of the site of the Temple of Jerusalem in 1967 have reawakened acutely the intense symbolism of place and land in Jewish consciousness.

### Scenarios for the Future

The state of Israel is today a microcosm of the state of contemporary society. At the ecological level, the sense of place is high in Israeli agricultural achievements. The desert has been made to blossom and man has good stewardship of the earth. Israel can teach the world wise, ecological management. At the cultural level, the sentiment for a Jewish homeland is still widespread in the world; and if Palestinians are also, with justice and fair-mindedness, provided land, then the redistribution of Israel's frontiers may become a model for territorial squabbles in other parts of the world. But it is at the ontological level, where Israel's sense of place is today no clearer than in the rest of the world; for as the Israelis use technological power to change their environment, the forces that shape their culture also become more and more man-made, and so their stance in the world becomes more and more anthropocentric. How then can a common order be devised, one that keeps not only Jew and Arab in balance but also man and land?

In fact, an ontology of place is as elusive in Israel, in spite of its rich

heritage, as anywhere else. There is the same oscillation there as elsewhere between a return to naturalism or paganism of space and the desecration of space. On the one hand, there are thinkers like the radical theologian Rabbi Richard L. Rubenstein, who sees the reestablishment of Israel as marking "the re-birth of the long forgotten gods of the earth within Jewish experience." He calls for "a new paganism," with Israel's return to the earth eliciting "a return to the archaic earth religion."<sup>64</sup> R. Sanders speaks of archaeology in Israel not only serving "to unearth the mythic heritage of place for a re-implanted people" but being "a major element in the national myth-making process." What tragic irony there is in the forces of naturalism that one form should spawn the Nazi mythology of blood and race to generate Auschwitz, while another should now promote the Israeli mythology of soil. The *Baalim* still haunt the land. The alternative is secularism and technocracy, for Israel is no longer a covenant community.

North America, too, was first viewed by its immigrants as the promised land. It, too, has seen the shift from the covenant people of Puritanism to the bureaucracy of big corporations, which have wasted American land more blatantly than anything witnessed under Israel's monarchy. Short in time but long in space, where Palestine was long in time but short in space, the symbolic burdens of frontiersmanship, democratic ideals, free enterprise, and bureaucracy were heaped upon the American continent.<sup>65</sup> Its prophets, transcendentalists like Muir, Emerson, and Thoreau, lacked the true discontent of the Hebrew prophets, for they lacked the discrimination of Yahweh or Baal. The sentiment of nature remains, in the contemporary environmental movement, a broken reed rather than a viable support to the complexities of modern society.

Will future man be at home in the world, or will it continue to expand into a placeless world? Can we have a geography of significant places, or will geography be abolished, as Alvin Toffler has predicted? Perhaps we can prognosticate with three scenarios<sup>66</sup> concerning mythic space, devastated space, and a lived place.

As Rubenstein and others argue, one prospect is the return to mythic space. This is the advocacy of Roszak and others for the greening not only of America but of the whole world. It involves heightened public skepticism towards the merits of technology and the crumbling inwardly of the scientific spirit.<sup>67</sup> It would be a world lacking intellectual unity; for while the Aquarian society is gentle, it is also tolerant of every emotional enterprise of astrology, occultism, and psychic exploration. It would engender psychic and spiritual placelessness, lost in the infinity of personal introspection and universal superstitions, which blur any distinctions between object and subject. It might engender more arts and crafts, but Western society would more likely relapse to medieval

Indian than maintain modern American standards of living. But the overall results would be more, not less, placelessness than that which we suffer now.

A second scenario is that of blasted space, where the thermonuclear warfare of the Northern Hemisphere has left two-thirds of the planet a nuclear desert. Its habitability has been reduced to some islands in the southern ocean. The frontiers of the postholocaust world would be frontiers of survival and, as Garrett Hardin's lifeboat ethics already indicate, it is a system more brutish than human.<sup>68</sup> Science, as the universal experience of mankind, would survive to be utilized for continued survival of the human race. But it would probably require a totalitarian measure of control, while place as the repository of historic memories would be forgotten by the unprecedented experience of its survivors. Anyway, they would be restricted perilously to the "technicalized space" of a deeply injured biosphere.

The third scenario, lived placefulness, is the hopeful one for mankind. It would assume the human race had overcome the perils of the contemporary technological society and its nationalisms. But how? It would begin with the recognition that for the first time in human history, mankind now enjoys a common cosmology of science about the material world. But as it advanced with ever more complexity, the necessary epistemological shifts would be made to recognize with increasing clarity the distinctions of the many-leveled bases of knowledge, each demanding its own appropriate "understanding," which the "overstanding" of existing mechanistic interpretations cannot discern. The legitimate *place* of each discipline would help to reconcile analytical and intuitive reasoning, leading to a gradual convergence of the spirit of true science with the spirit of authentic religion. The deep antinomies of present cultures would be healed as each knew his place not with a worldview but with a lifeworld of total being. Man would remember that the beginnings of science were rooted in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, which desacralized the world without desecrating it. Then all would celebrate the first days of creation in the acknowledgment of the sacramental in every place.

Today, technological rationality and human spirituality are still poles apart. To take the idea of creation seriously will be to initiate immense changes of thought and spirit. But which is the best prospect: the Aquarian, the technological, or the Judaeo-Christian world? As geographers, we have not only the choice between a placeless geography and a geography of place, but we have the responsibility of seeking to live in a discipline that reflects more consistently our own lifeworld. Our marxist colleagues have rationalized such a geography. How does our Judaeo-Christian tradition fit into today's world? What is certain is that the Judaeo-Christian tradition can be blamed neither for our environ-

mental crisis nor for our political troubles in the Middle East nor for our ontological sense of alienation.

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GOETHE'S APPROACH  
TO THE NATURAL WORLD:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL  
THEORY AND EDUCATION

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DAVID SEAMON

Humanistic studies emphasizing phenomenological and existentialist approaches have begun to offer deeper, more humanly focused insights into geographic questions such as the nature of space, place, home, and landscape.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, a more abiding concern for man's relationship with nature and for the ways in which environmental attitudes are formed in an age of scientific and technological implosion has also begun to make itself felt. Various writers have argued that, as problems of energy and ecology disrupt and even threaten human existence, a decisive change in environmental attitudes is not only desirable but necessary.<sup>2</sup> In different ways, these various writers suggest that man no longer feels respect and concern for the natural world, that he has become alienated from the rhythms of nature and can reestablish his ties with nature only through some directed, self-conscious effort. As the historian Lynn White, Jr., phrased it, "A man-nature dualism is rooted in us and until it is eradicated not only from our minds, but also from our emotions, we shall doubtless be unable to make fundamental changes in our attitudes and actions affecting our ecology."<sup>3</sup> In that vein, one goal of a more humanistic geography is to reveal patterns and varieties of environmental experience and learning that, if once lost and now obscure, might be newly invigorated and rechanneled to awaken a spirit of cooperation with and involvement in nature.

In pursuit of that task, a review of the work of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) becomes especially appropriate. If now more famous for his vast contribution to German and world literature, Goethe-the-poet was equally famous in his own time as Goethe-the-scientist, the student of nature. Geographers may find the latter intriguing not only

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because he established some of the first weather stations in Europe but also because Goethe's contributions to natural history and philosophy were the basis of a long friendship with Alexander von Humboldt. That friendship was itself the source of Humboldt's one attempt to write natural history in the genre of Schiller and other German romantics.<sup>4</sup> But Goethe and Humboldt moved away from romanticism almost simultaneously and for much the same reason; i.e., a highly empirical methodology. If the two geniuses of the German Enlightenment were here mutually influential, however, Goethe went further to expose the human encounter with nature and to reveal a belief in the purposefulness of that encounter. As he believed that all things in nature reflected a universal whole imbued with spiritual intention and order, so too did he believe that the universal whole might be demonstrated experientially through immersion in the events of nature. In the process too he gave definition to a highly systematic yet radically empirical method for the study of nature. The intent of that method was to arrive at not only a deeper understanding but also a more reverent appreciation of nature.

### Goethe and Romanticism

In his earlier years Goethe was involved in the European romantic movement, which reacted against the growing forces of science and technology and sought to return to a lifestyle that was more simple, whole, and in tune with nature.<sup>5</sup> Rejecting the French and classical models that had guided writers of the Enlightenment, the romantics turned instead to the powers of genius, imagination, and spontaneity. Nature, the creator of all things, was henceforth to be the artist's only teacher. Nature here was not only the natural things of the world—the rivers, valleys, mountains, clouds, and seasons—but also human nature as it appeared in simple, humble persons: children, peasants, the pure in heart. The romantics believed that nature was divine and One. The sensitive, searching individual could grow attuned to this oneness and discover, in moments of sudden encounter, his or her integral membership in a vastly larger whole. "I have felt," wrote Wordsworth in his poem, "Tintern Abbey,"

A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;

A motion and a spirit, that impels  
 All thinking things, all objects of thought,  
 And rolls through all things. [11. 93-102]

As Goethe grew older he moved away from the romantic view. He reacted against its individual rebelliousness and distrust of intellectual structure and turned his thoughts toward an understanding of the necessity of self-limitation. His strong emotionalism tempered; restraint and control, balance and harmony became his ideals in life, study, and art. Goethe took the task of every individual to be the greatest development of his or her talents into a fluent, integrated personality. In this attitude, he placed great emphasis on studying the world outside himself, believing that through the world the person discovered more about his own nature and thereby became more balanced and complete. "Man comes to know himself," he wrote, "only insofar as he knows the world; he becomes aware of the world only through himself, and of himself only through the world."<sup>6</sup>

Like the romantics, Goethe continued to view nature as a secret script in which the concerned person might discover an underlying unity hidden beneath a seeming material diversity. "Nature, however manifold it may appear, is nevertheless always a single entity, a unity; and thus, whenever it manifests itself in part, all the rest must serve as a foundation for the part, and the part must be related to all the rest."<sup>7</sup> The whole and parts, like macrocosm and microcosm, each reflect the other. For Goethe, the task is to discover this recurrent parts-whole harmony and thereby understand that the same fundamental mutuality is at work at all levels of the universe:

... all which presents itself as appearance, all that we meet with as phenomenon, must either indicate an original division which is capable of union, or an original unity which admits of division. . . . To divide the united, to unite the divided, is the life of nature; this is the eternal systole and diastole, the external collapsion and expansion, the inspiration and expiration of the world in which we live and move.<sup>8</sup>

Goethe's interest and love for nature led him to conduct many scientific experiments in diverse fields such as osteology, comparative anatomy, geology, meteorology, and optics.<sup>9</sup> It is in these studies that his approach to nature began to differ from that of the romantics and became potentially more reproducible for others. Whereas the intense

encounter with nature that the romantics prescribed in their prose and poetry was generally uncontrolled and unexpected (as Wordsworth's encounter in "Tintern Abbey"), Goethe sought to channel and systematize that experience, to bring its powers to bear on a particular phenomenon and thereby better see and understand it. "One instance is often worth a thousand," he wrote, "bearing all within itself."<sup>10</sup> His way of investigation sought to guide actively the special moments of recognition and then gradually to gather a more complete understanding of the phenomenon.<sup>11</sup>

### Delicate Empiricism

In his mode of study—"higher contemplation" (*höhere Anschauung*) or "delicate empiricism" (*zarte Empirie*), as he sometimes called it—Goethe forsook the analytical methods of science, which interpret things in terms of their parts.<sup>12</sup> Instead, he sought to use heightened contact with nature as a way to discover and understand the thing as it was *in itself* before any observer had defined, categorized, or labeled it; hence his statement that "natural objects should be sought and investigated as they are and not to suit observers, but respectfully as if they were divine beings."<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, he felt that the research instruments of science—microscope, telescope, and similar recording devices—artificially separated the student from the thing studied and often led to inauthentic understanding:

It is a calamity that the use of experiment has severed nature from man, so that he is content to understand nature merely through what artificial instruments reveal and by so doing even restricts her achievements. . . . Microscopes and telescopes, in actual fact, confuse man's innate clarity of mind.<sup>14</sup>

In effect, Goethe sought not to separate himself from the things he studied but to encounter them intimately—to penetrate their aspects through the keen and educable powers of human perception. "The human being himself, to the extent that he makes sound use of his senses, is the most exact physical apparatus that can exist."<sup>15</sup> Goethe believed that any error in understanding is generally the fault of the mind: "The senses do not deceive but the judgement deceives."<sup>16</sup> One must proceed carefully when making any transition from experience to

judgment, guarding against dangers such as “impatience, precipitancy, self-satisfaction, rigidity, narrow thoughts, presumption, indolence, indiscretion, instability, and whatever else the entire multitude and its retinue might be called.”<sup>17</sup>

Because the senses are so important in Goethe’s way of study, their training and education are crucial. He believed that observers are not all equal in their ability to see and that each of us must develop his perceptual powers through effort, practice, and perseverance. “Nature speaks upward to the known senses of man,” he wrote, “downward to unknown senses of his.”<sup>18</sup> If we cannot understand a particular phenomenon, we must learn to make fuller use of our senses and “to bring our intellect into line with what they tell.”<sup>19</sup>

Yet Goethe argued that it is not enough to train only the outer senses and the intellect. He maintained that as our abilities to see outwardly improve, so will our inner perceptions become more sensitive: “Each phenomenon in nature, rightly observed, wakens in us a new organ of inner understanding.”<sup>20</sup> As we learn to see more clearly, we also learn to see more *deeply*; we become more “at home” with the phenomenon, understanding it with greater concern and empathy. In time, he believed, the method reveals affective, qualitative meanings as well as empirical, sensual content. “There may be a difference,” he wrote, “between seeing and seeing . . . the eyes of the spirit have to work in perpetual living connexion with those of the body, for one otherwise risks seeing yet seeing past a thing.”<sup>21</sup> This kind of understanding does not come readily, but it can be had, Goethe claimed, by anyone who is devoted enough to immerse himself in systematic training. “Thus, not through an extraordinary spiritual gift, not through momentary inspiration, unexpected and unique, but through consistent work, did I eventually achieve such satisfactory results,” he wrote about his own scientific discoveries.<sup>22</sup>

## The Ur-phenomenon

Goethe maintained that in time, out of commitment, practice, and proper efforts, the student would discover the “ur-phenomenon” (*Ur-Phänomen*), the essential pattern or process of a thing. *Ur-* bears the connotation of primordial, basic, elemental, archetypal; the ur-phenomenon may be thought of as the “deep-down phenomenon,” the essential core of a thing that makes it what it is and what it becomes.<sup>23</sup> For example, Goethe saw the ur-phenomenon of the plant as the interplay between two opposing forces: the “vertical tendency” and “hori-

zontal tendency.”<sup>24</sup> The former is the plant’s inescapable need to grow upward; the latter, the nourishing, expanding principle that gives solidity to the plant.<sup>25</sup> Only when these two forces are in balance can the plant grow normally. Goethe believed that the powers of human perception and understanding cannot penetrate beyond the ur-phenomenon. It is “an ultimate which can not itself be explained, which is in fact not in need of explanation, but from which all that we observe can be made intelligible.”<sup>26</sup>

Unlike the Husserlian phenomenologist, who begins with experience but then, drawing back, examines it cerebrally through reflection, *epoche*, and other tools of the intellect, Goethe sought to maintain continual experiential contact with the thing *throughout* the course of investigation—to think about the thing, to intellectualize as little as possible. “Pure experiences,” he wrote, “should lie at the root of all physical sciences. . . . A theory can be judged worthy only when all experiences are brought under one roof and assist in their subsequent application.”<sup>27</sup> Yet Goethe saw no inherent conflict between experience and idea, fact and theory. He believed that genuine understanding entailed the mutual interplay of both fact and theory. Their resolution is to be found in the ur-phenomenon, which marks out the things in the foreground and brings all other phenomena into relation with them.<sup>28</sup> If study is conducted properly, facts and theory can arise smoothly together because each is part and parcel of the other:

The highest is to understand that all fact is really theory.  
The blue of the sky reveals to us the basic law of color.  
Search nothing beyond the phenomena, they themselves  
are the theory.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Theory of Colours***

Goethe’s way of study is perhaps best revealed in his work on color and light as they are manifested in the everyday world. Skeptical of Newton’s theory of color, Goethe began his studies in the late 1780s and published *Theory of Colours* (*Zur Farbenlehre*) in 1810.<sup>30</sup> The crux of his color theory is its experiential source: rather than impose theoretical statements (as he felt Newton had), Goethe sought to allow light and color to be displayed in an ordered series of experiments that the reader could experience for himself. Goethe claimed that if one carefully conducts these experiments with “unremitting and close application,” he

will discover from his own experiences the underlying processes through which all color appears.<sup>31</sup>

The ur-phenomenon of color, according to Goethe, is the tension between darkness and light. Unlike Newton, who theorized that colors are entities that have merely arisen out of light (as, for example, through refraction in a prism), Goethe came to believe that colors are *new* formations that develop through a dialectical action between darkness and light. For Goethe, darkness is not a total, passive absence of light as Newton had suggested but, rather, an active presence, opposing itself to light and interplaying with it. Goethe argued that darkness weakened by light leads to the darker colors of blue, indigo, and violet, while light dimmed by darkness creates the lighter colors of yellow, orange, and red.<sup>32</sup>

*Theory of Colours* begins with an examination of physiological colors; i.e., colors contingent upon the state and activity of the eye, as, for example, the orange after-image we see after looking at a blue flame. Goethe first asked the reader to explore the effect of darkness and light in general terms. He asked the student to consider experiences such as the following, to conduct them carefully as experiments: (1) to keep one's eyes open in a totally dark place for a time; (2) to look at a white, strongly illuminated surface, then turn to objects moderately lighted.<sup>33</sup> He explained that in the first experiment the eye is "in the utmost relaxation and susceptibility"; it feels "a sense of privation" and strives to perceive outwardly into the darkness.<sup>34</sup> The results of the second experiment are the reverse of the first: the eye, "in an overstrained state and scarcely susceptible at all," is dazzled and for a time cannot see the moderately lighted objects.<sup>35</sup>

For Goethe experiments like these, simple as they may seem, intimate an essential aspect of human seeing: darkness produces in the eye an inclination to light; light, an inclination to darkness. The eye, he says, is an active organ that takes on the state opposite that of the world outside. The eye "shows its vital energy, its fitness to receive the impression of the object, precisely by spontaneously tending to an opposite state."<sup>36</sup> Goethe worked to demonstrate an active dialectic between darkness and light, seeing and thing seen. For him, polarity and its reconciliation are prime forces in nature. Person and world, color and its complement, colored objects seen and the resulting after-image—all point to an instantaneous, living tension that joins the parts in a dynamic, interpenetrating whole. This relationship is "a creative conversation between within and without, a kind of dialectical education through which the individual form becomes in actuality what from the very beginning it had been potentially. For what is within and what is without are . . . merely poles of one and the same thing."<sup>37</sup>

## Demonstrating Unity in Diversity

Goethe's *Theory of Colours* indicated that many different phenomena of nature involve similar patterns and processes, that things of seeming diversity involve an underlying unity. Besides the physiological colors referred to above, *Theory of Colours* also explores physical colors (colors created by the intervention of a transparent or semitransparent medium—for example, prism or earth's atmosphere—between experiencer and scene) and chemical colors (colors inherent to the substance—for example, the green of a leaf). In the usual scientific approach, a separate discipline investigates each manifestation: the psychologist studies physiological colors; the physicist, physical colors; the chemist, chemical colors. By this method, the unity of color itself is sacrificed, broken into parts for the sake of scientific inquiry. Goethe's achievement is the rescue of color's integrity. By considering color in terms of its experiential structure, Goethe maintains the wholeness of color and at the same time arrives at underlying commonalities present in types of color manifested in the everyday world.

As we have seen, many of these commonalities involve some expression of polarity; for example, activity versus passivity, warmth versus coldness, proximity versus distance, colors related to acids versus colors related to bases. One of the more frequent manifestations of this tension in the everyday world, Goethe argued, is the intervention of a semitransparent medium such as air, smoke, or water in front of darkness or light. Empty space has the property of transparency, but illuminated space occupied by a semitransparent medium generates color.<sup>38</sup> Something dark seen through a semitransparent medium appears blue; and something light appears yellow. Decreasing the density of the medium through which the darkness appears, turns the blue to indigo and then violet. On the other hand, increasing the density of the medium through which the light appears causes the yellow to become orange and then red.

A prime example of the semitransparent medium is the blue of the sky and the changing colors of the setting sun. The sky is blue, Goethe argued, because the blackness of outer space is seen through the semitransparent medium of the atmosphere. Similarly the sun, setting behind the vapors of evening, turns from yellow to orange and red as the opaqueness of the atmosphere increases. Depending on its context, the same semitransparent medium—the atmosphere—leads to different colors.<sup>39</sup> This same basic process, says Goethe, is evident in many other color appearances, including the reddishness of the sea bottom as seen by divers, the bluish appearance of the distant mountains, the yellowish

appearance of distant snow-clad mountains, the bluish color of smoke viewed against a dark background, and so on.

The point of such clarification in Goethe's approach was, however, not only to expose the unity of nature but also to sensitize the student-scientist to the variety of color in the world and to the commonalities that join the appearances of nature in a wider, if less obvious, whole that unites quantity with quality.

### Uniting Quantity and Quality

Usual scientific approaches separate quantity from quality. The physicist, for example, speaks of color in terms of numbers of particle vibrations per unit time; his aim is to trace color processes back to movements of the smallest parts of bodies and thereby describe them mathematically in terms of measurable time and space.<sup>40</sup> He discounts the qualitative dimension of color, having to proceed from the basic assumption that "in the outer world only the quantitative, dark, and colourless processes of motion are present, and that the qualitative only arises as the effect of the quantitative, on an organism endowed with sense and mind."<sup>41</sup> Goethe, in contrast, sought to show that the perception and meaning of color are part of an inseparable whole, that the qualitative dimension of color is a reality present in nature and constitutes one integral unit.<sup>42</sup> "Every colour," he wrote, "produces a distinct impression on the mind, and addresses at once the eye and feelings."<sup>43</sup>

The latter half of *Theory of Colours* works to sensitize the reader to these finer meanings of color, so that eventually, according to Goethe, he "does not see a pure phenomenon with his eyes, but more with his soul."<sup>44</sup> Goethe argues that colors on the active side of the spectrum—the yellows, oranges, reds—excite human feelings that are "quick, lively, aspiring"; while the more passive blues, indigos, and violets produce a "restless, susceptible, anxious impression."<sup>45</sup> Yellow, the color nearest light, has a "serene, gay, softly exciting character," while blue, nearest darkness, is related to shadow and may provoke a sense of gloom and melancholy.<sup>46</sup>

In an age when it is often assumed that colors have no integral meanings—that their significance is generated by the viewer and varies with culture, historical era, and person—Goethe's seeming arbitrariness may appear outmoded and erroneous.<sup>47</sup> He would argue, however, that it is in fact the relativist position that is arbitrary, that each color *does* have its own special character that transcends a particular person, place, or time. The problem is that most persons have not developed the sensibilities to make contact with the objective meanings of color and therefore fall back on external designations and symbolizations. If the



person wishes to cultivate a sensitivity to color's deeper meanings, he or she *can*, but it will take dedicated study and effort.<sup>48</sup>

### Implications for Environmental Theory and Education

Today, much scientific research describes nature in mechanistic terms. A frog is called an "animal machine"; the earth is seen as a "spaceship"; man himself is described as "a complex biochemical mechanism powered by a combustion system which energizes computers with prodigious storage facilities for retaining encoded information."<sup>49</sup> The student holding this perspective works to know nature materially and intellectually: "nothing that cannot be measured and proved experimentally has any value."<sup>50</sup> A thing of nature is viewed largely as a collection of parts and their workings, which, if understood, will also lead to understanding of the whole. The impact of this perspective can be seen in much environmental education, which typically emphasizes cognitive mastery of scientific knowledge about the environment and ecology and thereby assumes that students will become more ecologically concerned and responsible.<sup>51</sup>

Much modern science furthermore sees nature without intentional design. Jacques Monod, for example, emphasizes that the modern scientific attitude implies the *postulate of objectivity*; i.e., the fundamental notion that "there is no intention to the universe . . . chance alone is the source of all novelty, all creation."<sup>52</sup> The processes of nature are totally blind, argues Monod, and man ". . . lives on the boundary of an alien world. A world that is deaf to his music, just as indifferent to his hopes as it is to his sufferings or his crimes."<sup>53</sup> In this view, the natural world is little more than a material object: an unintelligent stuff to be used for human purposes. It is studied so that man can extend his powers of prediction and control.<sup>54</sup>

Goethe's approach is important here because it offers a different way of understanding nature. It teaches an alternative mode of interaction between person and environment that entails reciprocity, wonderment, and gratitude. Goethe wished us to converse with nature and discover in ourselves its multifaceted reflection. His central ambition, as L. L. Whyte suggested, ". . . was nothing less than to see all nature as one, to discover an objective principle of continuity running through the whole, from the geological rocks to the processes of aesthetic creation. Moreover, this discovery of the unity of nature implies the simultaneous self-discovery of man, since man could thereby come to understand himself better."<sup>55</sup> Indeed, if Goethe's approach extends our modern-day vision of nature to include a greater sense of dignity, re-

spect, and purposefulness, so too may it expand our vision of man. In the words of the physicist Werner Heisenberg, whatever other value we may cull from Goethe's method, "Even today we can still learn from Goethe that we should not let everything else atrophy in favor of the one organ of rational analysis; that it is a matter, rather, of seizing upon reality with all the organs that are given to us, and trusting that this reality will then also reflect the essence of things, the 'one, the good, and the true.'"<sup>56</sup>

## Notes

1. For example, Anne Buttimer, "Grasping the Dynamism of Lifeworld," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66 (1976): 277-91; Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, and Thought*, Albert Hofstadter, trans. (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 145-61; Donald W. Moncrieff, "Aesthetics and the African Bushman," in Amedeo Giorgi et al., eds., *Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology*, vol. 2 (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Duquesne University Press, 1975), pp. 224-32; Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976); David R. Seamon, "Movement, Rest and Encounter: A Phenomenology of Everyday Environmental Experience" (Ph.D. diss., Clark University, 1977); Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).
2. For example, Aldo Leopold, *Sand County Almanac* (New York: Sierra Club Ballantine Books, 1970); Theodore Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973); E. F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973); Paul Shepard, "Introduction: Ecology and Man—A Viewpoint," in *The Subversive Science: Essays Toward an Ecology of Man*, Daniel McKinley and Paul Shepard, eds. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), pp. 1-10; Allan W. Watts, *Nature, Man and Woman* (New York: Vintage, 1970); Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," in *Western Man and Environmental Ethics*, Ian G. Barbour, ed. (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1973), pp. 18-30.
3. Lynn White, Jr., "Continuing the Conversation," in Barbour, *Western Man*, p. 62.
4. Douglas Botting, *Humboldt and the Cosmos* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 33-42.
5. For a biography of Goethe, see G. H. Lewes, *The Story of Goethe's Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1898); on his philosophy of life, see Arnold Bergstraesser, *Goethe's Image of Man and Society* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1949).
6. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
7. H. B. Nisbet, *Goethe and the Scientific Tradition* (London: Institute of Germanic Studies, 1972), p. 6.
8. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Theory of Colours* (1810; Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970), par. 739.
9. See Rudolf Magnus, *Goethe as Scientist*, trans. Heinz Norden (New York: Henry Schuman, 1949); Ernst Lehrs, *Man or Matter: Introduction to a Spiritual Understanding of Matter Based on Goethe's Method of Training, Observation and Thought* (London: Faber & Faber, 1958).
10. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
11. See Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends*, pp. 302-6.
12. Peter Salm, *The Poem as Plant* (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1971), p. xii; also see Goethe's essays on method in *Goethe's Botanical Writings*, trans. Bertha Mueller (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1952), pp. 213-45. On the methods of science, see Abraham Maslow, *The Psychology of Science* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1969).

13. "Cautions for the Observer," in *Goethe's Color Theory*, Rupprecht Matthaei, ed. (New York: van Nostrand Reinhold, 1971), p. 57.
14. Lehrs, *Man or Matter*, pp. 111; 106.
15. Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends*, p. 303.
16. Lehrs, *Man or Matter*, p. 85.
17. Matthaei, *Goethe's Color Theory*, p. 60.
18. Lehrs, *Man or Matter*, p. 85.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 84–85.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
23. Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends*, p. 306. The romantic poet Schiller complained to Goethe that his "ur-phenomenon" was synonymous with the Platonic Ideal, but Goethe refused to accept that characterization. For a perceptive discussion of this issue see Werner Heisenberg, "Goethe's View of Nature and Science," in *Across the Frontiers* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp. 122–41.
24. Lehrs, *Man or Matter*, p. 99.
25. Salm, *Poem as Plant*, p. 27.
26. George A. Wells, "Goethe's Scientific Method in the Light of His Studies in Physical Optics," *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, E. M. Wilkinson et al., eds. (Leeds: W. S. Maney and Son, 1968), p. 102.
27. Matthaei, *Goethe's Color Theory*, p. 16.
28. Lehrs, *Man or Matter*, p. 125.
29. Matthaei, *Goethe's Color Theory*, p. 76.
30. *Zur Farbenlehre*, in *Goethe's Werke, Hamburger Ausgabe*, E. Trunz, ed., 5th ed., vol. 13 (Hamburg, 1961); or *Theory of Colours*, trans. C. L. Eastlake (presently there are two English editions available—see notes 8 and 13).
31. Goethe, *Theory of Colours*, p. 11.
32. Opinions vary on the scientific validity of Goethe's color theory. The historian of science, Charles Gillispie, has called *Theory of Colours* "subjective," "sentimental," and "the painful spectacle of . . . a great man making a fool of himself"; see his *Edge of Objectivity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 192–201 (quotation on p. 196). For another attack on Goethe's theory, see Wells, "Goethe's Scientific Method." Some commentators have argued that *Theory of Colours* has at least heuristic value for science; see, for example, Arthur G. Zajonc, "Goethe's Theory of Color and Scientific Intuition," *American Journal of Physics* 44 (1976): 327–33. Some recent scientific studies suggest that Goethe's theory may ultimately be more in tune with light and color than some of the conventional scientific theories; see, in this regard, M. H. Wilson, "Goethe's Colour Experiments," *Yearbook of the Physical Society* (London: Physical Society, 1958); and Salm, *Poem as Plant*, p. 8. The best defense of Goethe's science is perhaps Lehrs, *Man or Matter*. For an overview of *Theory of Colours* and its relation to conventional scientific approaches to color and light, see Hans Gebert, "Goethe's Work on Color," *Michigan Academician* 8 (1976): 249–65.
33. Goethe, *Theory of Colours*, pars. 5–14.
34. *Ibid.*, pars. 8; 6.
35. *Ibid.*, par. 8.
36. *Ibid.*, par. 38.
37. Erich Heller, "Goethe and the Idea of Scientific Truth," in *The Disinherited Mind* (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), p. 11.
38. Goethe, *Theory of Colours*, pars. 145–77.
39. *Ibid.*, pars. 154; 155; also see Zajonc, "Goethe's Theory of Color," p. 331.
40. Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends*, pp. 310–11.
41. Rudolf Steiner, *Goethe's Conception of the World* (London: Anthroposophical Press, 1928), p. 150.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 150–56.
43. Goethe, *Theory of Colours*, par. 915.
44. Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends*, p. 316.
45. Goethe, *Theory of Colours*, pars. 764; 777.

46. *Ibid.*, pars. 766; 778; 782; 784.

47. Ray, for example, concludes that "each culture has taken the spectral continuum and has divided it into units on a quite arbitrary basis. . . . The resulting systems are emotional and subjective, not scientific." Verne F. Ray, "Techniques and Problems in the Study of Human Color Perception," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 8 (1952): 258-59; quoted in David Lowenthal, "Geography, Experience, and Imagination: Toward a Geographical Epistemology," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 51 (1971): 256. Similarly, Yi-Fu Tuan explains that "The relation between a chromatic band and emotion . . . is muddled by amateurish attempts at generalization: universal rules turn out to be culture-bound if not idiosyncratic." Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974), p. 24. Yi-Fu Tuan does conclude, however, that some colors, particularly white, black, and red, appear to have universal significance and are among man's earliest symbols. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

48. Several exercises using Goethe's methods were devised for students in a course entitled "Goethe's Way of Science," taught by the present author at Clark University from 1975 to 1977. The course included a series of student reports on color perception and their own experiences in the appreciation of color in the landscape. For all but a few, the exercises served to heighten a sense of contact with the physical environment and of their own involvement in the environment. As one student put it:

"Working with colors the way we have has been an important experience for me. Before, I really didn't notice them much. Now I can attune myself to them better—I can ask, "What are those colors telling me?" For example, I was driving home last weekend. It was dusk. I came to a ridge and below me was a view with blue hills receding in the distance. The nearer ones were indigo and violet. The sky was filled with clouds and the setting sun. In the past I am sure I would have noticed the scene, but now I noticed it more intently. I felt strong emotional contact, as if the colors were telling me something about myself, as if they were saying that part of them was in me. I felt hopeful and sad at the same time. I felt very much present."

That feeling of being "present" in nature is precisely the intent of Goethe's method. For additional discussion of the application of Goethe's method, as, for example, in the study of water, see Theodor Schwenk, *Sensitive Chaos* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976).

49. William Etkin et al., *A Biology of Human Concern* (Philadelphia, Pa.: J. B. Lippincott, 1972), p. 17; G. Tyler Miller, Jr., *Living in the Environment: Concepts, Problems, and Alternatives* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1975), p. 38; Jacquetta Hawkes, in a lecture given at the University of Washington, 1971, as quoted in *MANAS* 30 (November 16, 1977): 7.

50. Jacquetta Hawkes, *ibid.*, p. 2.

51. See, for example, James A. Swan and William B. Stapp, eds., *Environmental Education* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974). Some of the essays in this volume mention the sensory and affective components of environmental experience, but by and large most authors place heavier emphasis on increased *intellectual* understanding of nature.

52. "Jacques Monod, Nobel Biologist Dies; Thought Existence Based on Chance," *New York Times*, 1 June 1976, p. 36.

53. Jacques Monod, *Chance and Necessity* (New York: Vintage, 1971), p. 172. Obviously, not all scientists accept Monod's world vision; see, for example, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961) and Lewis Thomas, *Lives of a Cell: Notes of a Biology Watcher* (New York: Viking Press, 1974).

54. On this theme, see William Leiss, *The Domination of Nature* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974).

55. L. L. Whyte, "Goethe's Single Vision of Nature and Man," *German Life and Letters* 2 (1949): 290.

56. Heisenberg, "Goethe's View of Nature," p. 141.

## CHAPTER 16

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# THE STRUCTURING OF SPACE IN PLACE NAMES AND WORDS FOR PLACE

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DAVID E. SOPHER

Following an old tradition, this exploration, an inquiry into the cognitive structuring of space, scrutinizes pattern as the key to both meaning and process. Probed are the form and geographical pattern of place names that incorporate the cardinal directions and certain words that have to do with the concepts of "place."

### **Place Names and Cardinal Directions**

Although questions about the cognitive structuring of space now command great interest, the origins and development of this inquiry were idiosyncratic. The exploration had several beginnings. One was a boyhood in Shanghai and the familiarity it brought with the names of places around the city and elsewhere in China. There were the province names such as, in translation, "South of the River," "North of the Lake," and "East of the Mountains," which imparted a sense of stable order on the land. Many towns appeared to fix themselves in space in the same way or by claiming to be "in the center" in some respect. On a more homely scale, there were names like P'u-tung, "East of the (Huang) River," across the river from the city proper. Some local place names seemed to have emerged not long before from the living Wu speech of the people of Shanghai. One gave a name to the Shanghai underworld, stereotyped thus by an ethnic label: *kong-po nyin*, "North-of-the-River People," the river being the Yangtze and the reference being to the low-lying, partly unsettled country of easternmost Kiangsu Province, with its population of brawling fishermen, boat people, and river pirates.

Formal schooling and the prevailing ambience in the cosmopolitan foreign community of Shanghai were British, introducing a history that

involved “East Saxons” and “West Saxons,” “North Folk” and “South Folk,” and a geography that made mention of a Southampton, its predictable toponymic twin not being discovered until later. The use of cardinal directions in the naming of places would have come to seem quite natural. In Berkeley, subsequently, perhaps only the large number of local occurrences—North Berkeley, South San Francisco, West Oakland, East Bay, and many more—could have been notable. The intermittently rectilinear grid of streets enhanced the impression that such names, workmanlike if lacking in color, were entirely expectable.

A beginning in earnest came in the amply satisfying seminar on geography and place names that John Leighly gave at Berkeley. The North Folk and the South Folk reappeared, together with much on the land naming done by them and their kind. One had an opportunity, too, to look at other place-naming systems, my choice being Arabic toponymy in Spain.<sup>1</sup> Working through Asín Palacios’ dictionary and gazetteer of Arabic place names, one gained a sense of the many differences, some obvious, some quite subtle, between the components of these names and those of Old English.<sup>2</sup> A distinction that became apparent, although it was not made explicit then, was the almost total absence, in both Spanish and Arabic toponymy, of a common English form: names that incorporated cardinal directions.

Cultural geography at Berkeley touched lightly on the civilizational ordering of landscape and on the Chinese and other Asian cosmological schemata—with their principles of axiality and cardinality—that were later to be finely explicated by Needham and Wheatley. Another distinction to be made then was that between the magico-symbolic ordering of space by an elite and the names that might take their origin in that order (T’ien-An Mên, “The Gate of Heaven Peace”) on the one hand and, on the other hand, the immediate experience of the folk and the place names that language creates out of that experience. Explorers, administrators, planners, and professors in many cultures, including the Spanish, all aware of the larger picture, have made occasional use of cardinal directions as an element in new geographical coinages, usually on a grand scale (macrotoponyms): Mar del Sur, Sierra Madre Occidental, la France de l’Est. Difficult as it may be to distinguish clearly between so-called “spontaneous” naming of places by the man on the ground, so to speak, and the “self-conscious” work of the man at the desk, the distinction must be kept in mind if place names are to tell us how space has been structured cognitively.<sup>3</sup>

A number of questions began to take shape. Why are cardinal directions frequently used in English place names and in other Germanic toponyms but rarely used in the French and Spanish and, apparently, not often in those of other Romance languages? What might the circum-

stances of Chinese place naming, with its frequent use of cardinal directions, have to say to the question? What could be inferred about spatial cognition from these facts? One could hardly expect sure answers to such questions, and there were few guides to follow in gathering material that might be relevant. As it happened, the gradual development of the pattern of distribution and the fortuitous consideration of apparently peripheral questions came to yield clues to the relationship that ultimately emerged as significant.

### The Chinese World

In China, toponymic practice is in accord with the cosmic diagram that seems to underlie the traditional Confucian ordering of space. Cardinality and axially were impressed on the landscape and on the language as well. "To face north" (*pei mien*) was to offer respect to the sovereign; "to face south" (*nan mien*) was to rule. The Japanese adopted this convention: the east and west sides of their capital, Heian, later called Kyōto, which they built on Chinese cosmological lines, are still known from the imperial point of view as, respectively, Sakyō, "the left capital (i.e., section thereof)" and Ukyō, "the right capital."<sup>4</sup>

Ten of the eighteen former provinces of China proper and one in every twelve of its prefectures had a name containing a word for a cardinal direction (or the designation "middle"), testimony to the pervasiveness of the cosmological schema. There may have been something of a bureaucratic imagination in the genesis of these provincial names, one that could soar if it named the southwestern plateau province Yünnan, "South of the Clouds." The same type of naming reached down the settlement scale to appear in the names of cities, towns, villages, and informally recognized "folk geographic" spaces, as noted for the environs of Shanghai.<sup>5</sup> One is induced to see in this the working out, at the local scale, of an element of the Great Tradition, just as in the village landscape of India one may find, here and there, remarkable vestiges of the Great Tradition of landscape design on cosmological principles, although the precise connection with the tradition may sometimes be forgotten locally.<sup>6</sup>

An English-speaking layman might ask whether it would not, after all, be "perfectly natural" to name places in this way. One might respond that while the practice of naming places seems to be universal in its distribution, there is little else about it that is. For example, common to East Asia, Chinese custom itself provides a striking exception to one very widespread form of place names: those commemorating individuals. Names like Alexandria, Ahmedabad, Sidi Bel Abbès, Colón, Johnstown, Leningrad, names of places large and small, the memorials of the famous and the ordinary, are spread over much of the Old World

and most of the New like a vast cemetery; but they disappear in eastern Asia, where they are thought improper, despite the reverence paid there to the deceased.<sup>7</sup>

Responding more directly to the naive question, one can agree that thinking about space in terms of cardinal directions is by no means the special mark of a technically sophisticated civilization. The recent literature of cognitive mapping happens to have given prominence to alternative schemes of orientation such as the Micronesian navigational system of orientation to star-rising and -setting positions and the Polynesian duality of "inland" (Hawaiian: *mauka*) and "seaward" (Hawaiian: *makai*). Whether they use such systems or not, almost all preliterate peoples do have the idea of cardinal directions; although, as Barthel points out, should they not find orientation by them relevant to their circumstances, they will not use them.<sup>8</sup> Different systems can be in use simultaneously: in Honolulu, the Hawaiian system of local orientation has become a shibboleth to distinguish between the long-resident *white* American and the newcomer from "stateside." The possibility of coalescence of the two orientation systems, local and celestial, is illustrated in Malay, where the word for "south," *selatan*, is literally a reference to "the straits." Tanah selat, "the Land of the Straits," is the peninsular and island world at the southern end of the Malay Peninsula, approximately to the south of most points on either of its longer coasts. "Straitward" is nevertheless used by Malay speakers to designate the south wherever they may live, even on the south coast of Sumatra, where only open ocean lies in the direction thus indicated.<sup>9</sup>

Many simple societies do use cardinal directions for orientation. Some groups of aborigines in Australia designate neighboring tribes by terms for the appropriate cardinal directions, which may then become more-or-less permanent ethnonyms.<sup>10</sup> The preliterate Pueblo folk and the Navajos had elaborate schemata involving the correspondence of sets of properties: animals, plants, elements, colors, and cardinal directions, very like the Chinese and other East and Southeast Asian peoples, some of them preliterate, too, until recently.

Integration of the cardinal points in a cosmology, including the ascription of sanctity to sets of lakes and mountains assigned to the cardinal directions, need not, the Pueblo case suggests, lead to wide use of these directions in the naming of places. Tewa-speaking Pueblo people have a rich fund of geographic names, but apart from a few that refer to the sacred, cardinally oriented landmarks, Tewa place names never have cardinal directions as specific elements, as a survey of Harrington's compendium shows.<sup>11</sup>

Might it not, then, have been premature to assume that Chinese toponymic practice is a conformation to the cognitive structuring of mythic space in the Chinese Great Tradition? What might we find



where that tradition was taken as a program by a different elite, as happened in Japan, where, nevertheless, most place names appear to have arisen spontaneously from circumstances at the folk level? It is true that among the small number of Japanese place names—rather grand, official ones—that are transformations of Chinese words, the use of cardinal directions is common: Tōkyō, from Chinese *tung-ching*, “eastern capital”; Chūgoku, the land to the north of the Inland Sea, from Chinese *chung-kuo(k)*, “middle land,” China. The use of cardinal directions is, however, also common among the great majority of Japanese place names, which, although written in Chinese characters (*kanji*), are pronounced in the indigenous way (*kun*). A count of specific elements and prefixes that consist of *kun* forms of the cardinal directions, including “middle,” shows these to characterize from three to four percent of current place names in Japan: a remarkably high proportion, given the large number of possible alternatives.<sup>12</sup>

A number of these are modern planning-administrative inventions, such as the name of the industrial conurbation, Kitakyūshū (North Kyūshū). At a more modest scale of settlement, the massive regrouping of villages and towns that took place in 1889 led to the bestowal of thousands of new names by the bureaucracy, who would surely have made liberal use of words for cardinal directions. The common recurrence of certain village names of this type and, more tellingly, the frequent use of cardinal directions in Japanese surnames based on local topographic features (e.g., Kitagawa, “north river”; Nakamura, “middle village”) nevertheless strongly suggest that this toponymic practice is present at the “spontaneous” folk level, as it is in China. This does not, of course, rule out the possibility of diffusion and “downward” percolation of the Chinese model, an interpretation that may be given some support by the occurrence of the specific element *naka* (middle) in one out of three cases of place names that employ cardinal directions. Or are we seeing here evidence of a widespread East Asian folk structuring of space based on cardinal orientation that came to be elaborated in the Great Tradition? The question mark remains.<sup>13</sup>

### The Germanic Languages

The problem of the Great Tradition is not relevant to consideration of the homologous toponymic practice in England, since there is no semblance in the Anglo-Saxon worldview or in the landscape record of the Anglo-Saxon period of the cardinally oriented, rectilinear schema that gives spatial structure to the Chinese world. As it happens, the rectangular grid was in use in the Roman world of military garrisons and *coloniae* but without the requirements of cardinal orientation.<sup>14</sup> It is improbable that the appearance of this feature in the landscape could have given rise to a format for the naming of places among speakers of

Germanic languages while effecting nothing of the kind in the Latin linguistic realm.

In England a rough count of the place names that have a cardinal direction as a specific element or affix shows them to occur about once out of every twenty-five names, about the same frequency as that of Japan, although the occurrence of "middle" and "mid-" is insignificant.<sup>15</sup> The count includes forms that are no longer living English, as in the recurrent toponyms Norton, "the north *tūn* (farmstead)" and Sutton, "the south *tūn*." No clear regional pattern of distribution can be discerned.

One finds, however, marked regional variation in the occurrence of this toponymic form within other lands of Germanic speech. There is evidence that its appearance in the landscape and its gradual subsequent extension took place, for the most part, later than in England. In Germany, cardinal directions are more frequently secondary affixes than specific elements (like the "north" in Northampton rather than the "nor" in Norton). They are found both in authentic folk usage and in names that can be ascribed to more-or-less official and thus somewhat self-conscious name giving with, as Henning Kaufmann notes, its predilection for schemata.<sup>16</sup>

The use of affixes, which led to the more frequent appearance of cardinal directions in place names, began in the ninth century in Germany, becoming common by 1100 AD. It had its greatest development in the High Middle Ages, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. The first records of place names incorporating cardinal directions come from Frisia; after that they appear in Lower Saxony and Thuringia and are numerous in Westphalia. Many Flemish and Dutch place names are of this type. Despite continuing use of the format in modern Germany, it has always been rare in the south, its distribution being confined chiefly to the northwestern part of the country.<sup>17</sup>

Medium-scale maps of the Scandinavian countries disclose a fair cover of settlement names (Norrköping, Söderfors, and Västerby are examples from central Sweden) in which, as in England, cardinal directions frequently form the specific element rather than an affix. The same holds true for regional names, both for older "folk names" and some more recent administrative creations. When names having cardinal directions as affixes are added, the sum of these amounts to six percent of all Swedish place names.<sup>18</sup>

Such names appear to be far less frequent in Iceland, where, however, an interesting case of a dual system of ostensible cardinal orientation is reported by Haugen.<sup>19</sup> What Haugen calls "proximate" orientation, involving more-or-less correct compass directions, was employed in individual valleys. "Ultimate" orientation was used in describing clockwise or counterclockwise circulation around the island (the center was uninhabited and not traversed) in which the cardinal direc-

tions, applied as names to the four sections of the settlement periphery, served as indicators of destination. The dual usage led to many anomalous descriptions (one might actually be moving in a northerly direction for a considerable time while traveling "south"). Here again we find the coexistence of two *different* systems of orientation in which it is the configuration of the island that gives rise to the *local reference* system; although this is, paradoxically, what Haugen calls the "ultimate," or distant, orientation system. The apparent contradictions exist precisely because of the readiness of speakers of Scandinavian languages to use cardinal directions as regional names. The large number of anomalies noted by Haugen would not have been present had the four sections of the coast been given other sorts of descriptive names. The Icelanders themselves appear to have been no more confused by the anomalies than the Malays for whom, in the reverse situation, *south* anywhere appears to mean "straitward."<sup>20</sup>

### Maritime Connections

This rough sketch of the distribution of cardinal direction toponyms in the Germanic languages shows the center to be not far from the North Sea. Whether this may be more than a fancied or purely coincidental relationship is a question that is raised by the fact of another kind of relationship between Germanic and Romance: all Romance languages use words of some Germanic origin to designate cardinal directions. This is true even of inland branches of the group like Rumanian and Rhaeto-Romantsch, which has admittedly been influenced heavily in other ways by contact with German. In Rumanian, the newer forms have not completely displaced all the older derivatives of Latin (e.g., *apus*, "west," from Latin *appōnēre*; *răsărit*, "east," from Latin *resalire*). These forms are used in ordinary speech; Germanic equivalents find more frequent employment in literary and technical discourse.<sup>21</sup>

The transfer was not a concomitant of the great movement of peoples that accompanied the disintegration of the Roman Empire, although numbers of Germanic words did displace Latin ones then, some of which had been in everyday use (e.g., Latin *albus*, "white," replaced by German *blank* to form French *blanc*, Italian *bianco*, Spanish *blanco*, etc.; but note Rumanian *alb*). The etymological dictionaries are clear on the point: the first Romance appearance of the new words for cardinal directions was in France, where they were established in the twelfth century.<sup>22</sup> On linguistic grounds, their provenance must have been English, not German or Dutch (thus the French word is *ouest*, not *vest*), and the contexts in which they occurred were specifically maritime. Thence the polyglot maritime culture that was being elaborated in Atlantic Europe in the late Middle Ages took them into the Iberian peninsula toward the end of the fifteenth century; the earliest recorded Spanish use of *este* for "east" (in the form *leste*, indicating French

provenance) is in a letter written by Columbus. Italy in turn received the words by diverse routes; they were brought home by Italian seamen and read in translations of popular Spanish and Portuguese accounts of travel in the sixteenth century. In France, the diffusion into the interior was slow, as was the displacement of the older terms in accounts of *land* travel.<sup>23</sup>

The marine connection points to agency and route of diffusion but does not by itself explain why the transfer should have occurred at all. Why should the set of terms for a concept as basic as the cardinal points have been consistently displaced in a number of related but geographically separate written languages by a set of foreign equivalents of somewhat alien character? Note that the sound of the English *w* in *west* is quite foreign to French and Spanish, the word being represented in those languages by the orthographic improvisations *ouest* and *oeste*, respectively; in addition, the *s* in the French form is uncharacteristically sounded in that position. The scope and depth of the shift seem to imply diffusion of a functionally more efficient *technology*, one adapted to oceanic navigation. During the same period, currents of diffusion along the same maritime routes had led to the development of more effective marine technics, exemplified by the combining of the Atlantic Coast square rig with the Mediterranean lateen in a successful adaptation to the needs of oceanic navigation. With the internationalization of commerce, transportation, navigation, and cartography in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, an accumulating pressure on inland Romance languages, with German as chief source of foreign terms (cf. Rumanian *vest*), would have made the transfer complete.<sup>24</sup>

In what might the particular efficiency of the English words lie? Might it be that they are all of one syllable compared to the three or four in the Latin terms and their Romance derivatives? The question is pertinent because the contrast may also point to the possibility of a structural obstacle to the employment of cardinal directions in Latin place names: the words for them may not be adapted to the special toponymic grammar of Latin and Romance. Note, for example, the problem that is still found in modern French. Adjectival forms are derived directly from literary Latin; "northern Africa" is l'Afrique Septentrionale. In order to form the term *North Africa*, which would be an elementary one in English place name grammar, French must resort to the unwieldy imprecision of l'Afrique du Nord (Africa of the North).<sup>25</sup>

The case for the inefficiency of Romance in this respect is, however, not altogether convincing. Contractions and substitutions of many kinds may occur "naturally" in response to need as languages develop. French has long had *midi* and *levant*, words for the south and east, respectively, that now have a more restricted connotation; the Rumanian words I have cited provide a contrast between the work of ancient literary

forms and living speech. With its new lexical resources, Spanish has not been deterred from forming *Norteamericano* and *norteño* (of northern origin, northerner). We cannot maintain, I think, that terms for cardinal directions were absent from Latin and Romance toponymy because the terms themselves were cumbersome. Rather, to invert Sapir-Whorf, may we not argue that the appropriate forms were not needed, that toponymically usable forms did not emerge because the conceptualization of space in Romance place naming did not require them? I noted earlier the Romance use of both Germanic and Latin forms in the creation of macrotoponyms; this excepted, the displacement of the longer Latin words did not make for a significantly greater frequency of terms for cardinal directions in the heavy fallout of new toponyms that cover the former Spanish and Portuguese territories overseas. Support for the argument comes from the highly uneven German distribution of toponyms incorporating cardinal directions. Possession of the appropriate terminology and the appropriate toponymic grammar is not by itself enough to make for the appearance of this particular toponymic form. The North Sea core of its distribution invites attention to the possibility that some cultural ecological factor related to maritime experience may have fostered the emergence of a different habit of thinking about space.<sup>26</sup>

In North America, too, we find that the common linguistic resource did not result in an even distribution of place names with affixed cardinal directions wherever English-speaking peoples settled. The density of these names appears to be most marked in New England, where it became the usual way of differentiating new offshoots of settlement within a previously delimited area. Because this took place in a fairly close-knit religious community that could exercise strong internal control, the practice, which inevitably implies linkages and dependencies among the settlements having a common name, may have been more acceptable than it would have been where colonization proceeded more individualistically. One might surmise too that since the religious symbolism of the heavenly city that was being emulated in the New World invoked a cardinaly oriented square grid, such as has been demonstrated in the early plan of New Haven,<sup>27</sup> something of the sort may have been present in the thinking of those who developed and reproduced what became the common pattern of place naming. With the weakening of a social structure dominated by Congregationalism and, after independence, the move away from reproduction of English place names, the use of cardinal directions as differentiators of small rural settlements seems to have declined. In Iowa, for example, one finds it virtually confined to the cluster of settlements established by the utopian Amana Society. But the "feel" for this particular toponymic device remains, and it reemerges at a different scale of spatial organization as

a common way of differentiating urban satellite space. As such, it may have something of a bureaucratic flavor, but the system of naming is a part of folk thinking. "The Northside" and "the Near Westside" are not to be found on the city map of Syracuse, where I happen to live, but they exist on the maps in the minds of Syracusans.

The absence of a pattern is always difficult to demonstrate, and the generalization that terms for cardinal directions are absent from Romance place names, other than the occasional macrotoponym, remains somewhat impressionistic. Dauzat supports the generalization in a negative way by making no mention of cardinal directions as one possible class of specific element or affix.<sup>28</sup> No instance of the usage is mentioned in the report of an extremely detailed study covering the place names of a single commune in the south of France.<sup>29</sup> I have already cited the negative evidence in Asín Palacios' study and in the results of a scan of Spanish and Portuguese place names, in the New World as well as the Old.

Such a reconnaissance discloses a tendency in Romance languages, especially Italian, to favor directional elements that involve finger pointing from a fixed (ego) center; that is, the use of deictic pairs such as "that side/this side" and "far/near." The Latin prefixes *cis-* and *trans-*, taken directly from Latin into European scholarly usage, have been found useful in the creation of new regional identifications (e.g., *cis-* and *trans-* Appalachia, terms used by American historians, but not often by settlers). The form was not altogether unknown in the Germanic languages, and Russian toponyms (and other Slavic ones) make frequent use of the prefix *za-* and its equivalents, meaning "beyond, behind," but it is archaic in modern English, Dutch, and German. A province in the eastern Netherlands bears the name Overijssel, the IJssel being the waterway lying approximately north-south that links the Rhine and the remnant of the Zuiderzee, the IJsselmeer; but when the Dutch were colonizing South Africa, they used the Latin equivalent in naming the Transvaal and the Transkei.

Romance languages use terms of this kind to name areas rather than discrete settlements, although the areas need not be large and can become identified with a compact unit of settlement, as in the case of Trastevere, the working-class quarter of Rome "across the Tiber." As a device for building regional names, they may be given some employment by administrators, just as the cardinal directions have been; and one may rightly suspect some large administrative plan as the source of most of modern Portugal's provincial names, with their determined references to rivers and to position with respect to them. In song and story some of these, such as the Alentejo (Beyond Tagus), have nevertheless had a long life as folk regions. (One exception to these potamic names of Portuguese provinces happens to contain a reference to a

cardinal direction. This is the Algarve, the southernmost province, but the name means “the West,” coming from the Arabic *al gharb*.)

The inappropriateness of the egocentric viewpoint in place names often leads to their replacement as the locally dominant orientation shifts (Transylvania, Transjordan). The same term may acquire a diametrically opposite geographical meaning, since this is relative to the user: *tramontano* in Italian is a synonym for “northern” and “foreign”; but *ultramontanisme* refers to Rome and the centralization of ecclesiastical authority there, as seen, however, from France. This ambiguous relativity can also occur in the use of cardinal directions, leading to the curious fact that a county along Great Britain’s northern coast has a name meaning “the southern land” (Sutherland); the Norsemen, who also incorporated cardinal directions in their toponymic system, gave it the name.

Reference to the Norse brings us back to the maritime associations of cardinal direction toponyms in northwestern Europe. What might account for the association? Seafaring would certainly have entailed frequent use of the terms. There is the need to name winds and the possibility, although not the necessity, of doing so by referring to the direction from which they blow.<sup>30</sup> At sea, too, location has the relativity that is characteristic of motion. One does not occupy a fixed location from which to point, nor can one easily place oneself by reference to local characteristics. One is obliged to use a system of external references. Might not, then, the experience of seafaring have engendered a general openness and relativity in the conceptualization of space, so that the terms for cardinal directions, used frequently in the context of seafaring, came thereafter to be seen as appropriate for naming places on the land? The early English and their later successors moved from place to place as if carrying a floating compass card, dropping it here and there as a base of reference in the designations they gave to settlements and regions at different scales. Romance place naming bespeaks a view outward on the world from bounded spaces in fixed locations. The Chinese appear to use an “external” frame of reference, like the English, but theirs is a static, cosmic paradigm. It has no need for the constant dynamism of migration, colonization, and hiving off of settlements that are intrinsic to the English toponymic practice and that may further differentiate the circumstances of that practice from those of Romance place naming.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Terminology of Place**

The contrast between an open and dynamic conceptualization of space and a closed, static one seems to fit with other semantic contrasts that

distinguish English, especially, from the Romance languages and also with intuitive perceptions of two broadly defined regions of Europe: the northern and the Mediterranean. Consider the meanings of three place-related concepts in English and of their commonly used equivalents in the Romance languages: "home," "neighborhood," and "place," itself.<sup>32</sup>

"Home" is a peculiarly English concept, although some of its properties appear in the other Germanic languages.<sup>33</sup> Its distinctiveness is given it by its elasticity of scale, whereby it can refer to house, land, village, city, district, or country. As a result, reference to home(town) and home(land) transfers to those entities the sentiments of warmth, security, and intimacy of relationships that are attached to the home as family dwelling and that are virtually absent in the equivalent Romance terms, generally precise as to scale (e.g., in French, *ville natale*, *pays*, respectively, in turn differentiated from *maison* or *chez* ———, a word derived from Latin *casa*, "a small house"). English "home" is elastic in scale and implies some social permeability; the Romance terms that stand for different scale connotations of home are closed spaces, each located at a fairly well-defined scale.

*Neighbor* in its root meaning in the Germanic languages is a "nigh (near) dweller." What is expressed is a "spatial relationship" in which, evidently, the scale is open, dependent on the patterns of settlement and circulation. But *near* here also implies closeness in a social sense, with the existence of some mutuality of obligation, trust, affection; conversely, these decay with distance. In the Romance equivalents, there is no similar sense of an open but distally attenuated social field. The Romance terms (French *voisin*, Italian *vicino*, Spanish *vecino*, etc.) represent the Latin *vicinus*; that is, one belonging to the (same) *vicus*, a settlement unit that could be a village or a town; in Spanish, *vecino* has long had the dual meaning of "neighbor" and "property-owning citizen." The Romance words, then, ascribe undifferentiated status to the fellow residents of a bounded space; and while some commonality of interest and reciprocity of concern may unite them, the intensity of the bond is evidently far less than what is connoted in English.<sup>34</sup> In English, *neighbor* implies someone near and (therefore) connected; in French, one's neighbor is near but separate. *Neighborhood*, where one's neighbors are, is also, then, open in scale and spatially differentiated; Romance equivalents—*quartier*, *vecindade*, *barrio*—all imply boundedness, compartmentalization, and segregation.

It is ironic that a recent American geography movement that has sought an alternative to the shuttered vision of contemporary functionalism should, in focusing on "place," have itself been trapped by the provinciality of language. "Places," "making places," "placelessness," "sense of place" are counters in an almost mystical discourse that is



potentially confined to the English-speaking world: no small sect, certainly, but by no means the universe of humans.

Asked to translate the phrase "sense of place," the speaker of a Romance language will throw up his hands in perplexity, a reaction that is the more remarkable because both substantives are English borrowings from Romance. "Place," like "home," has an extensible scale in English; and, as with "home," the meaning of "place" to an individual or group at the scale of intimate experience is diffused upward in scale to other "places" ("New York is a nice place to visit"). This English elasticity of scale with regard to place stretches downward, too. When taken over in the same form from French, *place* referred to an open but bounded space of some size, usually urban; note, in addition to the French word, the Spanish *plaza*, Portuguese *praça*, Italian *piazza*, all originating through Latin in the Greek *plateia*, "open, flat (space)." In French alone, as in English, the word is also used as a metaphor in speaking of social relationships.<sup>35</sup> In French as in other Romance languages, nevertheless, the use of terms for discrete spaces that can all be "places" in English is quite specific as to scale. The words most commonly used to translate English "place" back into the Romance languages (*lieu*, *lugar*, for example) are, to use the English adjectival form of the Latin from which they come, uncompromisingly local in their connotations.

It can be suggested here only that the contrast between English, in particular, and the Romance languages in the use of names and words for place, points to the existence at some time in the past of two different underlying conceptualizations of space: one dynamic and relative; the other, stable and fixed. No form of etymological or cultural determinism is being proposed here. The meaning of words is not in their etymology but in the full range of their use, in which older meanings may often be heard to reverberate. The meanings, then, are a matter of cultural choice. When a French ethnographer writing in French tells how mobile Americans confer identity on a "home" and uses the English word to do so, it is because the full English meaning is not present in the French cultural repertory.<sup>36</sup>

Meanings and the conceptualizations they express can, of course, endure, as can other aspects of culture; and it is with what appear to be enduring differences in the conceptualization of space that this inquiry is concerned. May one not speak impressionistically, for example, of a northern European society that sees itself as "open" and fluid and of a Mediterranean one that seeks closure and stasis? Within France itself, a north-south distinction of this kind appears in folk geographic conceptions. The *pays* of northern France was an identified region that corresponded most often with an originally dynamic, if ultimately stable, field of cultural ecological action that usually lacked an effective focus.

In southern France, the *pays* was in most cases the *Umland* of the city after which it was named. Labasse makes a relevant point: Mediterraneans prefer to build in stone; that is, they seem to require durability, personal character, and a feeling of security in their structures. This, he thinks, may account for the poor showing of packaged industrial estates in Italy and France, whereas the "Anglo-Saxon" industrialist has a more functional, less temporally committed attitude, contributing to the success of the institution.<sup>37</sup>

If the cognitive distinction expressed by the form of words and names is still valid, one may model a variety of consequences in thought and behavior. Here are two: The "unbounded" but gently sloping space within which relations of trust are extensible in northern Europe and in which "we" live eventually ends abruptly in a cognitive cliff below which "they" are all strange, suspect, inimical: "we" become "racist" in our perception of that distant world. The relatively fixed relations within and among closed geographical and social spaces that would characterize the Mediterranean world, on the other hand, place the sharpest discriminations between "us" and "them" close to home. What makes those who are far in the distance different is a matter of indifference to "us."

Second, should we not expect to find just the persistent contrast that we do between the acceptance in "Anglo-Saxon" geography of a compatible mode of thought, "spatial analysis," and its lack of favor in Romance lands? Would we have found in a recent monograph on "spatial organization" an American rather than a French geographer writing that the blame for the most severe planning problems must surely be placed on abstract generalization and ignorance of geographic context, on "a refusal to go deep into the human landscape"?<sup>38</sup> Opposed to the "Anglo-Saxon" sense of being able to deal with a fluid, unbounded, available space, there still stands the notion, apprehended in the classic definition of geography as *la science des lieux*, that what matters more is the knowledge of enduring, if by no means unchanged, human domains of made, bounded, profoundly lived spaces.

## Notes

1. David E. Sopher, "Arabic Place Names in Spain," *Names* 3 (1955): 5-13.
2. Miguel Asín Palacios, *Contribución a la Toponimia Árabe en España*, 2d ed. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Patronato Menéndez y Pelayo, Instituto Benito Anas Montano, 1944).
3. The distinction is easily blurred should the man at the desk go into the field or the man on the ground be equipped with maps and a sophisticated knowledge of geography. By comparison with Old World place names, many in the New World appear as if given by persons with a lively map sense and thus, in effect, are an aerial view rather than one

based on ground-level observation alone. See, e.g., George R. Stewart, *Names on the Land*, 3d ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), p. 69.

4. The rich theme of orientation to a sacred or prime direction in language, landscape, and behavior implied, for instance, in the word itself is not pursued here. Literal orientation, "facing east," appears to have been widespread anciently in the Northern Hemisphere of the Old World, to judge from the evidence of language. The Semitic root *q-d-m* has the plural meanings of "before" (in both a spatial and temporal sense), "ancient," and "east"; note the name in Greek myth of the civilization bearer from the East: Kadmos. Sanskrit *pūrvas* is also "east" as well as "before," and various Indo-European and Semitic languages use words for "right" and sometimes "left" to designate, respectively, "south" and "north"; cf. Arabic *yaman* (Yemen); Sanskrit *dakṣina* (Latin *dexter*), becoming the Deccan; Carl Darling Buck, *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages: A Contribution to the History of Ideas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949). There are intimations of this orientation in the etymology of "north," as disclosed by some of its cognates: Umbrian *nertru*, "left"; Greek *nerteros*, "left; lower; infernal." For further development of the theme, see Heinrich Schröder, "Nord—Süd—Ost—West," *Germanisch-Romanisch Monatschrift* 17 (1929): 421-27. A north-south axis of primary orientation is East Asian, and we may note that Chinese cartographers placed north at the top of the map long before Europeans did. For the European shift in cartographic orientation from east to north and an excellent review of sacred orientation, see B. L. Gordon, "Sacred Directions, Orientation, and the Top of the Map," *History of Religions* 10 (1971): 211-27.

5. "The four compass directions enter into many village names [which have, in general, developed] with a certain degree of spontaneity." J. E. Spencer, "Chinese Place Names and the Appreciation of Geographic Realities," *Geographical Review* 31 (1941): 90-91.

6. See, for example, David E. Sopher, "Landscapes and Seasons: Man and Nature in India," *Landscape* 13 (1964): 14-19.

7. The renaming of Saigon by the victorious North Vietnamese as "Ho Chi Minh City" in 1975 is thus a revolutionary break with tradition; there is yet to my knowledge no "Mao City" in China, nor is there one named after Chiang on Taiwan. One would like to have more precise and complete distributions of such psychologically interesting practices, but the development of comparative systematic toponymics, which has been proceeding vigorously in the Soviet Union, has not yet produced a compilation for the whole world at the level of generalization sought here. On Soviet studies in the field, see Y. M. Pospelov, "The Present State of Toponymy in the USSR," *Soviet Geography: Review and Translation* 8 (1967): 234-47.

8. Thomas S. Barthel, "Raumvorstellungen bei Naturvölkern," *Geographische Zeitschrift* 54 (1966): 307. The Yurok, whose system of orientation to the Klamath River has also attracted attention, appear exceptional because of the flat statement of their ethnographer, Waterman, that they lack knowledge of cardinal directions. T. T. Waterman, "Yurok Geography," *University of California Publications in American Archeology and Ethnology* 16 (1920): 193. Kroeber speaks of them as having "simply discarded" the more abstract method. A. L. Kroeber, "Ethnographic Interpretations 7-11," *ibid.* 47 (1959): 238; and Erik Erikson sees this as of a piece with the Yurok's fear-driven restriction of their geographic radius and an accompanying extreme localization of spatial and historical meaning, all expressions of "an intricate phobic system." Erik Homburger Erikson, "Observations on the Yurok: Childhood and World Image," *ibid.* 35 (1943): 273.

9. Described for the Ainu by Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney is a peculiarly complex mixture of cognitive spatial structures involving (1) a sense of cardinal directions that is related to body symmetry and (2) a nested series of outward/inward oppositions like the simple Polynesian one. Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, "Spatial Concepts of the Ainu of the Northwest Coast of Southern Sakhalin," *American Anthropologist* 74 (1972): 426-55.

10. A. H. Elkin reports that "The Bemba are the north people, and the Nyul-Nyul the south people. Such words however in some cases lose their primary meanings; the Nyul-Nyul are so-called even by the people on their south." A. H. Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines*, 3d ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), p. 64.

11. John Peabody Harrington, "Ethnogeography of the Tewa," *U.S. Bureau of Ethnology Annual Report* 29 (1916): 29-626. The Cochiti, a Keresan-speaking people, are the only

group in the area that, in designating places, make some regular use of cardinal directions centered on their pueblo.

12. The source, containing 29,000 place names, is U.S. Board on Geographic Names, *Japan*, Gazetteer no. 12 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1955).

13. A survey of Vietnamese place names does not help to clarify the matter, since the words for cardinal directions in Vietnamese are of Chinese derivation; and Chinese official usage, including the composition of place names with cardinal directions, as in the name of the country itself, became naturalized in Vietnam. E. M. Murzayev, "The Geographical Names of Vietnam," *Soviet Geography: Review and Translation* 11 (1970): 809-20.

14. The Roman colonial city frequently employed an axial scheme with a grid of square or nearly square blocks (Lincoln, Silchester, Caerwent, Autun, Trier, Timgad); celestial orientation of the grid was also common. Orthogonal Greek and Hellenistic cities made less use of axiality and cardinality. Ferdinando Castagnoli, *Orthogonal Town Planning in Antiquity*, trans. Victor Callandro (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971), pp. 87 ff.; 110.

15. The source, containing 32,000 place names for the whole of the British Isles, is the gazetteer section of the *Reader's Digest Complete Atlas of the British Isles* (London: Reader's Digest Association, 1965).

16. Henning Kaufmann, *Westdeutsche Ortsnamen, mit unterscheidenden Zusätzen* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1958), pt. 1, pp. 2-3; 213. See also Ernst Förstemann, *Die deutschen Ortsnamen* (Nordhausen: Ferd. Förstemann, 1863), pp. 212 ff.; and Adolf Bach, *Deutsche Namenskunde*, vol. 2, *Die deutsche Ortsnamen* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1952).

17. Förstemann, *Die deutschen Ortsnamen*, p. 214.

18. The source, containing 74,000 place names, is U.S. Board on Geographic Names, *Sweden*, Gazetteer no. 72 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1963).

19. Einar Haugen, "The Semantics of Icelandic Orientation," *Word* 13 (1957): 447-60.

20. That two different systems, proximate and ultimate, are being used must of course be understood by the potential users. In the absence of clear directions, confusion may arise of the sort on the outskirts of Boston noted by Downs and Stea where, in order to reach the city, which lies to the northeast, motorists must take Route 128 South. Roger M. Downs and David Stea, *Maps in Minds: Reflections on Cognitive Mapping* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 52.

21. Alejandro Cioranescu, *Diccionario Etimológico Rumano* (Tenerife: Universidad de la Laguna, Biblioteca Filológica, 1958-66).

22. O. Block and W. von Wartburg, *Dictionnaire Étymologique de la Langue Française*, 4th ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de la France, 1964); J. Corominas, *Diccionario Crítico Etimológico de la Lengua Castellana*, 4 vols. (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1954); T. E. Hope, *Lexical Borrowing in the Romance Languages: A Critical Study of Italianisms in French and Gallicisms in Italian from 1100 to 1900* (New York: New York University Press, 1971).

23. Corominas, *Diccionario Crítico Etimológico*.

24. In the Italian dictionary of Daniello Bartoli, dated 1607, *est* is said to be appropriate for use on the ocean; *levante*, for the Mediterranean Sea. Corominas, *Diccionario Crítico Etimológico*. Hope applies Rothwell's conclusions about the history of the French words to the Italian: "The eventually standard Germanic terminology for the points of the compass . . . remained for centuries a technical vocabulary used solely by the seaman, penetrating into the general vocabulary of the landsman only when social and economic change, symbolised by the Revolution and the steam-engine, began to . . . make apparent the need for an accurate and universally valid system of orientation." See Hope, *Lexical Borrowing*, vol. 1, p. 256.

25. The Latin forms, on the other hand, can have their special usefulness in the creation of scientific-technical terms. I have, from time to time, proposed to colleagues in the field that they replace the unlovely and semantically absurd locution "sub-Saharan Africa" with the lilting yet precise decasyllable "extraseptentrional Africa," but the response has been discouraging.

26. Schröder collates a good deal of evidence to show that, a century ago, the "dictionary words" for the cardinal directions were not part of the living speech of countryside in southern (upper) Germany, the very region in which cardinal direction toponyms are

- rare. In naming winds, in particular, the people used orientation to sunrise (i.e., *vorder-* and *hinter-*, "front" and "back," for "east" and "west") together with local topographic references (south was up; north, down). Schröder, "Nord—Süd—Ost—West," pp. 425–26.
27. John Archer, "Puritan Town Planning in New Haven," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 34 (1975): 140–49.
28. Albert Dauzat, *Les Noms de Lieux: Origine et Évolution* (Paris: Librairie Delagrave, 1928); *La Toponymie Française* (Paris: Payot, 1946). One possible exception appears in Dauzat's discussion of place names given by the Northmen, whose descendants became the Normans: the generic element *-mare*, for "mere, lake," occurs, in one example, in the combination Normare. Dauzat, *Les Noms de Lieux*, p. 147. Lognon suggests that the specific *Nor-* is a personal name. Auguste Lognon, *Les Noms de Lieu de la France: Leur Origine, Leur Signification, Leurs Transformations* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1920–29), p. 288. Names established in the course of the earlier Germanic migrations seem not to have left a similar residue, according with the hypothesis that the Franks and Burgundians involved did not themselves have the practice.
29. Georges Ricard, "Une Étude Toponymique en Rouergue," *Annales Economies Sociétés Civilisations* 28 (1973): 1577–83.
30. Various ways of naming winds are known, including the use of descriptive terms, such as the *mistral* (dominating) of Provence; but the use of cardinal directions appears to be the most common. Those who need to be constantly aware of winds—deep-sea sailors and dwellers in the open plains—are, then, apt to make frequent use of the cardinal designations but not necessarily for toponymic purposes. Polynesians give such names to winds but not, from the Hawaiian evidence, to the features of their landscape. Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, *Place Names of Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1966). I should note that to say flatly that, for example, the northern Ojibwa described by Hallowell call the winds by the names of the cardinal directions is not to be unaware that the cardinal directions may also have "an inherent mystical life," as Cassirer says. For the Ojibwa, they are the homes of the anthropomorphized winds, who play a crucial role in their myths. Irving A. Hallowell, *Culture and Experience* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), p. 190.
31. I am not in a position to evaluate what seems to be very positive support for this supposition in South Asia, where, on the Chittagong coastal plain, the Bengalis, an extremely dense population that have taken to an active seafaring life in considerable numbers, maintain dispersed settlements also marked by a high frequency of hamlet differentiation on the basis of cardinal directions.
32. For a fuller treatment of the semantic and cognitive aspects of "home," see David E. Sopher, "The Landscape of Home," in D. W. Meinig, ed., *The Cultural Meaning of Ordinary Landscapes* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).
33. "'Home' in the full range and feeling of the New English *home* is a conception that belongs distinctively to the word *home* and some of its Germanic cognates and is not covered by any single word in most of the Indo-European languages." Buck, *Dictionary of Selected Synonyms*. But note George Steiner's reference to English *home* and German *Heim* as "mutually untranslatable cognates." George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 28.
34. "Love Thy Neighbor" appears in the French translation of the Bible not as *aime ton voisin*, but as *aime ton prochain*, "the one near to thee." The crucial role of diffuse kinship networks in rural France in fostering a sense of village solidarity—that is, of neighborliness—is explored by Tina Jolas and Françoise Zonabend, "Cousinage, Voisinage," in Jean Pouillon and Pierre Miranda, eds., *Echanges et Communications: Mélanges offerts à Claude Lévi-Strauss à l'Occasion de Son Soixantième Anniversaire*, vol. 1 (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), pp. 169–80.
35. Since *place* means both position in society and location in space, and one seems to be a metaphor of the other, Yi-Fu Tuan thinks it is possible that the "primary meaning" is position in society. Yi-Fu Tuan, "Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective," *Progress in Geography* 6 (1977): 233. This is either to affect indifference to the history and psychology of language or to put an idiosyncratic twist on the meaning of *primary*. Tuan's reference to an analogous case, that of the social and locational meanings of words like *near*, takes the same direction. Apparently following Heidegger, he believes the meaning

of human relationship to be the "literal," basic one and the locational meaning to be metaphorical. But the literal meaning arises from the child's earliest cognitive structuring of the space around him. See, e.g., Herbert H. Clark, "Space, Time, Semantics, and the Child," in Timothy E. Moore, ed., *Cognitive Development and the Acquisition of Language* (New York: Academic Press, 1973), pp. 27-63. Language cannot easily describe the complexity and intensity of inner feelings *without* resort to the metaphorical. Closeness to another is known, expressed in actions, deeply felt; the sense of it in words comes second and is always to an extent a contrivance in which the assistance of metaphor is often indispensable.

36. Claude Pairault, "L'Espace des Tambours et le Temps des Transistors," in Pouillon and Miranda, *Echanges et Communications*, p. 488.

37. Jean Labasse, *L'Organisation de l'Espace: Eléments de Géographie Volontaire* (Paris: Herrmann, 1966), p. 224.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

## CHAPTER 17

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# THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF UNREALITY: AN INTERACTIONIST APPROACH TO THE TOURIST'S COGNITION OF ENVIRONMENT

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JAMES S. DUNCAN

### **Some Central Tenets of Interactionism**

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical perspective within sociology that has been adopted in a variety of other social science disciplines.<sup>1</sup> Although it presents a challenge to a mainstream social science concept of man, interactionism is a well-respected position that has its roots in the American philosophic tradition of G. H. Mead, John Dewey, and William James. Interactionism rejects an atomistic, individualistic view of man. It posits no separation between the individual and society; individual selves are socially constructed. The self is largely a product of the opinions and actions of others as these are expressed in interaction with the developing self. One continually responds both consciously and unconsciously to the tension resulting from discrepancies between the attitudes of others and one's self-conception by adjusting his own view or through adjustments in his presentation of self in order to modify the opinions of others.

With interactionism there is no need for a transcendental object such as an abstract notion of culture, society, the hidden hand, or a social contract to mediate between the individual and society.<sup>2</sup> The individual of interactionism is active and relatively free. He is considered a subject, as in recent humanistic geography, rather than an object, as in the stimulus-response type models prevalent in behavioral geography.<sup>3</sup> Man is not a passive receptacle of roles, norms, or other elements of a "social system." Interactionists instead emphasize the freedom of an individual to "negotiate" or "build up lines of action" in response to the lines of action of others. The individual may be socialized but his behavior is not determined in any strict sense by his socialization.

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All objects according to interactionism have social meaning. The meaning is not intrinsic to the objects, but it results from a socially arrived-at consensus. It must be noted however that this consensus may not extend beyond a narrowly defined social world. As persons may have a variety of different reference groups, they are usually free to choose between various social meanings or to reject a group's meaning. One neither arrives at the meaning independently, however, nor in direct response to the object itself.

The concept of a social world is central to an interactionist analysis of cognition.<sup>4</sup> This concept, common to both Schutz's phenomenology and interactionism, refers to a group that shares a perspective and hence a wide range of meanings.<sup>5</sup> Shibutani defines the interactionist concept of social world as:

... a universe of regularized mutual response, an arena in which there is some kind of organization that facilitates anticipating the behavior of others. . . . There are special norms of conduct, a set of values, a prestige ladder, and a common outlook toward life.<sup>6</sup>

Social worlds provide a reference group and protection from others who do not share the same values and meanings. Schutz defines a social world as a complex of "social relationships, or signs and symbols with their particular meaning structure, of institutionalized forms of social organization, of systems of status and prestige, etc."<sup>7</sup> These meanings are "folkways of the in-group" and, except under unusual circumstances when they become viewed as problematic, they are "taken-for-granted" and do not require either "explanation or justification." They provide a standard definition of the situation or "recipe for interpreting the world."<sup>8</sup>

Both the interactionists and Schutz stress the taken-for-granted nature of the perspective provided by a social world. Shibutani defines this perspective as "an organized view of one's world, what is taken for granted about the attributes of objects, of events and of human nature."<sup>9</sup> Schutz spoke of taken-for-granted categories as an element of an individual's socio-cultural heritage, as a preestablished frame of reference of the group into which one is born. These categories or "typifications," as he called them, are not entirely consistent, coherent, or clear to anyone outside the group. The set of categories may not correspond to any scientifically valid "reality"; however, as W. I. Thomas often said and both Schutz and the interactionists are fond of quoting, situations defined as real are real in their consequences.



## An Extension of Interactionism

Berger and Luckman<sup>10</sup> and also Berger in an article with Pullberg<sup>11</sup> went a step beyond the interactionist and phenomenological tradition out of which they had come by introducing to their analyses the two important marxian concepts of reification and alienation.<sup>12</sup> These notions are compatible with interactionism and phenomenology; and, in fact, it can be argued that they are found implicit in the idea of a taken-for-granted world. Focusing attention on these processes and viewing them as problematic nevertheless should lead to a significant difference in emphasis affecting selection of research problems.<sup>13</sup>

Marx developed the notion of reification most fully in the first volume of *Capital*<sup>14</sup> in his discussion of the fetishism of commodities; and Lukacs generalized the concept further in his *History and Class Consciousness*.<sup>15</sup> *Reification* refers to the process by which man produces a world both of abstractions—that is, ideas, values, norms of conduct—and of real concrete objects, which, although they are his own product, he nevertheless permits to dominate him as objective unchanging facticities. *Alienation* refers to the fact that man forgets that this world is his own product, thus allowing it to act back on him. By reifying the world as he has produced it, by forgetting that it was he who gave it a “life of its own,” and by allowing it to have a power over him, man becomes alienated.

The taken-for-granted perspective, the norms, roles, expectations, the “recipes for interpreting the world,” the systems of meanings mentioned above are reifications; to the extent that man fails to see these as his own products, which are not necessarily “natural” or the only possible way things could be organized, to that extent he is alienated.

The difference between this view of the taken-for-granted world and that found in interactionism is its emphasis on false consciousness. For both the interactionists and phenomenologists interest tends to be focused on issues of meanings, consciousness, reasons, and definitions of the situation and less on the discrepancy between these and an “objective reality” that can be approximated by an outside observer and by which one can determine the degree of alienation or false consciousness of the group under consideration.<sup>16</sup> In their discussion of “dereification” Berger and Pullberg give the example of culture shock, which can be experienced by those who come into contact with other cultures:

Culture contact of any intensity tends to lead to a crisis in “knowledge,” as one is confronted with alternative ways of

perceiving the world and ordering one's life within it . . .  
 in any case, however, culture contact will have weakened  
 the reified fixedness of the old world.<sup>17</sup>

Schutz, in a well-known essay on the stranger, states that "the knowledge of a man who acts and thinks within the world of his daily life is not homogeneous; it is (1) incoherent, (2) only partially clear, and (3) not at all free from contradictions."<sup>18</sup> He adds, however, that it is sufficiently coherent, clear, and consistent to guide the members of the in-group in their everyday dealings with each other. But the stranger does not share the same basic assumptions: "He becomes the man who has to place into question nearly everything that seems to be unquestionable to the members of the approached group."<sup>19</sup> His experience also may lead him to question his own assumptions, to shake his confidence in the validity of his habitual "thinking as usual." This dereification of his own taken-for-granted world may be a traumatic experience, but there are means of avoiding it. Some are unconscious psychological mechanisms, while other means are for sale in the market place.

### **Perceptions of the Stranger**

Cognition is a function not only of one's taken-for-granted world or the shattering of this world, but it is also dependent on one's relation to a place and the persons associated with the place.<sup>20</sup> For cognition is a social process, so that what one sees is often influenced by what others wish one to see or what they think one wishes to see. Commonly, environmental "managers" have a vested interest in how others view an environment.

One's position in society also affects cognition of an environment. An omission of both interactionism and phenomenology is a discussion of both the material conditions that affect cognition and also the power relations that allow some to impose their worldview on others.<sup>21</sup> Cognition is a social construction, but not every group has an equal share in determining the perspective of the larger group. That this ideological hegemony is largely unrecognized makes it especially insidious.

Reactions to the stranger have varied through history and across cultures. Sometimes he has been defined as nonhuman, other times he has been considered divine.<sup>22</sup> Examples can be found in the Homeric myths as well as in the Bible: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."<sup>23</sup> Again, in some societies the stranger has been viewed as a denizen of another world.<sup>24</sup>

An example of this view is illustrated by Hart and Pilling's study of the Tiwi of the Arafura Sea.<sup>25</sup> In the past the Tiwi regarded the two islands on which they lived to be the extent of the inhabited world, while the far coastline of Australia was *Tibambinumi*, the Home of the Dead. Any outsiders who happened to land on the islands were massacred or driven away. Not being Tiwi they were not considered human and hence were threatening to the human population.

In an interesting case recorded by Reusch and Bateson<sup>26</sup> the stranger is not viewed as a god or as a deceased soul but as a kind of animal. In Java before the arrival of white men, there was said to have been a storm on the coast, and a large white monkey was found washed up on the shore. The priests explained that it was a member of the court of the god of the sea, who had been punished and sent out in the storm; and so the monkey was chained to a certain stone. An archeologist observing the stone saw scratched on it in Latin, Dutch, and English the name of a man and an account of his shipwreck.

Apparently this trilingual sailor never established verbal communication with his captors. He was surely unaware of the premises in their minds which labeled him as a white monkey and therefore not a potential recipient of verbal messages; it probably never occurred to him that they could doubt his humanity. He may have doubted theirs.<sup>27</sup>

Coupled with the notion of the stranger's divinity is the view of the stranger as a potential evildoer.<sup>28</sup> This dual view of the stranger as a god in disguise and the stranger as evildoer remains strong to this day in the folk mentality of parts of rural Europe.<sup>29</sup> In cases where the stranger is viewed as being potentially hostile, if he is not to be driven off then he must be ritually incorporated through what Van Gennep has referred to as the "rites of passage."<sup>30</sup> This involves his transformation from potentially hostile stranger to guest with attendant changes in rights, duties, and expectations on the part of both parties.

This division between the potentially hostile stranger and the incorporated guest is still a categorization that can be found in modern societies. In an impersonal market society such as ours, the separation between the hostile stranger and the guest can be seen as a question of property. The propertyless stranger in our society (the tramp being the archetype) remains the potentially hostile stranger who is feared, despised, often treated as inhuman; whereas the propertied stranger, the tourist, for example, is incorporated and treated as guest, albeit a paying one. The laws of hospitality still apply in this case; they have simply been commercialized. The "rite of passage" into the host group has

become in modern market society not a religious or symbolic rite but an economic transaction.

According to Fustel de Coulanges, in the city of antiquity a stranger had no status in the law and therefore needed a patron who could sponsor him and act as an intermediary with the host group.<sup>31</sup> As Pitt-Rivers points out,

... the stranger is incorporated only through a personal bond with an established member; he has, as it were, no direct jural relationship with anyone else, no place within the system, no status save that of stranger. . . . On the other hand, in relation to his patron he possesses, however little may be known about him, a clearly defined status, that of guest or client, which makes any further evaluation of him unnecessary. The status of the guest therefore stands midway between that of the hostile stranger and that of community member. He is incorporated practically rather than morally.<sup>32</sup>

In modern market societies this sponsorship is commercialized. The tramp because of his propertyless condition is unable to procure a patron, whereas the tourist is able to pay for one. The modern patrons in the form of tour guides or hotel personnel are professionals whose job it is to mediate between the tourist and the host group's environment. The tourist's cognition of his environment is greatly colored by his interaction with these patrons. Similarly the tramp's cognitions are colored by the fact that not only does he have no patron, but also he is confronted by a hostile police force whose job it is to remove impecunious strangers from the host's territory.

### **The Tourist as Stranger**

It is sometimes forgotten by those who refer to the famous essays by Schutz and Simmel<sup>33</sup> on the stranger that both authors were dealing primarily with strangers such as immigrants.<sup>34</sup> Not all strangers become so immersed in the culture of the places they visit, and in this section of the paper I will examine the reality of short-term American or western European tourists who are visiting foreign countries.

Given the nature of the tourist experience we may well ask, To what extent does the tourist shatter the opaqueness of anyone's world, either that of the native by seeing it in problematic and dereified terms or his

own by allowing his experience of other cultures to challenge his personal set of presuppositions? There is no simple answer to this question. Not all foreign cultures are equally alien to the stranger, and not all strangers experience alien environments in the same manner. One must ask under what conditions does a given stranger experience the alien environment? What is the nature of his interaction with the native, and how does this influence his cognition?

Shattering the opaqueness of one's own worldview is a realization that the categories one uses for organizing his or her relation to the physical and social environment are not natural, objective, and universal but rather are social constructions particular to specific social worlds or cultures. If the tourist emerges from a visit to a foreign country with his own categories largely intact, the experience will have done little to demystify his reified worldview. The tourist furthermore may return from his travels with his previous reified, stereotyped images of the peoples and places visited. This may be due in part to the tourist business, which profits from providing the tourist with that which he wishes to see.

There are several possibilities concerning the traveler's response to a new place. The first possibility is culture shock, a literal shattering of opaqueness. *Culture shock* is the "inability to make any sense out of the behavior of others or to predict what they will say or do. One's customary categories of experience are no longer useful, and habitual actions elicit seemingly bizarre responses."<sup>35</sup> Whereas Bock, being an anthropologist, places stress on interpreting behavior, we can see that one faces the same problem of interpreting the meaning of all aspects of the environment. Culture shock, then, is the failure of one's taken-for-granted categories to serve as a means of interpreting the environment and rendering interaction unproblematic. It is the realization that one's categories are not universal and thereby forms a significant challenge to reified forms of thought.

A second type of response does not constitute a shattering of opaqueness, for here the stranger's categories remain untouched by his experiences as he interprets the differences he sees by translating them into his own categories. A third type of response involves a rejection of the native categorization of the environment as irrational, inferior, pre-modern, or simply nontranslatable and, hence, irrelevant to one's view. Schutz intimates this response:

As long as a formula of transformation cannot be found which permits the translation of the system of relevances and typifications prevailing in the group under consideration into that of the home-group, the ways of the former

remain un-understandable; but frequently they are considered to be of minor value and inferior.<sup>36</sup>

This outright rejection of the natives' categories does not permit a knowledge of them to aid in rendering one's own view problematic.<sup>37</sup> The first of our range of responses to new places is not uncommon for other strangers such as immigrants or ethnographers, who experience culture shock when they first enter a new cultural environment. They must deal at length within the frame of reference of the natives in order to manage day-to-day living. This usually entails a dereification of their own worldview but rarely a full adoption of the reified view of the native. This would involve seeing the native categories as self-evident truths and, as Bourdieu has pointed out:

The knowledge we shall call phenomenological (or to speak in terms of currently active schools, 'ethnomethodological') sets out to make explicit the truth of primary experience of the social world, i.e., all that is inscribed in the relationship of familiarity with the familiar environment, the unquestioning apprehension of the social world which, by definition, does not reflect on itself and excludes the question of the conditions of its own possibility.<sup>38</sup>

The tourist, however, is less likely to have this reaction, for he is largely insulated from the native's perspective. He usually avoids extensive contact with natives; since he often does not speak the language, he prefers to deal with guides and other tourist personnel who tell him what to see and how to interpret what he sees. The intermediaries limit the tourist's experience of culture shock by acting as mediators between him and the local culture, either translating what he sees into familiar terms or describing it as unique or quaint: terms distant and irrelevant to the everyday experience of the traveler.

Inherent in most modern tourism is a contradiction. On the one hand the tourist wishes to see the landscape and life as it is lived in the host's country; he wishes to have an "authentic" experience of the region.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand he is usually both unable and unwilling to place himself in a position in which this might occur. He faces the barriers of language and does not share the native's customs and beliefs; by his very status of being a stranger he cannot be treated as a native would be. In addition he is unwilling to adopt the perspective of the native, for he also wants to have the "comforts of home," which include physical

comforts and, more importantly, a taken-for-granted world with its avoidance of disorientation.<sup>40</sup>

One could say that the tourist wishes to see “authentic experience” rather than to participate himself, though there is some variation in the degree of participation that a tourist will risk. For those tourists in France who want to briefly participate with the natives, “. . . individual arrangements can be made with the French Ministry of Tourism to have coffee in a French home, and even go for an afternoon drive in the country with a Frenchman of ‘approximately one’s own social station.’”<sup>41</sup> For those more adventurous still, the *New York Times* ran an advertisement offering tourists “. . . 21 days in the land of the Hatfields and the McCoys’ for \$378.00, living in with some of the poorest people in the U.S. in Mingo County, West Virginia.”<sup>42</sup> Seventy persons responded to the advertisement.

The tourist’s preconceived idea of what constitutes an authentic experience will undoubtedly shape his cognition. Often it will be highly romanticized, as tourists often search for cultural purity, an ideal type of environment that is untouched by modern technology. In non-Western countries the Western tourist tends to seek a premodern, precontact environment so that what he will experience is not only a journey in space but a journey in time as well. The preconceived images of the tourist are invariably fostered by the entrepreneur. If the tourist wants a landscape that is fifty or a hundred years out of date, then such landscapes can be created or maintained. The irony of course is that the tourist achieves his sought-after authenticity only by being presented with inauthenticity.

### **The Celebration of Inauthenticity**

One can identify a variety of types of contrived landscapes that have been created to fill the tourist’s desire for an authentic experience. The first of these types is the landscape that is a remnant of the past. A good example of contrived authenticity was described by the Italian anthropologist Fidele.<sup>43</sup> He stated that the villagers in a remote village in the Italian Alps had started for the first time in forty years to celebrate festivals and wear their traditional costumes again at certain times of the year purely as a commercial venture to attract tourists to the village. The performance was put on by the villagers not as a meaningful ceremony but as a play that was probably as quaint to them as it was to the tourists. The latter, of course, thought that they were witnessing a performance in which the participants were investing much more of themselves than they in fact were.

The celebration of inauthenticity can be greatly facilitated by the manipulation of artifacts in the landscape. In the town of Santillana del Mar in northern Spain, the zoning laws prohibit changes being made to the physical structures of the village unless permission from the zoning board has been obtained. This board will not allow any building modifications or additions that do not conform to the idyllic image of the place; for, as the town nearest to the famous caves at Altamira, Santillana depends heavily on the tourist trade. Through artificially controlling the landscape and holding back outward signs of modernization, it appears to the tourist as a perfect example of a "real" Spanish town. These museumlike pockets of authenticity or tourist attractions are described by Boorstin as:

... an elaborately contrived indirect experience, an artificial product to be consumed in the very places where the real thing is as free as air. They are ways for the travelers to remain out of contact with foreign peoples in the very act of "sight-seeing" them. They keep the natives in quarantine while the tourist in air-conditioned comfort views them through a picture window. They are the cultural mirages now found at tourist oases everywhere.<sup>44</sup>

A second style of inauthenticity is provided by the setting that gives the tourist the impression of living as the natives do. An example of this was the recent suggestion by an American travel agency that a chain of hotels be attached to the Israeli *kibbutzim*. The hotels were to be composed of

... rough log cabins, surrounded by trenches and barbed wire to lend "color". Guests would be invited to join the *kibbutz* watchmen on guard duty, to get up early to milk cows and to help in the fields. But the idea of roughing it [would not go any] further than the log walls of the "hotels". Inside the buildings [would be] air conditioned, with private tiled bathrooms, perfectly sprung beds, and smooth percale sheets—topped by rough Bedouin camel blankets.<sup>45</sup>

In contrast is the tourist landscape constructed out of context with a view to providing an exotic experience. Examples are the tourist stops along interstate highways, the fantasylands of resort areas, and whole settlements such as the mining town of Kimberley in British Columbia,



which was redesigned as a Swiss alpine village to attract skiers. Such transformations are popular because they allow the tourist to experience a European ski resort without the expense of visiting one. Again the tourist willingly participates in the creation of inauthenticity.

Similarly Jackson points out that the landscape of American tourism has changed markedly since World War II. Motels that evoked the region's past, whose motifs were that of the New England village, the California mission, or the southern plantation have been largely supplanted by those that evoke the faraway and exotic. Hawaii and the South Seas are now popular themes.<sup>46</sup> Landscape and identity join in a common conspiracy in maintaining the myth of the sensation seeker.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, given the social and physical barriers the tourist knowingly or unknowingly causes to be erected between him and the everyday world of the residents in the countries he visits, it can be said that it is unlikely that his status as stranger shatters the opaqueness of his own reified, everyday world. It was suggested that tourists are different from ethnographers and immigrants in this respect. The latter often suffer culture shock for a period of time before they overcome the condition of dereification or disorientation. They eventually come to accept or at least understand the natives' reified categorization of the world, and the world is once again rendered unproblematic, although possibly never as highly reified or self-evident and natural as it is to someone who has never been exposed to alternative forms of social organization and ecology.

The literature on reification argues that a reified worldview, or false consciousness, is a conservative force that bars men from realizing that the world is their own product and therefore that it can be changed by them into a more equitable world. Dereification is held to be desirable; through knowledge (including self-knowledge) one can achieve power. A belief that a change in men's cognition can bring about major change in society is common to the writings of prominent thinkers such as Hegel, Marx, and Dewey. To a large extent social and political structures are in fact a product of reified thinking. Through these structures, however, men have brought forth a very complex and concrete world that may be traced back to thinking or false thinking but may not so easily be undone by thinking. Marx, if not Dewey, was materialist enough to realize that demystification alone will not bring about real change, although this does not necessarily apply to some of his more idealistic followers.

A degree of reification nevertheless may be necessary and inevi-

table. Dereification at a large scale may produce a state of anomie,<sup>47</sup> or normlessness, that cannot be sustained by any society. Just as the tourist protects himself from dereification, so will any members of a society, for a taken-for-granted world is a necessary aspect of day-to-day living.

The tourist is a certain kind of stranger, whose cognition of alien environments illustrates two major points, both of which are related to the fact that cognition is a social construction. First, one's cognition of the environment is influenced by his relation to the persons he interacts with in a place, even indirectly. It is also a result of one's prior taken-for-granted world, and this in turn is the product of past social interaction.

At a more general level this paper introduces the reader to some of the primary tenets of a qualified interactionist position and points out some of the overlap between this and phenomenological sociology. An interactionist approach to the study of environmental cognition differs from the individual psychological approach often found in recent behavioral geography in that it treats the individual in the context of his ongoing social relations; i.e., as a member of a social world. It is of course a naive humanism that suggests that the researcher can be any more than an outside observer of the lived experience of those he studies. Through *verstehen* and a variety of other methods we attempt to see the world through the eyes of our subjects. However, just as the stranger, because he is a stranger, can never truly see the world as the native does, so the academic will never recreate the consciousness of those he studies. As Bourdieu stated, the very fact that the academic questions the taken-for-granted world of a group insures that he will never truly experience the world as its members do. It is very much in line with interactionism to "take the role of the other," and we should attempt to understand the assumptions and perspectives of others. We also can take advantage of our position as outside observers, however, by studying the relation between the cognition of our subjects and the broader range of events that affects them in ways of which they may not be aware.

## Notes

1. For a general review of the sociological position known as symbolic interactionism, see G. P. Stone and H. A. Farberman, eds., *Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction* (Waltham, Mass.: Xerox College Publishing, 1970).
2. The use of the transcendental object in geography is discussed in J. S. Duncan, "The Superorganic in American Cultural Geography: A Critical Commentary" (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1977).
3. A good example of this humanistic approach is found in David Ley, "Social Geography and the Taken-for-Granted World," *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers* 2 (1977): 498-512.

4. A geographical approach to the relationship between social world and cognition is found in J. S. Duncan and N. G. Duncan, "Social Worlds, Status Passage, and Environmental Perspectives," in G. T. Moore and R. G. Colledge, eds., *Environmental Knowing: Theories, Research and Methods* (Stroudsburg, Pa.: Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross, 1976), pp. 206-13.
5. A good selection of Schutz's writing is provided in Alfred Schutz, *On Phenomenology and Social Relations*, H. Wagner, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).
6. Tamotsu Shibutani, "Reference Groups and Social Control," in A. Rose, ed., *Human Behavior and Social Processes: An Interactionist Approach* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), pp. 136-37.
7. Schutz, *On Phenomenology*, p. 80.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Shibutani, "Reference Groups and Social Control," p. 130.
10. P. L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Doubleday, 1966).
11. P. L. Berger and S. Pullberg, "Reification and the Sociological Critique of Consciousness," *History and Theory* 4 (1964-65): 196-211.
12. It should be pointed out that the humanist marxist tradition out of which this perspective comes has been ignored by North American marxist geographers, whose principal concern is with structural, institutional, and economic variables. Humanist marxists are very much interested in sociopsychological questions, and from their point of view orthodox and structuralist marxism is a form of sociological determinism not unlike that of theorists such as Talcott Parsons.
13. It should be noted that reification is normally held to have a negative quality, while the taken-for-granted is thought to be positive. These inherent qualities ascribed to the terms are unfortunate in that they obscure the structural relationship between the two. In this paper, I will use the terms interchangeably in order to highlight the similarities between them. As used here, reification and the taken-for-granted are not necessarily good or bad; rather, they have both positive and negative qualities.
14. Karl Marx, *Capital*, F. Engels, ed., vol. 1 (New York: International, 1967).
15. Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971).
16. One can find discussions of awareness contexts in interactionism. See Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, *Awareness of Dying* (Chicago: Aldine, 1965). Also Alfred Schutz, *On Phenomenology*. One finds a recognition of objectively determined unconscious motives or "because motives" that may differ from subjectively experienced reasons. The difference as was stated above, however, is one of emphasis.
17. Berger and Pullberg, "Reification," p. 211.
18. Alfred Schutz, "The Stranger," in Richard Sennett, ed., *The Psychology of Society* (New York: Vintage, 1977), p. 143.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
20. For the relationship between cognition and place, see E. M. Gerson and M. S. Gerson, "The Social Framework of Place Perspectives," in G. T. Moore and R. G. Colledge, eds., *Environmental Knowing: Theories, Research and Methods*, pp. 196-205; and M. S. Gerson, "The Shock of the Sacred: Expectations and the Conduct of Religious Places" (Paper presented at the 1977 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Salt Lake City, April 1977).
21. An attempt by an interactionist to deal with such issues is found in J. S. Duncan, "Men Without Property: The Tramp's Classification and Use of Urban Space," forthcoming in *Antipode*.
22. A. M. Hocart, *The Life-giving Myth* (London, 1935).
23. Heb. 13:2.
24. M. M. Wood, *The Stranger: A Study of Social Relationships* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), pp. 77-84. L. Levy-Bruhl, *Primitive Mentality* (New York: Macmillan, 1923), pp. 355-64.
25. G. W. M. Hart and A. R. Pulling, *The Tiwi of North Australia* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966).
26. Jürgen Reusch and Gregory Bateson, *Communication: The Social Matrix of Psychiatry* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1951).

27. Ibid., pp. 204-5.
28. J. A. Pitt-Rivers, "The Stranger, the Guest and the Hostile Host: Introduction to the Study of the Laws of Hospitality," in J. G. Peristiany, ed., *Mediterranean Sociological Conference: Contributors to Mediterranean Sociology* (Paris: Mouton, 1968), pp. 13-30.
29. Ibid.
30. Arnold Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).
31. Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité Antique* (Paris: Durand, 1895).
32. Pitt-Rivers, "The Strangers," pp. 15-16.
33. Schutz, "The Stranger." Georg Simmel, "The Stranger," in K. Wolff, ed., *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (New York: Free Press, 1950), pp. 402-8.
34. For a discussion of this point, see S. D. McLemore, "Simmel's 'Stranger': A Critique of the Concept," *Pacific Sociological Review* (spring 1970): 86-94.
35. P. K. Bock, ed., *Culture Shock* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), pp. ix-x.
36. Schutz, *On Phenomenology*, p. 85.
37. I do not endorse a view in any way similar to that put forth by Peter Winch in his study, *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958). Winch claims that the worldview of a society can be understood only in its own terms and is fundamentally untranslatable at any level. Not all translations are equally good, however, and in spite of the theoretical possibility of translation, the average tourist's ethnocentric interpretation is unlikely to enable him to place his own presuppositions in any larger perspective.
38. P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1977), p. 3.
39. The concept "authenticity" is developed in Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976).
40. For an interesting interpretation of American suburban development as a form of disorientation avoidance, see David Evans, "Alienation, Mental Illness and the Partitioning of Space," forthcoming in *Antipode*.
41. Ibid., p. 52.
42. *New York Times*, 30 June 1969, p. 1.
43. L. Fidele, personal communication.
44. D. J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 99.
45. J. B. Jackson, "We Are Taken for a Ride," *Landscape* 11 (1962): 20.
46. E. H. Zube, ed., *Landscapes: Selected Writings of J. B. Jackson* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), p. 65.
47. For the concept "anomie," see Emile Durkheim, *Suicide* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1951).

## CHAPTER 18

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# INDIVIDUAL AND LANDSCAPE: THOUGHTS ON CHINA AND THE TAO OF MAO

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MARWYN S. SAMUELS

*Our traditional assumption overlooks the important influence which individual persons may exert on the motivations and actions of hundreds of millions of other people, with resultant consequences of major importance in the geography of areas small and large.*

RICHARD HARTSHORNE

*Mao Tse-tung's thought is the guiding principle for the Chinese people's revolution and socialist construction. . . . We must carry out propoganda calling on everyone to study Chairman Mao's writings, follow his teachings, act according to his instructions, and be his good fighters.*

FOREWORD

QUOTATIONS FROM CHAIRMAN MAO<sup>1</sup>

Geographers have long found it difficult to accommodate a preponderant interest in man sui generis and men in large groups to a biographical concern for the role of individuals. Traditional geographical concerns have been most successful at broadly cultural scales where, for example, man's relationship to nature is articulated in terms of habitat and broad land use patterns. Similarly, more contemporary interests in social and spatial interaction have operated best at aggregate levels. Indeed, one can argue that there are deeply rooted intellectual and ethical forces in the history of all the sciences, whether natural or social, that are aimed not merely to ignore but to submerge the individual by right of reason and the *esprit de système* (analytical methods).<sup>2</sup>

Despite the overwhelming strength of this tradition, however, the application of existential and phenomenological perspectives has, of late, more clearly focused attention on a rationale for the examination of the role of individuals in the making of landscape. That rationale remains, for the most part, implicit to an expanding literature on the subjective dimensions of human interaction, decision making, and man's relationships with nature. More explicitly, as I have argued elsewhere, a "biography of landscape" that focuses directly on individuals-

in-situ is not only a feasible but a logical outcome of an historically sound and philosophically mature human geography.<sup>3</sup>

There are no doubt many serious issues yet to be resolved in any geography of man that pursues the case of the individual and the landscape. Since many of those issues are dealt with at length in the aforementioned paper on the biography of landscape, I shall avoid the temptation to repeat an already extensive argument. Rather than belabor philosophical points about the need to recover the often idiosyncratic worlds of the individual or even explore the more serious ethical question about freedom and responsibility in the landscape, I mean here to direct attention to only one subsequent issue: the way certain individuals create and give meaning to landscapes in their own images of reality.

Before proceeding, several *caveat lector* are appropriate. This essay is a preliminary inquiry more in the nature of a commentary than a treatise. It arises partly from a desire to defend and demonstrate, albeit briefly, the thesis that a focus on the individual and the individual's worldview need not infer solipsism or become antisocial but may just as easily lead to the greater apprehension of the locations of power in society. The theoretical contexts of that thesis are, to say the least, complex. Most obviously, a focus on the individual as the driving force of history has its clear precedent in the liberal doctrine of individualism, the eighteenth-century ideal of enlightened self-interest articulated by Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, and the utilitarians. Eighteenth-century individualism was itself, however, a variation on the more unequivocal and deeply rooted concept of elitism, the view that individuals are the *locus* of power in society. Elitism, or the doctrine articulated since Plato's philosopher-king, that certain individuals lead and mold history has, of course, evolved into a wide-ranging theory of social dominance. For all its complexity, one merit of that theory is the way it reveals that power or, at least, the acquisition of power and its legitimatization in authority is not equitably distributed but is concentrated in the hands of those who control the means as well as the rationales whereby others produce and transform their worlds.<sup>4</sup> More specifically, elite theory is especially relevant because it reveals that raw power or coercion is transformed into legitimate authority by individuals and groups who control and mold ideas and images in the shape of ideologies.<sup>5</sup> In its broadest implications, that view underscores the intent of this essay.

Tempting as it might be to defend that view by reference to theoretical precedent alone, however, the range of the latter together with the limits of space imposed here dictate a focus on one, primarily empirical, case. To that end, I shall focus on the case of China under the "Great Helmsman," Chairman Mao Tse-tung. That illustration is chosen for several reasons. For one, few would deny that Mao Tse-tung

was the central figure of the Chinese revolution, its prime mover and its chief ideologist, or that his vision of the ideal landscape was anything but instrumental in defining the rationale and design for the changing landscape of proletarian China. For another and perhaps even more fundamental reason, the case of Mao Tse-tung reveals a curious anomaly in the Promethean ethic of modern Marxism-Leninism; an anomaly which, on the one hand, can be traced to the Sinification of marxism and, on the other, leads to a peculiarly Maoist vision of the ideal landscape. And in that regard he was not only the prime architect of the revolution in China, he was also its preeminent geographer, both by inclination and by training.

### **Mao, the Geographer**

Among his various, if less-illustrious occupations, at least twice in his career Mao Tse-tung was a teacher of geography. Initially as a teacher in the Hunan Provincial First Normal School (Ch'ang-sha, 1920-21) and later as an instructor in the Kwangchow Peasant Institute (1925), Mao taught economic geography.<sup>6</sup> An interest in geography, moreover, can be traced to some of the earliest phases of his intellectual history. In 1912, having been demobilized from the Revolutionary Army that saw the end of dynastic rule in China and finding little prospect as a business school student (primarily because he was unable to use English language texts), Mao dropped out for a period of self-directed readings in history and geography in the Hunan Provincial Library. There, as he familiarized himself with the translated works of Adam Smith, Charles Darwin, John Stuart Mill, and others, the nineteen-year-old Mao began the "serious study of [the] history and geography of Russia, America, England, France, and other countries." There too, as he recounted to Edgar Snow, "... for the first time I saw and studied a map of the world."<sup>7</sup>

Though the sources for Mao Tse-tung's early interest in geography remain unclear, the intellectual context of that interest is well enough understood.<sup>8</sup> Like his early readings in philosophy and social history, it was through the conceptual prism of Ku Yen-wu, Lin Tse-hsu, Kung Tzu-chen, Wei Yüan, K'ang Yu-wei, and other Confucian reformers of the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries that the young Mao first received exposure to a *new* geography. Much of the latter, as in Wei Yüan's *Hai-kuo t'u-chih* (Geography of the World, first published in 1844), was a compilation of translated Western geographies and the product of a domestic renaissance in empirical, regional geography begun as part of the *chin-wen* (New Text), or broadly Kung-yang school,

of Confucian reform.<sup>9</sup> That new geography was itself instrumental in the revival of Confucian empiricism, internationalism, and state craft. Aimed to promote agrarian modernization, industrialization, and national integration, it was also part of the larger nineteenth-century Confucian project for China's "self-strengthening."<sup>10</sup> Later, as Confucian reform became nationalist revolution, the new geography also became part of the larger modernizing ethos for the New Nation.<sup>11</sup>

In short, the young Mao Tse-tung's interest in geography was a function of his awakening first to a Confucian reformism and then to a revolutionary nationalist modernizing and patriotic ethos. To be sure, no one part or even all of his intellectual beginnings can account for the later thought and action of Chairman Mao. Reflecting on his youth and especially the Social Darwinist and idealist influences of his Ch'ang-sha tutor, Yang Ch'ung-hui (whose daughter, Yang K'ai-hui, married Mao in 1921), Mao later explained: "At this time my mind was a curious mixture of ideas of liberalism, democratic reformism, and utopian socialism."<sup>12</sup> Encouraged by Yang to read a text on ethics by the neo-Kantian philosopher Friedrich Paulsen, as Mao noted, "I was inspired to write an essay which I entitled 'The Energy of the Mind.' I was then an idealist."<sup>13</sup> That Mao later turned away from Paulsen's neo-Kantian idealism hardly needs mention. But, whether he turned completely away from his intellectual upbringing remains questionable.

Several points can be raised about the relevance of Mao Tse-tung's premarxist intellectual roots. Most importantly, herein lies much of the foundation for what Mao described as the "Sinification of Marxism—that is to say, making certain that in all of its manifestations it is imbued with Chinese peculiarities."<sup>14</sup> No small part of that Sinified marxism is a peculiar blend of dialectical materialism, late Confucian idealism (including its emphasis on individual consciousness and social will), and Taoist imagery in the writings of Mao. But another and, for us, more important modality of a Sinified marxism is its constant reference to the reality and transformation of the Chinese landscape: its peculiar conditions, its history, and its new geography. And here at least two questions command attention. First, to what extent does a Sinified marxism reflect changing environmental values? Second, to what extent are these values translated into a Maoist version of the ideal landscape?

### **Changing Environmental Values**

Much has already been said by others about the Promethean character of a Maoist environmental ethic.<sup>15</sup> For Mao Tse-tung, as for Marxism-



Leninism in general, man makes landscapes in a "struggle to transform nature" through his labor. Nature is both a resource and an obstacle in the path of socialist construction or progress. The standard source here is Mao Tse-tung's rendition of the ancient tale of Yü Kung ("The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains").<sup>16</sup> Replacing the *deus ex machina* of the original tale with class struggle, Mao's version illustrates the proletarian goal to "reshape the objective world" in order to "reshape man himself." Human nature, class struggle, and proletarian revolution are, as it were, the forces that drive history and create landscapes out of nature.

For all the accuracy of this interpretation of the Maoist environmental ethic, however, several points require mention. At the outset, any claim here for innovation on the part of Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung or its anthropocentric focus must be judged in the light of Chinese experience. And in that regard, the "struggle to transform nature" was hardly unknown to Confucian China. One need only reflect briefly on the enormous geographical literature of Confucian China to be reminded that, whatever the literati proclivity for stewardship in nature, pragmatic Confucianism demanded the modification or transformation of nature into human landscapes. Mao's China did not invent environmental engineering, spectacular land modification schemes (as in the famous case of Ta Chai), or even the ideal of self-reliance. From an environmental and purely technological standpoint, the Han Dynasty irrigation projects in the Ordos Desert, the medieval (eighth to fifteenth century) restructuring of waterways in central China, and the centuries-old ideal of the self-sufficient well-field village are equally, if not more, remarkable. And, besides, Chinese peasants have struggled to transform nature and remove mountains, not to mention forests, ever since neolithic times. The tale of Yü Kung is, after all, an ancient folkloric rationale for man's struggle against nature.

If, furthermore, by the "struggle to transform nature" the Maoist environmental ethic intends a thoroughly secular, modernizing ethos aimed to promote national power and a better livelihood for the people, then one can find equally sound precedent in the developmental ethic of Confucian reform. Tseng Kuo-fan's campaigns for industrialization, Chang Chih-tung's program for agrarian-industrial modernization, and the entire body of *T'i-Yung* (essence and utility) arguments on behalf of economic reform in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were, at least in terms of landscape consequences, no less Promethean in scope than contemporary Chinese views. Indeed, those who proclaim the Maoist environmental ethic to be thoroughly innovative vis à vis Confucian tradition all too easily identify Confucianism with the arcane, frequently esoteric Sung neo-Confucianism of Wo- jen and others who

opposed *chin-wen* reform in the nineteenth century. In the process, they also conveniently ignore Mao Tse-tung's own intellectual roots in the alternative, modernizing Confucianism of K'ang Yu-wei, Chang Chih-tung, Tseng Kuo-fan, and others.

This is not to say that a Sinified marxism is anything but aggressive in image and ideal or that the intensity of the "struggle to transform nature" has not escalated under the leadership of Chairman Mao. Rather, it is to say that the intellectual and material roots of the Maoist environmental ethic are more varied than any simplistic, purely marxist analysis would suggest. At the same time, however, a case can be made that the special quality of a Sinified marxist approach to nature is not its marxist rationale but its peculiarly Chinese imagery and message.

### The *Tao* of Mao

If the standard interpretation of the Maoist environmental ethic too easily ignores its Confucian precedents, it also often fails to record the powerful folk-Taoist imagery employed by Mao Tse-tung to articulate that ethic.<sup>17</sup> The "struggle to transform nature," for example, is more commonly rendered in Mao's statements as *tui-t'ien hsuan chan*, "to declare war on heaven." In the myth-laden language of the people, not to mention the highly literate symbology of Taoism and Confucianism, a declaration of war on heaven means a cosmic struggle among opposing natural forces. In the mythopoeic literature of old and new China alike, it is here not so much Yü Kung's removal of the mountain that defines man's relationship to nature but rather the most popular folkloric hero of all, the Monkey, who, in the apocryphal versions of the monk Hsuan Tsang's journey to India (*Hsi Yu Chi*, "Record of a Journey West"), is the symbol of internecine struggle within nature. And one need not search far for Mao's poetic rendition where man, in the guise of Monkey, becomes a force of nature "like wind and thunder"; and class struggle, revolution, and the people become a "swirling gale" ready to consume and transform all in its path.<sup>18</sup>

One can barely read the poems and essays of Mao Tse-tung without the conclusion that, for Mao at least, man's struggle against nature is indeed an internecine cosmic battle between heaven (hence his use of *t'ien-jan*, "nature") and human nature (*jen-hsing*) and that the war is itself quite "natural." Indeed, Mao rarely employed industrial-technological images to define man's struggle to reshape the objective world and himself. Instead, he almost always employed folk-Taoist and Confucian naturalist metaphor. One of the key phrases used to describe the

righteous ferocity of proletarian revolution especially popular during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, for example, was Mao's "Only in wind and thunder can a country show its vitality."<sup>19</sup> That the phrase is taken directly from a poem by the nineteenth-century Confucian reformer Kung Tzu-chen and that it evokes an image of cosmic battle between opposing natural forces is, I submit, not merely coincidental to Mao's adoption. Rather, it serves as evidence of Mao's own understanding of the modalities and meaning of social change and man's relationship to nature in China.

It can be argued, of course, that the use of traditional symbols and images is merely a necessary linguistic device for the propagation of otherwise new environmental and social values. That imagery serves, as it were, to make the often aggressive demands of Marxism-Leninism more understandable, hence palatable to a peasantry yet to be transformed. Indeed, if the modernizing ethos of marxism requires a dramatic change in attitudes toward nature and man, then the use of traditional images to translate that requirement adds legitimacy by virtue of Sinification. But this itself only begs the question of values further. If only a tool for the propagation of new values, what happens to those values in the translation?

If reference to traditional value systems cannot alone serve to explain the full meaning of a Sinified marxism, at least two important aspects of the Maoist environmental ethic are further clarified in that light. First, the use of traditional naturalist imagery in Mao's version of man's struggle against nature effectively elevates the contest to the super-mundane and, in the process, lifts even the most banal land use change to the domain of the extraordinary. Nature here frequently becomes a cosmic force that literally "surrenders" to the will of man and is "defeated" by the people.<sup>20</sup> In the process, man too is elevated. This, I submit, is the principal source of that special élan so often associated with mass mobilization land development projects in China. Each mountain removed, each new land redevelopment or reclamation project, whether large or small, becomes the symbol (model) and evidence of man's increasing stature in the battle between two cosmic forces: man and nature.

In its turn, that aspect of a Sinified marxism reveals a second and more important dimension of the Maoist environmental ethic. If Marxism-Leninism can indeed be Sinified, that alone suggests there is something within Chinese tradition that complements and legitimates, even as it changes and is changed by the ostensibly new value system. That this is the case with Confucianism, especially in its *chin-wen* form, has already been partly demonstrated. As regards Taoism, an equally good case can be made.

Though antagonism between men and their natural environment was anathema to the Taoist sage, antagonisms among opposing natural forces, symbolized in the dialectics of Yin and Yang, were the centerpiece of Taoist logic. For Taoism, man was a force in nature, and man's struggle with other natural forces was part of the dialectical unity called *tao*.<sup>21</sup> The opposition or antagonism was, in effect, not between man and nature, as in the West, but between nature and nature—hence the unity of all being. Mao Tse-tung's reworking of that Taoist tradition into dialectical materialism is perhaps the supreme example of the Sinification of marxism. The results of his incorporation of that Taoist tradition are neither purely material nor merely metaphorical; they are metaphysical. Most importantly, herein lies at least part of the reason for Mao's rejection of the central principle of Engels' dialectics of nature (i.e., the negation of negation) and his replacement of the latter with the "unity of opposites."<sup>22</sup> In a word, this is the *tao* of Mao.

While the unity of opposites is perhaps never clearly identified with nature, it is nonetheless always defined as "the most basic thing," the thing that conditions both man and nature. If Mao remained largely reticent about its consequences in nature, he was at least somewhat less oblique about its ultimate consequences for man. As he put it:

The life of dialectics is the continuous movement toward opposites. Mankind will also finally meet its doom. When theologians talk about doomsday they are pessimistic and terrify people. We say that the end of mankind is something more advanced than mankind.<sup>23</sup>

Except to say that it is the opposite of mankind, Mao did not enlighten us as to what might be more advanced than mankind. From a Western perspective, either God or nature transcends man. From a Taoist perspective, however, it is the rule or internal consistency of opposing forces. And only one thing transcends man in the Maoist logic as well; the rule of the unity of opposites itself.

The unity of opposites, or Mao's theory of contradiction, is the *sine qua non* of the Maoist environmental ethic. What it entails, among other things, is that man is not the be-all and end-all of existence but rather that "struggle" is itself the be-all and end-all of existence. Man's struggle against nature or, in Mao's terms, the "declaration of war on heaven" is but one modality of a larger and ultimate struggle in nature and history. Its concrete manifestation, furthermore, is less the conquest of nature than it is a dialectics of landscape change; i.e., a permanent struggle among contradictory forces in the landscape.

## A Dialectics of Landscape Change

As Mao Tse-tung's analysis of the dialectics of landscape together with his policy directives for geographic change have been the subject of no little discussion on the part of Western economists, geographers, and others, there is little need here for detailed treatment.<sup>24</sup> Briefly stated, in Mao's view, the Chinese landscape is imbued with contradictions, chief among which are: rural versus urban centers of change or initiative; interior versus coastal centers of industrial growth; local self-sufficiency versus specialization of functions; and democracy, or decentralization of decision making versus centralization of authority.<sup>25</sup>

Whatever may be said about each of these contradictions, one nuance of the whole is especially relevant to an understanding of Mao's interpretation of the dialectics of landscape. Like the unity of opposites in general, the contradictions on the landscape have no absolute resolution. Rather, resolutions are relative to the intensity of struggle depending upon historical circumstance and perceived needs at any one time or place. Mao's policy directives for development vary accordingly.

To be sure, once translated into policies, Mao's dialectics of landscape frequently emphasized only one dimension of a particular contradiction. From this context, for example, comes the impression that Mao favored the rural over the urban and that a Maoist design for the landscape is essentially anti-urban.<sup>26</sup> This is, however, only an impression, and one derived of particular periods. Such policies as *hsia-hsiang* (going down to the villages) and Mao's famous anti-urban commentaries during the Cultural Revolution serve to illustrate that impression. But they can be countered with his policy directive of March 1949 when he noted that:

From 1927 to the present the center of gravity of our work has been in the villages—gathering strength in the villages, using the villages in order to surround the cities and then taking the cities. The period for this method of work has now ended. The period of 'from the city to the villages', and of the city leading the village has now begun.<sup>27</sup>

As Mao warned further, a failure to shift the center of gravity to the cities would have meant the failure of the revolution itself.

Two decades later, in April 1969, while reflecting on the events leading to the Cultural Revolution, Mao reiterated his statement of 1949 but now with a different twist:

Now we have entered the cities. This is a good thing. If we hadn't entered the cities, Chiang Kai-shek would be occupying them. But it is also a bad thing because it caused our Party to deteriorate.<sup>28</sup>

The "deterioration" of which Mao spoke was, of course, the subject of great debate during the Cultural Revolution, a debate having to do in part with the emergence of an urban party elite isolated from the mass of peasantry in the countryside, not to mention the increasing isolation of Mao Tse-tung himself from the center of power. That Mao chose to identify the loss of revolutionary élan with the city, moreover, reflected his retreat from the Soviet model of urban-industrial concentration begun with the Great Leap Forward in 1958.

After the consolidation of power in the cities and in view of the predominantly agrarian structure of the Chinese economy, Mao returned to the pre-Liberation theme of "from the countryside," stressing the need to develop agriculture and light industry as the foundation for growth in the capital intensive "key sector," heavy industry. One result was a program of urban redistribution emphasizing the development of small, interior centers vis à vis the larger coastal cities in line with the policy of "walking on two legs" (i.e., integrated agricultural-industrial development).<sup>29</sup> Another, more famous result was rustication in the form of the relocation of some twelve million urban students "down to the countryside" in order both to sharpen their revolutionary consciousness and to support the rural labor force during peak periods and in labor deficit areas. Both, in conjunction with internal migration controls, contributed to a net decline in the national rate of urbanization during the decade 1960-70.<sup>30</sup>

Therein lies the merit of the view that a Maoist landscape ideal intends anti-urbanism. Yet, if partly accurate, the notion of a Maoist anti-urban bias too easily avoids Mao's own prourban comments (entering the cities was, after all, "a good thing") as well as the industrial aims of the Maoist development strategy, including the expansion of concentrated industrial growth based on An-shan, Shanghai, Wu-han, Chi-nan, and other major regional centers. Mao's dialectics of landscape change moreover was aimed less at the expense of the city or urbanization in all regions than at the enhancement of rural-urban symbiosis. The great policy shifts of the 1960s in this regard reflected one theme persistently maintained by Mao since 1949; i.e., "Attention must be given to both city and village, and it is necessary to link closely urban and rural work, workers and peasants, industry and agriculture."<sup>31</sup>

The Maoist landscape ideal is here not prorural and anti-urban;

rather, it is characterized by intense interaction between city and countryside; the one, in dialectical fashion, sometimes being transformed into the other, or vice versa. For this reason, moreover, the ideal is not one of balanced growth or the development of some equilibrium as between city and countryside, industry and agriculture, coast and interior, and so on. Rather, as Mao insisted in his seminal essay "On Contradiction," "Nothing in this world develops absolutely evenly; we must oppose the theory of even development or the theory of equilibrium."<sup>32</sup> Like the revolution itself, the struggle to transform nature and the dialectics of landscape development were, for Mao, permanent, even as their modalities (as his policy directives) varied in time and place.<sup>33</sup> Resolutions or apparent resolutions, as in the mixed rural-urban form and functions of the communes, are not sealed onto the landscape as a fixed and unchanging synthesis of the dialectics of landscape. Like periods of rest between peaks of struggle, they serve instead to focus contradictory forces in a new setting, a setting which must, in Mao's terms, inevitably culminate in further conflict and contradiction. The ideal landscape is, in short, everywhere filled with struggle or tension, for "If there were no contradictions and no struggle, there would be no world, no progress, no life, there would be nothing at all."<sup>34</sup>

The peculiarity of Mao's dialectics of landscape is, then, less a function of the resolution of contradictions than the amplification of spatial and environmental conflicts in theory and in practice. The morphology and meaning of landscape are characterized less by balanced tensions between man and nature or place and place than by infinite malleability in the struggle to reshape the world, history, man, and nature. Change is itself the essential good and necessity of the Maoist landscape ideal, and it is the capacity for change that creates landscapes, makes history, and determines existence. The *tao* of Mao here turns to the geography of China not only to expose a series of vital contradictions on the land but also and more importantly to reveal a landscape inherently and permanently imbued with change through conflict.

## Conclusion

The landscape is thoroughly and permanently imbued with struggle, tension, and dialectical conflict where, in Mao's terms, "the wind will not subside, even if the trees want to rest."<sup>35</sup> In the final analysis, this served as the centerpiece of Mao Tse-tung's image of reality as well as the intellectual foundation for the spatial and environmental program

of his Sinified marxism. It constitutes the sine qua non of the Maoist environmental ethic and landscape ideal.

Much more can and undoubtedly should be said about the philosophical and political, not to mention the geographical, implications of the Maoist landscape ideal. For all its Chinese content, after all, a Sinified marxism is nonetheless marxism, which is to say that it is derived of sources quite apart from the concrete circumstances of Mao's Chinese heritage. One can argue quite convincingly that, if Mao indeed inherited a Chinese concept of dialectical conflict, he also added to it a Western concept of change. That is to say, Maoism transformed Taoist naturalist resignation and Confucian cyclical historicism into a doctrine of progress. If Mao remained enigmatic about the ultimate aims of the unity of opposites, he nonetheless maintained a conviction that a teleology of successive advances worked its way through history and onto the landscape. The struggle to transform nature, the dialectics of landscape change, and the revolution itself were for Mao, of course, purposive. They all aimed to proclaim the ascent of man.

Therein too, however, lies the nub of the *tao* of Mao as well as the special irony of Mao's Sinified marxism. The ascent of man is, as suggested earlier, an ascent toward the cosmos. As Mao phrased it in a 1965 poem, the ascent of man is a movement toward "the ninth heaven to embrace the moon or the five oceans deep to capture a turtle."<sup>36</sup> To embrace the moon or capture a turtle is, in traditional Chinese terms, to reach for immortality and the cosmos.

To embrace the moon is, of course, no easy task, even in an age of technological implosion. How much more so for a society still predominantly agrarian? Not all that difficult after all, for as Mao added:

Return to merriment and triumphant songs.  
Under this heaven nothing is difficult,  
If only there is the will to ascend.<sup>37</sup>

There—in the "will to ascend"—lies the special irony and genius of Maoism. Human will, including the will of the individual, is the energy that transforms history and the landscape. Parting company with crude materialism, Mao here sounds the bell of human consciousness and will as the force that, facing its opposite, makes history. Here too, "Mao knew himself as victorious revolutionary against overwhelming odds and as sage chairman conscious of historical development."<sup>38</sup> And, we might add, in that regard Mao also knew himself as sage geographer conscious of a cosmic battle between man and nature that culminates in a dialectics of landscape change.



## Notes

1. Sources for excerpts prefacing chapter 18 are: Richard Hartshorne, *Perspective on the Nature of Geography* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1959), pp. 152–53 and “Foreword,” *Quotations from Chairman Mao* (August 1965) (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1965).
2. Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), pp. 3–36; Lev Shestov, *Potestas Clavium* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1970).
3. M. S. Samuels, “The Biography of Landscape,” in D. Meinig, ed., *The Cultural Meaning of Ordinary Landscapes* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).
4. Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1963); T. B. Bottomore, *Elites and Society* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1964); T. R. Dye and I. Harmon Zeigler, *The Irony of Democracy* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1972).
5. Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1936).
6. For a detailed, chronological biography of Mao Tse-tung, see Jerome Ch'en, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), especially pp. 24–51; 100. Mao's position as teacher of geography, among other subjects, is confirmed by archival records at the Hunan Provincial First Normal School and by the lecture schedule for the Kwangchou Peasant Institute, a copy of which is displayed in the Museum in Mao's home village of Shao Shan, Hunan.
7. Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), pp. 141–42.
8. Frederick Wakeman, Jr., *History and Will: Philosophical Perspectives of Mao Tse-tung's Thought* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973).
9. The intellectual history of geography in China remains little studied by Western scholars. The standard source for the classical and medieval periods is Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1955), pp. 479–590. On the new geography of the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, see F. W. Drake, *China Charts the World, Hsu Chi-yu and His Geography of 1848* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975) and M. S. Samuels, “Kung Tzu-chen's New Sinkiang,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66, no. 3 (September 1976): 416–27. For a general reference on the subject in Chinese, see Wang Yung, *Chung-kuo ti-li hsüeh-shih* (A History of Geography in China), rep. ed. (1938; Taipei: Commercial Press, 1968). For a review of geographical research and training in contemporary China see M. S. Samuels, “Geography in China: Trends in Research and Training,” *Pacific Affairs* 50, no. 3 (fall 1977): 406–25.
10. On the Confucian reform movement, see especially Mary C. Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957) and Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: A Trilogy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965). On the Confucian background of Maoism see especially Wakeman, *History and Will*, pp. 101–52.
11. Wang Yung, *Chung-kuo ti-li hsüeh-shih*, pp. 217–62. Also see the collected volumes of the Nanking University Historical and Geographical Society, *Shih-ti hsüeh-pao* (Journal of the Historical and Geographical Society) (Nanking, 1920–26).
12. Snow, *Red Star over China*, pp. 147–48.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
14. Mao Tse-tung, “Speech to the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party [October 1938],” in S. Schram, ed., *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (New York: Praeger, 1963), pp. 112–14.
15. See especially Rhoads Murphy, “Man and Nature in China,” *Modern Asian Studies* 1 (October 1967): 313–33.
16. Mao Tse-tung, “The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. 3 (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1965), pp. 321–24.
17. For an insightful discussion of Mao's use of folk-Taoist images, see Wakeman, *History and Will*, pp. 74–93.
18. Arthur Waley, trans., *Monkey: Folk Novel of China by Wu Ch'eng-en* (New York:

- Grove Press, 1958). On Mao's use of the tale of Monkey, see Wakeman, *History and Will*, pp. 89–90.
19. Mao Tse-tung, "Introducing a Cooperative," in *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1967), pp. 403–4.
20. Murphey, "Man and Nature in China," p. 319.
21. Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1960), pp. 60–67; 93–117; 204–40. On the Taoist dialectics of nature, see Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 2, pp. 33–164; 304–51. Compare the latter with Mao's comments on the unity of opposites in note 34, below.
22. Mao Tse-tung, "On Contradiction," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. 1, pp. 311–47. On Mao's rejection of Engels dialectics, see idem, "Talk on Questions of Philosophy," in S. Schram, ed., *Chairman Mao Talks to the People* (New York: Pantheon, 1974), p. 226.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 228.
24. See, among others, Audrey Donnithorne, "China's Cellular Economy—Some Economic Trends Since the Cultural Revolution," *China Quarterly* 52 (October/December 1972): 605–19. Jack Grey, "The Two Roads: Alternative Strategies of Social Change and Economic Growth in China," in S. Schram, ed., *Authority, Participation and Cultural Change in China* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1973), pp. 109–57. Keith Buchanan, *The Transformation of the Chinese Earth* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1970).
25. The central text for Mao's dialectics of landscape is his "On the Ten Great Relationships," Schram, *Chairman Mao Talks*, pp. 61–83.
26. L. J. C. Ma, "Counterurbanization and Rural Development: The Strategy of Hsia-Hsiang," *Current Scene* 15, nos. 8, 9 (August/September 1977): 1–12.
27. Mao Tse-tung, "Report to the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. 4, p. 363.
28. Mao Tse-tung, "Talk at the First Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party," in Schram, *Chairman Mao Talks*, p. 288.
29. Buchanan, *Transformation of the Chinese Earth*, pp. 227–50.
30. Sen-Dou Chang, "The Changing System of Chinese Cities," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66, no. 3 (September 1976): 398–415.
31. Mao Tse-tung, "Report to the Second Plenary Session," p. 363.
32. Mao Tse-tung, "On Contradiction," p. 336. Mao's insistence on economic and political disequilibrium was the cause of the break with Liu Shao-ch'i and played a major role in the intraparty disputes of 1959–65. See especially Lowell Dittmer, *Liu Shao-ch'i and the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 67–170.
33. S. Schram, "Mao Tse-tung and the Theory of Permanent Revolution," *China Quarterly* 46 (April/June 1971): 221–44.
34. Mao Tse-tung, "Talks at the Chengtu Conference [1958]," in Schram, *Chairman Mao Talks*, p. 108. Mao here further linked the unity of opposites to the dialectics of nature. "We must cite abundant examples," he noted, "to explain the concept of the unity of opposites and their transformation into one another. . . . Spring, summer, autumn, and winter are also transformed into one another. Elements of spring and summer are contained in autumn and winter. Birth and death are also transformed into one another. Living is transformed into dying, lifeless matter is transformed into living beings."
35. Mao Tse-tung, "The Objective Existence of Class Struggle [1966]," in Wakeman, *History and Will*, p. 275.
36. Mao Tse-tung, "Chingkanshan Revisited [1965]," in Gerome Ch'en, ed., *Mao* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 113.
37. Mao Tse-tung, "Chingkanshan Revisited, 1965—To the Melody of Shui Tiao Ko T'ou," trans. with notes by Jerome Ch'en, *The China Quarterly*, ed. Dick Wilson, published by the Contemporary China Institute, School of Oriental and African Studies 34 (April/June 1968): 3–5; reprinted in Ch'en, *Mao*, p. 113 and Wakeman, *History and Will*, p. 327.
38. *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER 19

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# KNOWING ONE'S PLACE: "THE COLOURED PEOPLE" AND THE GROUP AREAS ACT IN CAPE TOWN

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JOHN WESTERN

*We have a wonderful band of non-Europeans . . .  
oh, they're very happy where they are now.*

MOWBRAY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
WORKER (WHITE): 10 FEBRUARY 1975

*If I heard I could go back I'd take a helicopter tomorrow.*

GROUP AREAS REMOVEE  
(COLOURED): 6 JUNE 1975

*This Group Areas is the most vicious law they ever did.*

GROUP AREAS REMOVEE  
(COLOURED): 19 NOVEMBER 1975

In this essay the reciprocal relations between place and society are examined in the context of the asymmetric access to power of different social groups and social beliefs in Cape Town, South Africa. The social beliefs of the dominant minority have been institutionalized in the Group Areas Act, and for strategic and economic considerations this act has been implemented in the forcible expulsion of "Coloured people" from their racially integrated inner city homes to racial ghettos on the edge of Cape Town in the sand dunes of the Cape Flats.

The social costs of forced removal are assessed for over 100 families who were expelled from the inner suburb of Mowbray. In addition status differences that were latent during residence in Mowbray have been made explicit by the various locations to which families have been moved. Thus within the displaced Coloured community itself, stigma or respectability is now conferred by address.

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## The Social Construction of a Society

The primary focus of attention in South African society is the struggle for power between 4.50 million Whites and 18.75 million Black Africans. There are also, however, over 3 million persons "in the middle," of whom 750,000 are Asiatics and the remainder, those who are termed "Coloureds." Essentially, the latter are the creation of miscegenation among Whites, who established themselves in South Africa after 1652, moving toward the interior from Cape Town; their slaves, who were imported mainly from Madagascar and the East Indies; and the autochthonous Khoisan peoples, otherwise known as Hottentots and Bushmen, now almost completely wiped out. Today the majority of Capetonians are Coloureds, neither Whites nor Black Africans, the lands of these last being over 400 miles further east. Thirty percent of all the Coloureds in the republic live in Greater Cape Town, forming about sixty percent of its total population of over one million.

Through the relationships of slavery and subsequent dependence the Coloureds involuntarily took on a culture that in nearly all respects is the same as that of White South Africans, though an important exception is the Muslim religion of the subgroup of about 160,000 "Cape Malays." Also, miscegenation both before and after emancipation (1834) has given rise to a situation whereby many "White" South Africans appear to be Coloureds who have "passed for white," while many legally defined Coloureds are in appearance indistinguishable from Whites. Black Africans have also come to Cape Town in significant numbers during this century, predominantly as migrant male laborers; and some have intermarried with Coloureds.

Thus Capetonians, like Brazilians, range along a phenotypic continuum from those who appear to be Nordic Whites to those who appear to be Black Africans. Upon this continuum the present government imposes a discrete hierarchy of White-Brown (Coloured)-Black (Bantu) categories through apartheid legislation. Thus, in the terms of the Group Areas Act of 1950, which determines the settlement patterns of racial groups in South African cities, we read that a White is "... any person who in appearance, obviously is, or who is generally accepted as a white person, other than a person who although in appearance obviously a white person, is generally accepted as a coloured person," or who is married to or cohabits with any person who is not White. The emphasis on social acceptance means that it is in fact possible for a citizen of South Africa actually to have his official "race" changed by the courts of the Race Classification Board—a Kafkaesque notion to anyone unfamiliar with the republic. In 1975, for example, 14 Whites

were reclassified as Cape Coloureds, as were 3 Black Africans; whereas 24 Cape Coloureds and 2 Chinese officially became Whites.

Why do such laws exist? There are coldly rational reasons for a superordinate White group, outnumbered five-to-one by "non-Whites," to implement legalized racial discrimination. Heribert Adam<sup>1</sup> suggests that "The Apartheid system has been viewed as simply the most outdated relic of a dying colonialism, yet possibly it is one of the most advanced and effective patterns of rational, oligarchic domination. . . . This pragmatism . . . is oriented solely toward the purpose of the system: the smooth, frictionless, and tolerable domination over cheap labor and political dependents as a prerequisite for the privileges of the minority." Among the legislation supporting the apartheid (apart-ness) system is the aforementioned Group Areas Act. At the introduction of the bill to the Whites-only Parliament in 1950, Prime Minister D. F. Malan stated, "It is the essence of the apartheid policy which is embodied in the Bill"; and Minister of the Interior T. E. Dönges said, "We believe that this Bill will be one of the cornerstones for preserving a White South Africa."

This act was aimed not so much at the Black African majority in most South African cities, for legislation (although not strictly enforced until then) had existed to segregate them residentially since 1923, and indeed earlier. The act was, rather, aimed at those in the middle: the Indians and the Coloureds. It has total power of eminent domain to remold the residential social ecology of South African cities. Of this, Kuper, Watts, and Davies aptly observe, "The acceptance by Europeans of such revolutionary changes in the traditionally sacred rights of ownership indicates their conviction that the provisions of the Group Areas Act would be applied against Non-Europeans, and for the benefit of Europeans."<sup>2</sup> So it has proved. Although a geographer-apologist for the government has claimed that "a relatively small number of people, both White and non-White, do become the 'victims' of this law,"<sup>3</sup> statistics reveal that one Indian in four is (or shall be) removed, one Coloured in six, but only one White in 666; i.e., 200,000 Indians; 400,000 Coloureds; 6,731 Whites.

Giving these figures (1976), the minister concerned, Marais Steyn, explained, "Ninety percent of the families which had to be moved came from depressed and/or slum areas. . . . [It is only] In the exceptional cases where housing which was still habitable has had to be vacated." Thus slum clearance and the concomitant "health hazard" argument are the official justifications for group areas removal of persons (almost exclusively non-White) from one part of the city to another. The act, however, was attacked by antiapartheid Member of Parliament Helen Suzman in 1961: "You do not need a Group Areas Act to clear slums;

there is a Slum Clearance Act under which one can quite readily clear slums; and . . . to put up great housing schemes [in which those removed have been resettled] . . . also has nothing whatever to do with the operation of the Group Areas Act." The point is indeed not the establishment of great housing schemes, but rather *where* they have been established: at the periphery of the now Whites-only central cities. The *location* of resettlement reveals an intent quite different from that of government pronouncements: it is one of social distancing and not concern for health hazards.

There are, then, more profound reasons for group areas than the minister chooses to advance. Consider how J. P. Kay, writing in 1832 of Manchester, warned of "the evils of poverty and pestilence among the working classes of the close alleys, . . . where pauperism and disease congregate round the source of social discontent and political disorder in the centre of our large towns."<sup>4</sup> Here is introduced the *strategic* motive, which is indeed one of the two major underpinnings for the group areas conception. For twentieth-century South Africa, van den Berghe does not doubt its importance:

The older non-white shanty towns with their maze of narrow, tortuous alleys were often located close to white residential or business districts; they are now systematically being razed as a major military hazard. . . . The new ghettos are typically situated several miles from the white towns, with a buffer zone between.<sup>5</sup>

It is in this light that we may understand the wholesale clearance of, for example, Cape Town's District Six. Certainly there were sections of deteriorated housing, but equally important was its status as a ninety-five-percent Coloured area immediately adjacent to the "White" city center. Generations of Coloured occupancy had made it a symbolic focus for the Coloured people; but with its proclamation as a group area for Whites only, the Coloured homes were demolished. Hilda Kuper observes how ". . . in a single politically defined territory. When one group is dominant it may express its domination by ignoring, neglecting, and even obliterating the established sites of the subordinated people."<sup>6</sup> By victorious Rome, Carthage was razed *and plowed*. Adam Small, a poet-playwright classified as Coloured, adds the following annotation in local dialect to a photograph of a Cape Coloured workman stepping through what is now the rubble of District Six:

Die bulldozers, hulle't gakom  
romtcmtom  
dom

The bulldozers, they came  
rumblerumble  
stupid

was ons mos	we really were
stom mos	just dumbfounded
al die djare	all the years
Klaar gakom het hulle	They came right on in
en plat gadonner	and knocked it all down flat
alles hieso	all of it here
alles, alles,	all, all,
hyse, harte,	houses, hearts,
die lot,	the lot,
alles,	all of it,
God!	God!
—So pellie,	—So old chum,
Klim yt die klippe yt	Climb out from the rubble
op,	up,
op!	up!
Djy dink sieker ek is cynical?	You probably think I'm cynical,
	eh?
God, pellie, ek is serious	God, old pal, I'm serious
...	... <sup>7</sup>

The importance of the strategic motive was underlined during the urban unrest in the (Cape) winter of 1976. After a number of weeks of rioting in the Black African and Coloured ghetto "townships" outside the city on the Cape Flats, violence eventually flared in the city center itself. An editorial in the city's Afrikaans daily is illuminating:

This is the work of cunning people. . . . It was also a cunning, calculated move to get [school] children to come to the center of the city and make it the scene of their rioting. Obviously it was intended to involve the general public [an interesting euphemism for Whites] in what had up till then been confined to Black and Brown residential areas, helping to create a crisis psychosis and thereby ensuring much more publicity.<sup>8</sup>

Clearly, according to *Die Burger*, violence and riot in the "non-White" townships is not as intolerable as that which occurs in the "White" city.

In addition to the wholesale clearance of inner city "non-Whites," there is another strategic method whereby the rulers may attempt to lessen this "problem." Again we might note a parallel with urban England in the Victorian era:

The necessity of coping with the dangerous masses of working people accumulating in the centres of the cities is a theme which is constantly repeated. T. Chalmers [1821–

26] insists on the principle of "locality" as an instrument of both religious and civic administration in towns. [Whereby] . . . the unmanageable mass which would otherwise form into one impetuous and overwhelming surge against the reigning authority could be split up into fragments.<sup>9</sup>

And Glass notes that a decline in fear of the British laboring masses in the last two decades of the nineteenth century was attributable in part to the fact that "the heterogeneity of the British working class was discovered *and encouraged*"<sup>10</sup> (emphasis added). The policy of divide and rule is thus espoused.

In contemporary South Africa, note that subsumed under the strategic functions of group areas legislation are *definitional* elements. Those who are termed "non-Whites" by the apartheid laws do not constitute one solid and undifferentiated mass. There are objectively existing and subjectively experienced internal differentiations among them. Thus although Black Africans on the Rand may express a preference for tribally mixed housing (for example, Patricios<sup>11</sup>), Soweto is internally segregated into numerous ethnolinguistic sections. Similarly, the overall category "Coloured" has by law seven subcategories. Three are generally considered "Asiatics": "the Indian Group" (99 percent of the "Asiatics"), comprising those whose original home was in the British Indian Empire and who were brought to South Africa mainly as indentured laborers for the Natal sugar plantations; "the Chinese Group"; and "the other Asiatic Group." The remaining four subcategories are generally considered "Coloureds": "the Cape Coloured Group," Coloureds *sensu stricto*, forming 93 percent of these four subcategories; "the Cape Malay Group" (5.9 percent); "the Griqua Group"; and "the other Coloured Group." Rather than discuss what the supposed differentiation and composition of these subgroups consists of,<sup>12</sup> consider rather that among those who are White South Africans there exist similar ethnolinguistic divisions. The Whites could, by precisely the same governmental logic, be legally divided and spatially segregated into Afrikaner, English-speaking Christian, Jew, Portuguese, etc. But this is not done. Leo Kuper comments:

The danger is in the numerical preponderance of the non-whites. It is a threat, however, only if the non-whites are united. . . . The Group Areas Act (1950) gives the Governor-General [now the state president] the necessary power to subdivide Coloureds and Natives [now called "Bantu" by the government and "Black Africans" in the present paper], but not whites. . . . If my interpretation is rejected, then we must assume that it is sheer accident that the



government has . . . discriminated against the Whites by withholding from [them] the privilege of communal living.<sup>13</sup>

Adam's reaction is a little different:

Whether the Afrikaner past with its former progressive nationalism is projected on to the other groups, or whether Apartheid is merely a witting device of *divide et impera*, is hardly significant compared with the fact that obviously a widespread ethnic narcissism in all groups responds to such offers.<sup>14</sup>

A consciousness of ethnic differentiation rather than a unified Black bloc nevertheless is clearly in the government's interest.

In terms of section 12(2) of the (revised) Group Areas Act of 1966, we may note that the state president has the power of definition to "create" a group for the purposes of the act when it is deemed expedient. Under this act, then, "Cape Malays" are recognized to exist as such only in the places where they are numerous enough to warrant (in the government's eyes) their own group areas. Thus in East London no attempt was made to separate "Malays" from the general "Coloured" group among whom they were living. In Port Elizabeth the Group Area Board decided there should be a separate "Malay" group area, but the city council opposed this, and eventually the board agreed with the city council on the grounds that there were in fact too few Malays.<sup>15</sup>

In Cape Town the situation is uniquely complex. There are clearly enough Malays to warrant separate, specified, Malay group areas according to the criteria of the act, for they comprise approximately twenty percent of the Coloured population of the Cape Peninsula. Thus Malays *only* are allowed to inhabit their historic territory, Schotsche's Kloof: "the Malay Quarter." But this accounts for only a small proportion of the Malays living in Cape Town, and attempts to establish other segregated Malay Group Areas in the Surrey Estate and in Wynberg were vociferously opposed and eventually dropped. Thus all Malays who do not live in Schotsche's Kloof are free to live scattered throughout the Coloured group areas of Cape Town. This is a self-contradiction in terms of the act. In any given urban area (in this case the city of Cape Town) there are either enough or not enough members of any subgroup to warrant their own group area. But in Cape Town the Malays seem to have been permitted (or, rather, obliged) to have their cake and eat it too: they are segregated where some arguably might wish to be so (in

“their” quarter) and not segregated among the “Coloureds,” in general, elsewhere. Legal opinion pronounces:

In relation to land outside those areas, they [Malays] will fall in the general “Coloured” group and they will shed their character of belonging to a sub-group. Outside the specified districts, [i.e., Malay group areas] a genuine Malay can freely sell to or acquire from a coloured because they fall in the same group, but in relation to land inside the specified districts, this identical Malay may not enter into the same kind of transaction with a coloured, because there they belong to different groups.<sup>16</sup>

At this point one begins to wonder if the whole legalistic exercise is merely one demonstrating the government’s power of definition. When, for the Group Areas Act, is a Malay not a Malay? “The question is’ said Alice ‘whether you can make words mean so many different things.’ ‘The question is’ said Humpty Dumpty ‘who is to be master, that’s all.’”

The apparent Alice-in-Wonderland quality of the law, however, masks a real issue. It is in fact perfectly logical and generally apt that when members of a particular minority group are very small in relative numbers, the mainstream society, with its power externally to define them, tends to subsume them into a more general minority group of allegedly somewhat related characteristics; but when more numerous, more visible, they may be allowed a more particular identity. Thus Guatemalans, say, in the United States would, in the general society, probably be viewed, at least at first, as members of a larger Spanish-speaking group; in the East Los Angeles barrio, however, with a sufficient concentration they might well be defined as distinctively Guatemalans, as opposed to Mexicans or other Spanish speakers. The only difference is that the South African apartheid policy demands this kind of societal convention be codified in law. But note the truth of Humpty Dumpty’s statement regarding mastery, one well understood by the advocates of “Black Consciousness,” who clearly perceive and oppose the White government’s manipulation of differences among its subdivided Coloured, Asiatic, and Black African subjects. As a South African Students’ Organization leader exulted: “It’s *our* turn to define now.”<sup>17</sup> This is the burden of Leo Kuper’s remark: Blacks are divided, Whites are not. Unity is to be at all costs challenged for the “non-Whites” and to be by all means fostered for the Whites.

Not only does the Group Areas Act define categories of persons within “non-Whites,” but it also aids in the distinction between Whites

and "non-Whites." When in pre-group areas cities in South Africa, working-class Whites and Coloureds lived in integrated areas, as was especially the case in inner city Cape Town, then in many instances social distinctions could not be made among them.<sup>18</sup> Fair-skinned Coloureds would pass for White because they could straightforwardly claim social acceptance by some of their White neighbors. Poor Whites, who migrated in tens of thousands to the cities from rural depression between the wars, may have been even poorer than many artisan Coloureds and as such were liable to absorption into the latter's ranks. Whites, already in a minority in South Africa—and a decreasing minority because of differential fertility—could not afford to "lose" so many of "their own." So, in order to bolster an ambiguous who's who, the group areas conception can offer a definite *who's where*; i.e., if such a person lives in such a suburb, then he can be *only* Coloured: one is one's address. Thus can group areas aid in "racial" definition.

This is, indeed, an example of Sommer's distinction between "dominance" and "territoriality."<sup>19</sup> During the slave-owning period Whites did not need to underline their evident socially superior rank with spatial segregation. Even after emancipation when the Coloureds became servants rather than slaves, as in the Deep South of the United States, no need was perceived by the British colonial government to provide any legal means of territorial segregation in Cape Town, for Whites clearly dominated the subordinate Coloureds in all respects. The Whites were not outnumbered by Coloureds in the city, the latter "knew their place," and, as Marais puts it, the colonial government's preoccupation with Black African peoples on the eastern frontier of the Cape "naturally took precedence over the mere question of the poor, which was all the Coloured people seemed to present."<sup>20</sup> But with industrialization there comes the possibility—although not the inevitability—that demands for a labor force will not primarily be based on grounds of color, as in the prior agrarian Cape. Thus, any potential for equalization in status between White and Coloured as a single working class must be avoided<sup>21</sup>; and *one* of the ways in which it may be avoided and the dominance of Coloured by still socially distant White, upheld is the deliberate spatial policy of segregation.

If one underlying motive for the group areas legislation is the attempt by Whites to create for themselves a sense of spatial security, then the other motive is the *economic*. Kuper et al. see their work on Durban, where by far the greatest number of South African Indians live, as illuminating a situation "where the opportunity for material gain is linked with the monopoly of power . . . [for the Whites] the Group Areas Act converted political power to material gain."<sup>22</sup> In this regard the act is just one instance of the rise to economic might of Afrikanerdom subsequent to their taking over of the reins of the South African state.

Meer is in no doubt that the main target was the Indian.<sup>23</sup> Leo Kuper agrees; the Indians have been affected proportionately more than any other group by group areas removals. "There was a convergence of interest—English getting rid of competitors, Afrikaners gaining entry, more particularly in the rural areas."<sup>24</sup> "In general, the Technical Sub-Committee's plan involves the redistribution of resources in favour of Europeans. . . . The value of European investments in the city [thereby] . . . would rise by £6,000,000 to £120,000,000, while Indian investment would fall to about £18,500,000."<sup>25</sup>

The sharp categories of apartheid have especially attacked the fuzzy areas of "overlap" of Whites and "non-Whites." Laws such as the Population Registration, Prevention of Mixed Marriages, and Immorality (i.e., "interracial" sexual relations) Acts eliminate much social interaction. The limited political access of the Coloureds, once included—though to a disproportionately small degree—in the now exclusively White parliament, has been abolished. The spatial overlap, with its social implications, has been abolished by the Group Areas Act. It was manifested by racially mixed areas such as Cape Town's Observatory and by Coloured/Malay enclaves in White areas, such as Mowbray (see below). There was also an economic overlap, whereby exceptions existed to the White-Brown-Black: rich-poorer-poorest relationship. These have been eroded by laws concerning apprenticeship in skilled trades, the "job reservation" acts (whereby only members of a certain "racial" group may fill a certain type of job), and the Group Areas Act.

The business and trading success of a number of Indians rendered their economic status higher than that of many Whites. This made them visible and vulnerable to attacks by those whose constituency was especially that of the poorer Whites; i.e., Afrikaner nationalism. In 1838 the *trekboers* defeated the outnumbering Zulus at the Battle of Blood River, a sacred place indeed for the Afrikaners. In this milieu, on the centenary of the battle, National party leader D. F. Malan warned of "meeting the Non-European defenceless on the open plains of economic competition." The poorer Whites' fear and envy of the Indians was a powerful source of group areas, whereby wealth was obligatorily redistributed from Indians to the Whites. Nor was it only the poorer Whites. Solidly English Durban was devising its own strategy prior to group areas to redirect investment from Indian business to English-dominated commerce, although the English sector was already the most privileged economically in South African society.

Consider the racial specificity of those who had been moved from business premises by the Group Areas Act up to the end of 1975 (table 19-1). The same specificity is maintained in data on those who were still, at that time, due to be moved (table 19-2). Prior to group areas the

Table 19-1. Business Displacements by Race and Province

	Cape	Transvaal	Natal	Totals
White	3	8	10	21
Coloured	38	33	11	82
Indian	139	668	470	1277
Chinese	3			3

Table 19-2. Planned Business Displacements by Race and Province

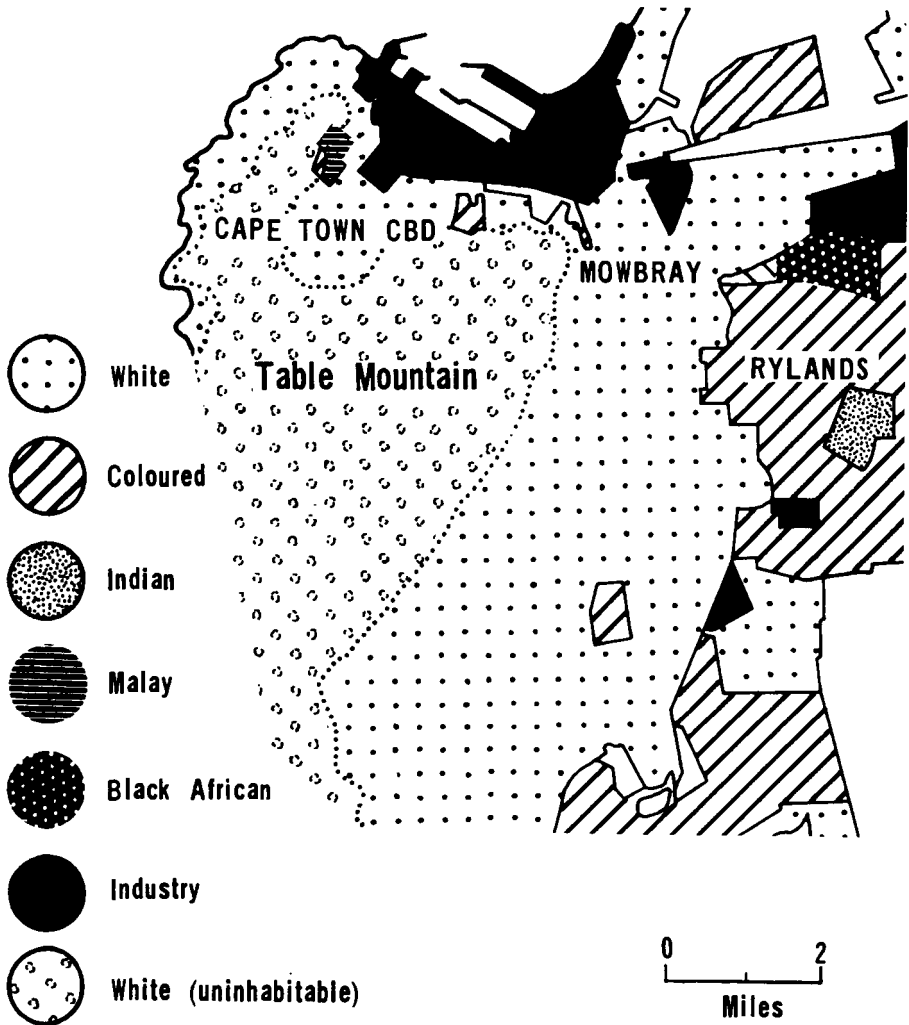
	Cape	Transvaal	Natal	Totals
White	48		12	60
Coloured	195	48	4	247
Indian	897	2332	552	3781
Chinese	617			617

distribution of Indian residences frequently mirrored the distribution of economic activity rather than any ethnic distributions.<sup>26</sup> For Indians, it was necessary for their trading occupations that they be widely dispersed throughout the city, accessible to their multiracial market. To require Indians to live and trade in their own group areas (except by a ministerial permit, which is easily revocable) is to destroy their businesses. Yet the location of the two small Indian group areas in Cape Town and Rylands (figure 19-1) and Cravenby (figure 19-3) is very restricted.

Finally, financial gain has also accrued to Whites through the purchase and then resale or rental, after renovation, of the homes owned by "non-Whites" ejected by the Act. In Cape Town this has mainly concerned Coloured people, and their small homes into which were once crowded nuclear and even extended families are now remodeled bijou "Chelsea Cottages" lived in by middle-class Whites at a much lower density.

The ethnic ecology of Cape Town in the early 1950s, prior to group areas implementation, is shown in figure 19-2. In general terms, as for other South African cities at that time, the map of racial patterns was also a map of economic gradients.<sup>27</sup> This stratification, however, was by no means "watertight," as figure 19-2 conveys immediately. Batson showed that in 1936 only 44 percent of the municipality of Cape Town's residential area could be termed indubitably (that is, over 75 percent) "European," and only 20 percent by the same criterion, "non-European"; 37 percent was "mixed."<sup>28</sup> A comparison of figure 19-1, the post-group areas Cape Town, with figure 19-2 shows how indeed any spatial overlap of White and "non-White" has been eliminated.

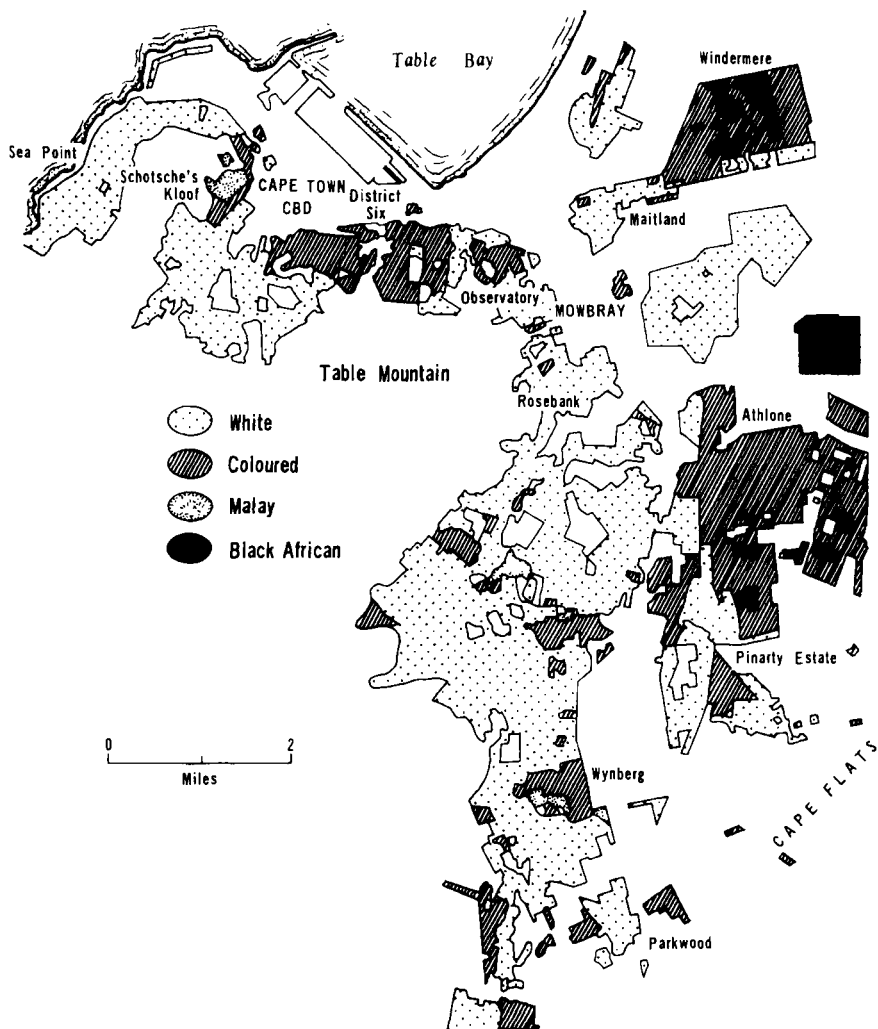
Figure 19-1. Greater Cape Town, Actual Group Areas (1976)



### The Social Construction of Space: The Case of Mowbray

One area among many where these processes may be illustrated is Mowbray, an inner suburb now wholly White but prior to group areas proclamation (1961) having a well-defined enclave of about 200 “non-White” families. The present author interviewed over 100 of these in the sites to which they had been displaced, and this information can provide a case study of the spatial and social effects of the prevailing

Figure 19-2. Cape Town Ethnic Areas (c. 1953)



NOTE Indians scattered throughout the area.

SOURCE Peter Scott, Cape Town: "A Multi-racial City," *Geographical Journal* 121 (1955): 149-57.

government ideology. As much as is possible, the words of interviewees themselves on their experience will be employed.

Two most striking impressions are gained from these interviews: the concern over the lack of physical safety in the present milieu, especially in the city council township rental schemes; and the socioeconomic status cleavage between the township renters and those who have become homeowners subsequent to removal.

The agricultural village of Mowbray and with it the humble dwell-

ings of ex-slave servants and laborers were enveloped in the late nineteenth century by the urban sprawl of Cape Town, four miles away. The Coloured/Malay housing plots crystallized into three adjacent “non-White pockets” surrounded by White residential areas. To what extent, just prior to removal in the early 1960s, did they constitute a “community”? *Community* is both an ill-defined and value-laden term. Avoiding any lengthy discussion, it here suffices to note that Marris considers it to have two essential qualities: one is *territory*, the claiming of familiar communal places, and the other is *acknowledgment*, mutual recognition bound by kinship and friendship.<sup>29</sup> The combination of these two qualities results in what Wild has called “fields of care.”<sup>30</sup> Of such an area (Bethnal Green in London), Young and Willmott write, “the interaction between length of residence and kinship is therefore the crux of our interpretation. Neither is by itself a sufficient explanation.”<sup>31</sup>

There is however one other factor to be considered. Mowbray was defined from outside, in its “foreign relations,”<sup>32</sup> as “non-White” Mowbray and as such suffered exclusion by White property-owning and political power. But rejection from without may excite a reactive search for solidarity within. Thus Whisson asks “are there not ‘avoidance rules’ and preferences for ‘we coloured people’ to live together and associate together—expressed by the unwillingness to incorporate Whites into the groupings?—Whites make ‘us’ feel uncomfortable, remind us of what we are not. . . . Exclusiveness is not wholly one-sided.”<sup>33</sup>

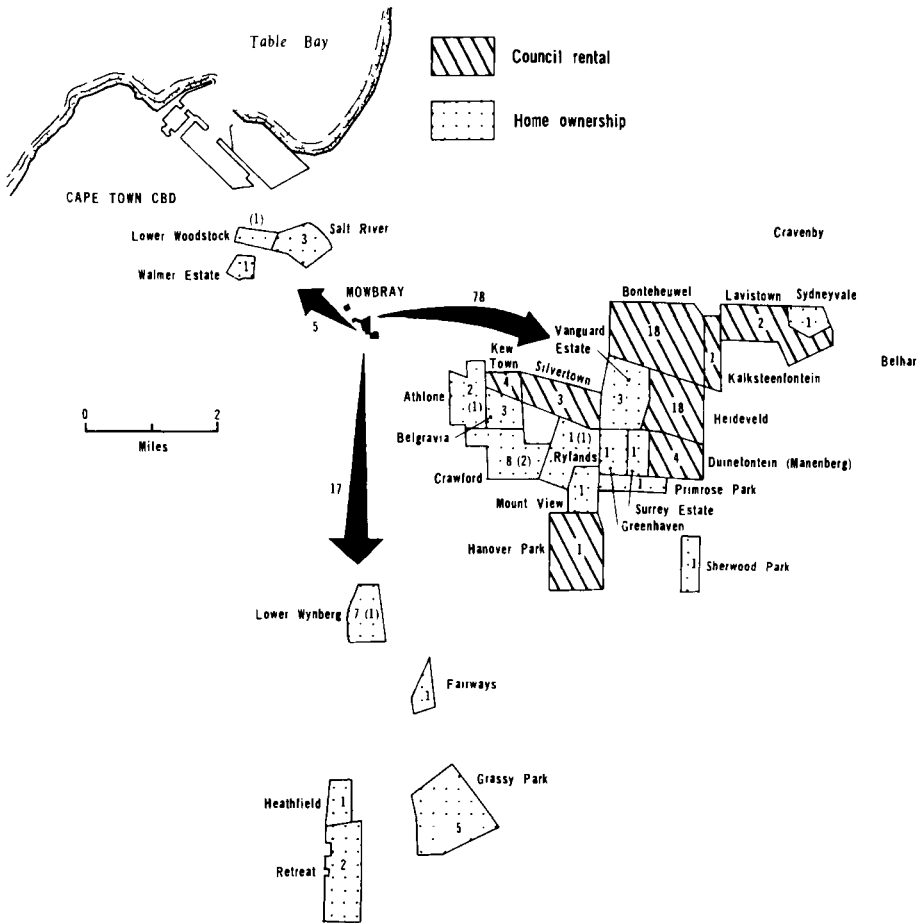
The self-consciousness of such a collectivity is still, however, only a partial, not an all-enfolding, community. This was especially so in Mowbray’s case because most of the wage earners did not work there but in the inner city industrial tract of Cape Town. For them Mowbray was only a part-time community. It is nevertheless much grieved for by its removees. Seventy percent of head-of-household interviewees, for example, were related to at least one other physically separate household within walking distance in the village; now they are scattered (figure 19-3). The average length of stay in the village for heads of household at their removal was thirty-three years, well over half an average Coloured lifespan. Table 19-3 shows the length of neighborhood residence and relates it to the presence of kin, the relationship that Young and Willmott considered crucial to community.

A final element in the sharpness of regret for Mowbray is that, among Coloureds and Malays, it was considered a higher status area. Its status is revealed by a battery of objective data covering income, occupational status, subsequent car and home ownership, and religious and linguistic (English or Afrikaans) affiliation. Also, as an enclave in comfortably off White Mowbray-Rosebank, Coloured residents perceived themselves as sharing in the area’s *respectability*—a word that cropped up in interviews continually:



“It was better living in Mowbray with the Europeans. The lower orders, the working-class Coloured people were better there. Here [Athlone] they still have one foot in the bush. It was nice up in Mowbray, the whole environment was better. The government treats all Coloured people alike, both the respectable and the working class; but I was brought up like the Whites. . . . My friends were White [and so were his first cousins], we didn't worry about colour.”

Figure 19-3. Destinations of 100 Mowbray Removees



NOTE Parenthetical figures, private rental.

(Of this latter person, a septuagenarian, another interviewee opined, “Oh, he’s been a play-white for years!”) But one of the younger interviewees, aged thirty now, saw preapartheid relations more clearly:

Table 19-3. Years of Residence and Kinship Links in Mowbray

Years of Residence	Separate Kin Households									Total Related Families	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		9+
0-4		2	1	1							7
5-9	2										0
10-19	10	1	2		2	1					18
20-29	5	7	3	1		2		1	1		41
30-39	8	8	6	2	1					3	51+
40-49	2	2	2	2	1	1		1		3	55+
50-59		3	1	3		2				1	33+
60-69			1	1						1	14+
70 or more	1					1				1	14+

"If they had really meant equality with us we wouldn't have been in our particular little streets. There were not too many places where White and Black households alternated along the street as neighbors. And although our relationships with the White people seemed quite friendly, we were hardly in and out of each other's arms all the time."

The act of removal, mostly from 1964 to 1966, was not pleasant: "I've never seen my husband cry, but I did when we got the letter saying we had to go to Bonteheuvel." A man now living in Heideveld commented: "We were the last people out, we *battled* to stay there." Bonteheuvel and Heideveld are large city council rental schemes, to which most Mowbray removees were assigned (see figure 19-3). Bonteheuvel especially has a negative image:

"But they were hard. I remember going down to the city to plead for more time and I was praying 'Please God give me some help' and you'd go in and they wouldn't even look up or say anything to you. And they came round to my house to tell us to get out and looked at it—I'd done it up nice and had a bathroom put on and things—and one said 'D'you know, I wouldn't mind living in one like this.' Then they said they'd got a place for me in Bonteheuvel, and now they'd got that, we'd *have* to go. But I was scared of that place, especially for my daughters who I'd brought up nice and who were then teenagers and I knew we were getting this place [home ownership plot] ready but not in time for them—so we would have to move twice, you see,

and all the business it is. So I sat down and wrote a really sad letter, telling them everything—oh, it was a shame—and you know it must've touched one of them because they came and said I could stay for a while.”

An old gentleman who served in both world wars lamented:

“You make a place your own, you make it comfortable for your old age, then they come and tell you you've got to go. And you can't start again, time's against you—you remember those people who committed suicide in Tramways Road, Sea Point? They gave me a month's grace to build by my son-in-law's land, but it wasn't finished and they were there on the last day of that month, saying there was a 240-rand fine if I wasn't out.”

A young home-owning teacher commented:

“It was *humiliation*. And the whole thing's a vicious circle, a trap within a trap: if you want to speak out, you have to leave South Africa; if you want to stay, you've got to keep quiet. . . . Yes, I'll help you, but this is a very negative study; it won't get us back.”

Some interviewees alleged that there were even more serious effects:

“A lot of people died after they left Mowbray. It was heart-breaking for the old people. My husband was poorly and he used to just sit and look out of the window. Then before he died he said, 'You must dress me and take me to Mowbray. My mum and dad are looking for me, and they can't find me in Mowbray.' ”

Those who were removed have experienced increased separation from all elements of their lifeworld. The data emphatically demonstrate that removees are on average further (in distance, time, and frequently costs) than they had been in Mowbray from workplaces, health services, places of worship, relations, “best friends,” preferred shopping centers, movies, sporting events, plumbers, and electricians. For 64 percent (of sixty-three measurable cases), for example, the average daily journey to

work and back is now one hour and fifty-six minutes; of this, one hour and seven minutes has been added due to group areas removals.

Intangible impositions must also be borne. The *most common* sentiment regarding their new residential area (52 percent of interviewees) was that it was “unsafe,” 21 percent specifically saying they were frightened to walk out at night. One interviewee, referring to a bicycle chain, said: “We always take necessary precautions when we’re out on the road in Lavis at night.” This township was described disparagingly in comparison to Mowbray:

“This is a terrible place. We’re very much living in fear in this place. Best of all we were very much safe in Mowbray . . . here there are too many shebeens [illegal liquor outlets]. And once my chickens has disappeared. Three weeks back my eighteen-year-old third eldest son got stabbed in the head by skollies [ruffians] outside the house, and his nose broken—with a nail, the doctor said. You don’t know who they are, and you’ll never find out. The police don’t take action. You’re scared to walk. The people are in fear. If you see a rape, you stay indoors. If you see them stealing washing, you stay quiet, otherwise they’ll come and smash your home up.”

The most common sentiment concerning Mowbray (48 percent) was that it was physically safe. The second most common (37 percent) was that it was psychologically safe; i.e., those who said “In Mowbray everyone knew everyone else, you could see strangers.” In this is implied what Marris terms *acknowledgment*, of which local surveillance is part:

“. . . when I was fifteen or sixteen if we did anything rude, offhanded in the street—like going to bars or smoking or taking a dame out—you’d get a pak [a clip around the ear] at night at home, they [parents] knew about it right away. . . . It was the old men who used to stand at the corners chatting or sit on the stoeps; they’d pretend to be reading the Koran or a comic or playing kerem [makeshift billiards played with checkers, not balls] or whatever, but out of the corner of their eye they were really watching you.”

Over one-third said “Mowbray was so convenient,” being much closer to the city; and the same proportion added that they wanted to return (but to a remembered, now nonexistent Mowbray):

“Of course we’d like to go back. Everybody knew you in Mowbray, what day you were born, exactly who you were married to, and where that one came from, and who you were related to.”

But as Fried found with the clearance of Boston’s West End, the trauma did not weigh on all removees alike.<sup>34</sup> By abolishing “non-White” Mowbray, the government has abolished also its confining White “walls,” which engendered an internal community sentiment that overcame the area’s internal heterogeneity. The two main elements of heterogeneity were Muslim Malay versus Christian Coloured, and the richer versus the poorer. Both these elements are expressed in today’s distinction between home owner (plus private renter in home ownership areas) and council renter. There is a clear tendency for Malays, as a group better off than non-Malay Coloureds, to be less likely to be council renters; almost 60 percent of Christian Coloureds interviewed were council renters, but only 40 percent of Muslims.

The home owner versus council renter distinction is readily translated into a spatial pattern, thereby emphasizing the social distance among groups. In Mowbray there were both renters and owners; but now, once again, one is one’s address. The interview data showed a systematic relation between housing tenure and a number of attitudinal responses:

- a. wishing/not wishing to return to Mowbray;
- b. preference for the present residence;
- c. a perception of present safety/lack of safety;
- d. satisfaction/dissatisfaction with neighbors;
- e. a guardedness in interaction with neighbors;
- f. disapproval of neighborhood children;
- g. a status of being “out in the bush”;
- h. the articulation of various specific complaints about their present house.

Home owners expressed both the superiority of their own areas and the stigma attached to the names of council townships:

“A very middle-class kind of Coloured people in Fairways. Here’s no skollies in Fairways [chuckles]. Load of snobs here, posh houses built . . . but I’m not too happy walking

here because of the Parkwood township toughs just over the way. All the beautiful areas we Coloured people have, have got the mixed classes, the rougher types, nearby: Fairways next to Parkwood, Pinarty next to Hanover Park, Belhar next to Lavistown.”

Eight ex-Mowbrayites lived as home owners in well-established Lower Wynberg. One was at pains to underline his social and spatial distance from

“... those townships like Bonteheuwel—I don’t know the names of those places. The most I ever see of them is when I’m driving out to the airport on the freeway, and that’s enough for me. Never been there, never will.”

Another ex-Mowbrayite mentioned two more recent townships: “I’m very lucky living in Wynberg; it’s not Heideveld or Hanover Park.” A third asserted respectability by telling me, “I don’t go out into those other quarters. It’s rough out there. . . . I *never* been to Athlone.”

As may be imagined, many consciously respectable ex-Mowbrayites living in the townships resent such spatial stereotyping and complained, of Bonteheuwel, “They didn’t sort us out. They put us next to District Six and Salt River people.” Or, of Silvertown, “Around here there’s not so good a class of people, from [inner city] Cape Town. They’re not like Mowbray people, who were very respectable.” Or, of Heideveld, “We’re respectable people—I’m from the imam’s [priest of the Mowbray mosque] family. Why can’t they keep us all together? I’m next to skollies from Maitland, alcoholics from Windermere” [formerly a notorious shantytown].

A conventionally respectable Muslim, a florist, sums up his feelings about Bonteheuwel, to which he was forcibly removed from Mowbray and from which he is endeavoring to escape into a home ownership area: “As far as I’m concerned Bonteheuwel’s just a roof over my head.” Mr. Gierdien goes on to try to rebut what certain other persons categorize him as being, “typed” as he is by the stigma of his address:

“No, when you say you’re from Bonteheuwel, some of them look at you down their noses, people from Fairways or Wynberg. I tell them there are decent people in Bonteheuwel, too. We’ve got social apartheid among ourselves, as well as the big thing.”

In South Africa, as elsewhere, the meaning of space is the language of society.

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34. Marc Fried, "Functions of the Working-Class Community in Modern Urban Society: Implications for Forced Relocation," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 33, no. 2 (1967): 90-102.



## CHAPTER 20

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# THE URBAN COMMUNITY MOVEMENT: MOVING TOWARD PUBLIC HOUSEHOLDS

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JAMES T. LEMON

One hot day last summer as I was cycling by a small parkette on my street in Toronto I noticed a young man throw an empty cigarette package toward a trash container. He missed, but then got off the bench, walked over, picked it up, and placed it in the bin. Now that is a sign of Toronto; the parkette is clean even though heavily used. But the question haunts us, How strong was his commitment (and our's) toward a pleasing public environment? I did not stop to ask him whether he really wanted to pick it up, but there are signs that Torontonians do these duties with reluctance. After all we are part of the Western world in which individualism has provided the operational ideology for several centuries, and public goods come in a very bad second to private concerns in our thinking, emotions, and financial commitment.

Yet the age of individualism wanes and we become more painfully aware that we must move toward more concerted participation through collective action. We move reluctantly because our common history places obstacles in our way. We are accustomed to images of freedom without limitations and to not being constrained by neighbors except to the most minimal degree. We go our own separate ways. Even so, although isolation and personal freedom characterize our past, it can no longer remain thus if we and our children are to develop in a healthy manner—indeed, many now say, if we are to survive as a species.

In this discussion I will consider several kinds of participation in the urban environment that can together be considered aspects of the urban community movement. Although these areas are not coordinated and the movement shows a great deal of fragmentation, we can see many connections and common strands among persons who are striving to work collectively in their local environments. We need to look at

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trade unions and worker participation because the workplace absorbs persons' energy for better or for worse. We need to consider the activities and the financing of various neighborhood services operating through public and volunteer social service agencies, cooperatives, and residents groups. To deal with both workplace and the neighborhood points up a fundamental problem in our urban society—the separation of work and home. We have to begin addressing that problem. I will use the “public household” concept to sharpen the trends that are under way, trends toward reciprocity in relations involving money, emotions, and the means of distribution and production, and a growing concern over the quality of products we use and are pressured to use. All these are influencing participation in work, home, and local community structures. But first we must consider the wider scale and the powers of separation that are so deeply embedded in our society and culture.

### **The Reality of Separation**

Nowadays, we hear much about limits. In ecological terms the Club of Rome's *The Limits to Growth* several years ago burst on the scene, summing up a strong feeling that the planet's resources are threatened by overpopulation.<sup>1</sup> The widespread appeal of this position, stressing survival as it does, struck a responsive chord in the affluent West. Critics of the survival view argue that not third world overpopulation but our profligate waste of resources and pollution are the problems, our preoccupation with excessive consumption in both material and nonmaterial terms. Barry Commoner argues persuasively that Western society, notably North America, will run out of capital long before it runs out of resources.<sup>2</sup> He notes that business analysts predict a need for \$1.9 trillion in the economy over the next decade as compared to \$670.0 billion over the past ten years. This is the result of working against nature; specifically, he says, against the second law of thermodynamics. Every new unit produced demands more inanimate energy than the previous one. In fact, American agriculture is close to a situation where more units of energy are put in than are harvested. The pursuit of capital becomes more frantic through more and more energy-consuming inanimate technologies, while individual physical labor is increasingly rejected.

Some are arguing further that the vast productivity of the West is itself increasingly less attractive. We now hear of limits to satisfaction, social limits to economic growth, and the joyless economy, as we all face within us a growing indifference to qualities of needs or wants.<sup>3</sup> Fred

Hirsch uses the paradox of affluence to show that satisfaction is diminishing, and what is becoming scarce is enjoyment of "positional" wealth and so of status.<sup>4</sup> Although he recognizes that many in the West are still materially deprived, the majority of Westerners have access to a wide range of consumer goods. Thus those who pursue status through material goods find the field crowded and so are trapped into an unwanted egalitarianism. There are social limits on growth. Tibor Scitovsky adds the obvious: that all of this results in a monotony of products produced by boring jobs.<sup>5</sup>

But individuals still pursue satisfaction. If the direction of pursuit is wrong and possibly even destructive, how then can individuals seek growth? Hirsch points in the right direction by asserting that "collective means may be necessary to implement individual ends."<sup>6</sup> But as he says, in this Western world we are "reluctant collectivists," and our reluctance gets in the way of action. Why are we reluctant to the point of being so incapacitated?

Ideology and institutional structures are central for an understanding of our near impotence. What we have witnessed is a society fostering the separation of thought from emotion and of participation from place and community. The key phrase has been "freedom from restraint." But freedom focused attention outside the self; the individual succeeded by controlling and even dominating both the environment and other persons. In a sense, the least satisfied person had the best chance of succeeding because his gaze was ever outward, never within or on communitarian needs for himself or others.<sup>7</sup> Although this is a reality in any society, the intensity of this liberal feeling reached its apogee in America. The ethic of work became compulsive. The very success in drawing largesse from an abundance of resources converted the urge into the consumer maelstrom of the past few decades. But this ring of freedom is hollow, even sour, as in the song from the movie *Nashville*, "I Ain't Free But It Don't Worry Me."

In the concrete dimensions of everyday living, the ideology of freedom has to be seen through institutional structures. For geographers, an institutional focus on place and our separation from place is appropriate. Yet, lest we become trapped in the esthetics of place, we must provide a social content and not only a visible one.<sup>8</sup> *Placelessness*, a sense of separateness from the landscape, implies a separation from community. One could go further to say that the current concern over landscape esthetics itself represents a separation from community, a romantic reaction to big-city life. Place cannot be conceived without community. But turning it around, many who talk of community without an awareness of place and the landscape of place are equally vulnerable because community can exist only when grounded in place. Geographers have a role in bringing the two together to lead toward creative understand-

ing and action. To put this in a more particular way, planning of the physical environment means planning communities; and this must be explicit rather than implicit.

We could easily argue that the large-scale corporate ordering of society and landscape through technology and the mass media has been the major force weakening our sense of place and our awareness of communities. Indeed, massive technological change has made us uneasy and is forcing us to raise questions. Yet the roots of our difficulty are deeply embedded. Based on an emerging individualism in western Europe, the early settlers of North America were invited, as it were, by an open environment toward the development of individual farmsteads and the privatization of households despite the persistence of certain community structures such as churches and local government. Before the conquest in New France seigneurial powers could not constrain farmers and fur traders.<sup>9</sup> From the outset New England Puritans too were not able to maintain tight settlements.<sup>10</sup> In Pennsylvania the Quakers and Mennonites, usually recognized as strong communitarians, immediately moved to private property and scattered farmsteads separating neighbors from easy daily contact. Extremely low taxes for collective public goods added greatly to privatization.<sup>11</sup> Resistance to taxes, one force leading to independence, was a clear signal that public money was something alien, fitting the Jeffersonian view that the least government is the best government, whether local or state. Similarly, colonial clergymen complained of their tenuous status, and national independence wiped out the vestiges of church establishment. Add to this the expectation of success through mobility and through business, and the result is a society with little commitment to place and community.

Even so, a residual concern for place and community persisted over these centuries. Despite a preoccupation with individual salvation, churches provided a means for participation, as did voluntary associations. In a muted fashion Chicago sociologists of the 1920s sought community in a city so addicted to competition rather than cooperation that Kipling had earlier decided that it was "inhabited by savages."<sup>12</sup> In geography the idea of place remained, though subdued, in works such as Richard Hartshorne's; in fact, despite his concern for region, Hartshorne's areal differentiation can be seen as a harbinger of the statistical definition of areas that entered geography with spatial analysis.<sup>13</sup>

The massive postwar expansion of the economy and increased movement by car and plane encouraged North Americans to drop place and community from their vocabularies. Urbanists touted Los Angeles as the model for the nonplace urban realm: diffuse and unfocused.<sup>14</sup> Work and home came to be even more widely separated in space. Even though commuting times may not have increased, the psychological reality of each day passing thousands of other anonymous drivers has

served to detach commuters from places and so from communities. The alienating quality of most work had its unconscious effects at home. Now even those jobs are insecure, as the economy is even more under the control of multinationals with no commitment to place, region, or even nations. The moral glue of Protestantism—the advocacy of trust and honesty—needed to secure the contracts of capitalism is dissolving as the commercialization of society goes well beyond its basis of early agrarian capitalism.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps Peter Marin may be correct in his reflection on community that “the real horror of our present condition . . . is the loss of the ability to remember what is missing.”<sup>16</sup>

We are witnessing the massive reality of an individualistic culture: our ideology, our institutions are geared to a discipline of the solutions of problems by individuals. We deeply resist the development of a public discipline to encourage the expansion of public goods. How then can we talk of strengthening participation in the face of trends running so counter to public life?

### **Participation in the Workplace**

To answer this question let us investigate some actual situations in the workplace and neighborhood. To speak of these concrete cases, a “public household” concept is a useful starting point.<sup>17</sup> Historically the family—notably in agricultural societies including those of early capitalist times—had a strong, direct stake in economic matters; that is, in the production as well as the distribution of goods and services. In a healthy society reciprocal relations within families are strong and not replaced by the explicit contractual relations found in the impersonal market place. Trust, mutual support, and participation exist as decisions are made on a consensus basis. These characteristics are less common today as recognition finally dawned on us that the economic functions of the family have long since been eroded through the structure of work and its separation from home. Contract is replacing consensus in family life.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the traditional family is rejected by many today. Yet possibly it is this very erosion of the family that leads us to extend the household concept to the community. Mutual support of single mothers with children, of isolated men, and certainly of less-confident nuclear families is essential; that is, we must go beyond voluntarism and accept a commitment to deliberate group action. The goal is to provide “as many positions of prestige . . . as there are persons capable of filling them.”<sup>19</sup>

Participation and mutual support occur in diverse spheres, first of all in the workplace, where limits are placed on everyone. An obvious area

to consider is the expansion of trade unionism into professional and white-color sectors of the economy. In the past few years the closed shop industrial model has been adopted by teaching federations, typists, and now perhaps even bank clerks. Reluctant collectivists are collectivizing. Underlying this process is an increasing awareness that society's total resources are limited, so that competition for position or wealth is best pursued through group, rather than individual, means. Much of the organizing is defensive, based on a fear of losing status rather than gaining it. In the case of teachers, dropping enrollments because of a rapidly falling birth rate adds an existential rationale, for fewer teachers will be required. The motivation for unionization is therefore very plainly individualistic. It is a rational calculus in that the closed shop is the way to insure that one's own status is protected.<sup>20</sup> A serious result of this pressure is that in our individualized society the nonunionized, whether rich or poor, resent this mode of operation.

Is there a way for unions to counter widespread opposition and also to develop deeper participation? Could widening management through more collective control help on both counts? In the industrial sector we hear a good deal about worker participation in management, particularly in Europe. For some time West German workers have been on boards of directors: at Volvo in Sweden the work structure has been modified by developing semi-independent work teams; and in Yugoslavia more thoroughgoing worker control through works' councils has been attempted for a generation.<sup>21</sup> In Britain there have been a number of experiments and public demands for greater participation, as expressed in the Bullock Report.<sup>22</sup> Even in North America a number of management-sponsored schemes going beyond profit sharing to shop floor democracy have been instituted.<sup>23</sup>

Serious questions are being raised about these trends. If most attempts have been management inspired, why have they moved from the traditional hierarchical system? Jobs in many plants are tedious, so productivity in terms of profit is less than desirable, which at bottom is the chief concern. Neither profit sharing nor high wages in industrial plants have been enough to stem the rising tide of absenteeism, slow downs, and militancy—the results of jobs so fragmented, so unskilled, and so undemanding of creative energy.<sup>24</sup> The West German experience with its low militancy levels is viewed with envy by industrialists and politicians in Western countries. To concede a little and at the same time increase efficiency (also resulting in fewer workers) may well improve profits.<sup>25</sup>

Some union critics are justifiably worried that management-inspired cooperation can reduce rather than enhance worker power. They fear cooption now as a few saw the danger in the previous generations'

solution through consumer goods. They fear greater unemployment, now rising even in West Germany. They also worry that no greater equity in incomes will result.<sup>26</sup> Others are more optimistic; the industrialists' strongly negative reaction to the far-reaching proposals of the Bullock Report suggests that real gains might well be made on behalf of labor.<sup>27</sup>

Yet, if we are to overcome the separations running deeply through our Western society, more thoroughgoing changes in technology will also be needed. E. F. Schumacher through his *Small Is Beautiful* advocates intermediate technologies so that physical labor input is much greater than in Western countries at present.<sup>28</sup> Instead of £1,000 technologies, so to speak, in the West and £1 technologies in the third world, we should seek something in the order of £100 technologies throughout the world. This former large-scale corporate manager further argues that this would not only decrease unemployment but allow for participation in management. As recognized by many persons, this looks like a sensible direction: it would mean bringing industry to a regional or even local scale, possibly reducing the size of the overgrown metropolis.

But problems persist. Not only has participation been quite limited with the operation remaining controlled by a paternalistic management at Schumacher's own firm of Scott Bader (according to one thoughtful analysis<sup>29</sup>), but also he has overlooked *the materials produced*. Scott Bader produces "polyester resins and . . . alkyds, polymers and plasticisers."<sup>30</sup> Plastics are made from petroleum and petroleum is controlled by multinationals. Further, one of Commoner's key arguments is that manufacturers of plastics have a way of spinning off new products, replacing simpler goods, such as wood and leather, processed more directly and intensively by human hands. A compulsion exists to expand continually the range of plastic goods because residual materials are available and because in the capitalist system growth is essential. Although ostensibly cheaper, plastics consume more inanimate energy in their manufacture, and so in the long run the costs will become enormous and inflationary.<sup>31</sup> One suspects that Schumacher's company may have been successful less because of participation than because it has ridden the growth wave with plastics.

The problem of products is a crucial one. Plastics mean more technology, not less. Plastics foster a continuing vulnerability of workers to industrial diseases, increased pollution, and toxic substances in the public's air and ground. Plastics promote a "throw away," not a conserver, society. Plastics demand not craft workmanship but fragmented jobs with people out of touch with the material. I will return to this question in conclusion, though admittedly no easy answer exists at the scale at which our society operates. But now let us turn to the neighborhood.

## Obstacles to Neighborhood Participation

The neighborhood movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s has apparently lapsed into anonymity. In Toronto at least the heady days of stopping expressways and highrise buildings in the Annex and of Riverdale residents being politicized by Alinsky-trained organizers have been followed by bewilderment and lassitude.<sup>32</sup> Citizen participation seems remote from questions of growing unemployment. What of a lasting nature has been secured by community participation?

Much is "yeasting," as someone said recently; and much is actually happening, though some government policies and actions are disquieting. John P. Robarts' recently published *Report of the Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto* is a good point from which to start, since it reflects views of the provincial government.<sup>33</sup> The report explicitly recognizes the value of citizen participation and even of the need to develop local responsibility for neighborhood human services.<sup>34</sup> These services are likely to be more sensitive to needs and less formalized, like those "once provided by the extended family and neighbors." They would be cheaper than higher level bureaucracies and would be based in local centers to focus a variety of programs. Robarts backed off from recommending such formal action, however, by arguing that the overall system is so fragmented that higher scale rationalization is needed first. He notes that where there are multiservice centers they still need coordinating organizations. In the future, he concludes, perhaps these centers could be promoted further.

But that is projected into an uncertain future. His rejection of any formal institutionalization of citizen participation, as has been achieved with the resident advisory councils in Winnipeg and community resource boards in Vancouver, suggests that a deep reserve remains concerning local power, not only municipally but also at higher governmental levels.<sup>35</sup> In Toronto, it seems, we must not move too quickly. Why is Robarts so reluctant? Why has the Social Credit government in British Columbia been so anxious to dismantle the community resource boards set up by the previous New Democratic government? We can suggest four reasons: the tradition of electoral politics, the threat to politicians of the legitimization of local power, the problem of cost, and the necessity of maintaining the illusion of free choice through voluntarism.

1. *Electoral democracy* is regarded as the key means of participation, and this position receives considerable public support. Although the reform movement of the turn of the century moved vigorously to remove power from local politicians to businessmen-controlled, special purpose boards and even city-manager style government, once the



higher levels of government assumed control over local spending the trend has been toward giving local politicians more power. At one time the Ontario Municipal Board was a major means of controlling erratic actions by municipal governments, but now it may be restricted if the Robarts recommendations are followed.<sup>36</sup>

This raises a basic reason for government reluctance in promoting community participation. In market capitalism where income distribution is invariably skewed, it is held that fiscal control should be outside politics.<sup>37</sup> In the face of attempts to equalize incomes, the franchise was extended, and today even tenants have the municipal vote. But the drive for egalitarian participation in the form of self-help groups such as we are arguing for comes too close to controlling some of the economic levers; especially now, as human services, welfare, and education are major sectors in the economy. These areas, it is argued, must remain in the hands of elected politicians (and their bureaucracies). Bourgeois liberty should be restricted to the franchise or possibly slightly more widely through party participation. The perpetuation of this system is still strong despite low voter turnouts.

2. Therefore, *legitimatization of local participation is a threat* to politicians at all levels.<sup>38</sup> The failure of grass-roots-based municipal parties to emerge as a critical vehicle for participation shows that politicians have been successful in resisting concerted popular participation.<sup>39</sup> The drive toward more tightly integrated community work could very well bring out more internal conflict and so would more profoundly disturb politicians to the extent that legitimacy would be removed from them. At root, massive individualism of course hinders such communal local action.

3. Thirdly, *the control of economic resources* is crucial. Ultimately, for healthy communities to develop, public money must be available for public goods, these perceived as of local concern. Yet government commitment in this area has been inconsistent and intermittent over the past decade. Even so there are many people who have been trained or partially trained through community action programs and who have a strong commitment to this work. This is clearly indicated by the number of applicants for the few positions available. Recently in Toronto the board of education (of which I am a member) set up a school-community relations program arising from its multiculturalism report, for which workers would be hired. Over 500 applied; indeed, for one additional position, 200 applications were received. These applicants may be unemployed or underemployed, yet they want to do this kind of work rather than bureaucratic office work either in large corporations or large government. They feel the community is where they wish to put their energies.

Community work as a sector of social service programs has been the

vulnerable edge of governments in trouble over excessive debts.<sup>40</sup> They could raise taxes on the affluent and corporations but are fearful of public reaction, a public informed by the media with the rhetoric of free enterprise and the need for investment capital. They are doing their utmost to bolster a system that becomes increasingly unmanageable. Businessmen, of course, are inconsistent on government intervention. Welfare mothers, the unemployed, and community workers are said to be "free loading"; business, especially large corporations that receive massive grants from government both directly and indirectly through tax concessions, are not. The old adage more than ever holds up in these days of cutbacks: free enterprise is for the poor; socialism, for the rich.

A clear recent example of government ambivalence over community issues is a recent position taken by Metro Toronto Council. To show its concern about high youth unemployment it developed a scheme to hire ninety young persons on welfare to help elderly persons in their homes. Funds would be partly provincial and partly local. The jobs provide temporary services because otherwise the elderly would become "too dependent," and so the duration of the program was only thirty weeks. Even to this modest scheme reactions were: (1) property taxpayers should not have to support the program (a complaint from the one millionaire mayor in Metro) and (2) public volunteer agencies, notably the United Community Fund, opposed the idea in principle but agreed to support the scheme because welfare costs would possibly be cut lower through modest public expenditure.<sup>41</sup> Not only does confusion abound but politicians and the holders of charity power show no understanding of asserting community and bringing persons together.

4. The final argument used against local participation is *the ideology of free choice, advocating voluntarism for public involvement*. Voluntarism does not necessarily mean a profound commitment nor even a recognition of being a member of society. Individualism leads to a divided life in which volunteer work usually is a secondary external matter. Indeed, at worst the supporters of voluntarism continue to resemble, if more subtly, those charity matrons of Victorian times who patched up the broken bodies and mollified the depressed spirits of the poor, brutalized by the system invented and perpetuated by their husbands, who were intent on profits and economic growth.<sup>42</sup> Even if this harsh view is reversed so that we admit that historically charity led to the social welfare system, the consequences are not dissimilar. Paternalism (and maternalism) does not easily lead to the promotion of self-help organizations. The "public household" view demands more than free choice voluntarism.

Today can we see more than voluntarism? I believe so. Collective neighborhood action has not left the minds of some politicians and civic officials. In Toronto the proposals of the Neighborhood Services Work-

Group for multiservice neighborhood centers are under serious discussion.<sup>43</sup> These proposals go beyond Boston's mini-city hall concept, the decentralization of some municipal functions into neighborhoods to the organizing of planning and social services by neighborhoods. To a degree this has already happened in physical planning, though because they have been allowed only an advisory role, the number of involved citizens has been few.<sup>44</sup> With the completion of detailed neighborhood plans this year, the council may decide to dismiss many local planners, many of whom are sympathetic to citizen input, unless the promise of planning as an ongoing process linked to social services can be pursued. Fortunately, Toronto's school board has shown a strong interest in using schools as multiservice centers, and cooperation with the city is being pressed by the board.<sup>45</sup> The fear of losing a small neighborhood school through dropping enrollment may lead residents to act cooperatively in seeking greater community use in the human service field. Already a few schools have day care facilities, and evening use by a wide variety of community groups is extensive and almost to capacity.

A major obstacle is the problem of jurisdiction over costs: The school board is under attack for excessive spending and is reluctant financially to support so-called noneducational functions, at least until the province and Metro Toronto governments recognize day care as educational. Many programs in the social service field continue to be blocked by the equivocation of the federal and provincial governments.

### **Neighborhood Participation in Toronto**

Despite the financial stringency in government, some groups in the urban community movement are showing great determination to maintain momentum, even if they spend an inordinate amount of time on raising funds from municipal, provincial, and federal governments and also from quasi-public bodies such as the United Community Fund and foundations. In Toronto, particularly in the central city, a wide range of nonprofit groups drawing on public funds in part, are operating out of store fronts, churches (themselves trying to make ends meet, while helping out community and theater groups), legal aid clinics, community recreation centers, and secretariats supporting a variety of groups, such as information centers and environmental advocacy, ethnic, and senior citizen programs. The city recently received sixty applications to fund groups of these types, and this figure by no means exhausts the number. Metro Toronto Council received ninety-five applications, granting \$766,000 in the social service area.

To be more specific, let us consider two rather typical groups in my

own neighborhood. The first, the Bloor-Bathurst Information Center, has been operating since 1971.<sup>46</sup> Its chief purpose is to provide guidance to individual low-income and immigrant families (of which Toronto has many), and it has done relatively little group-oriented work. It helps individuals find their way through the maze of employment and social welfare agencies, gives legal aid, lists housing possibilities, and provides translation of Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, and Greek. It draws its clients from an area about two miles in diameter around the Bloor-Bathurst subway station, one of the busiest in the city. Its board is composed of users and middle-class supporters from the downtown area. Its 1977 budget for five paid staff is \$76,000, of which 25 percent is federal; nearly 40 percent, provincial; 5 percent, city; and 28 percent, from the United Community Fund. Even though staff members spend a great deal of time seeking funds, the center is officially and locally regarded as a useful and even crucial resource to help immigrants, in particular. Even if it rarely acts in a collective way, the center indirectly and informally helps to build and extend networks among persons in the city and to demystify bureaucratic rules. The staff members themselves have a strong cooperative sense of society.

The second group, the Toronto Child-Parent Development Center, is located half a block away and represents a bold new initiative of working with parents of preschool children.<sup>47</sup> The leadership for this group comes from persons with training in early childhood education, though its board is community and user based. Under a Local Initiatives grant, the group originally began in 1973 as a toy-lending library and play center. In 1975 it moved to the store front location, where there is a playroom visible from the street, a kitchen, and a backroom for special activities such as crafts. Parents drop in for short periods of time and the center is seen as a supplement but not a substitute to day care facilities, some of which are close by. The major goal is to give status and support to parents, notably lower income single mothers. It goes further to support self-help groups, such as Aid for New Mothers and Le Leche League, and works with Childrens Aid, the City Health Department, and adjacent schools. Its budget runs to nearly \$60,000, funded from a variety of sources like the information center, though it received considerably less from the province, as yet indecisive of its policy for children's programs.<sup>48</sup> At root, this group among others is extending public concern so as to draw the family into the public household.

These kinds of services are local but cannot go very far in generating full participation for many residents. Yet the intent is to move well beyond traditional public and private social agencies, and in this endeavor the service centers are more vulnerable in being dependent on unpredictable government funds. They are associated more closely

with other nearby neighborhood groups partly through a coordinating body called Annex Agencies. One obvious significant connection is the residents' association, based clearly on the principle of participation. For a while in the late 1960s and early 1970s resident groups showed much fire and engaged the energies of many persons in what seemed then the redirecting of society.<sup>49</sup> The quality of the environment was undoubtedly a major motivational force in their activity.

Yet the bloom has faded. The institutionalization of part of the platform by a more sympathetic council, especially over questions of undesirable local developments, has sapped the strength of involvement; success, if partial, has spelled failure for extensive participation. Possibly the development of multiservice centers and recreational facilities in connection with local schools may generate greater interest. Yet resident associations have pressed for little beyond the protection of private property and a serene environment, just as tenants' groups have acted collectively only to protect their individual rights when facing difficult landlords. Many residents' groups today accept tenant members where they were earlier restricted to property owners. This probably signifies a willingness to see tenants as legitimate rate payers, following the electoral system; and it also intimates that user rights to property rather than exchange or speculative values are uppermost in residents' minds. Perhaps this may open the way to more public ownership of land, a necessary precondition for effective participation.<sup>50</sup> In my very socially mixed neighborhood, the change has brought a deepening concern over the conversion of apartments to tiny expensive bachelorettes; yet overall the integration of tenants into resident groups has not contributed to substantial action. Rent control legislation has quieted the tenants.

Even more fundamentally, residents' groups rarely draw up budgets. Money is raised for ill-defined operating expenses with a reserve fund for legal defense as needed. This failure to develop budgets implies that community associations cannot penetrate deeply into economic realities. Neighborhood life then is simply a slight and generally low-key aspect of various networks of participation, intimating that communities are of "limited liability."<sup>51</sup> In some lower income areas, on the other hand, money from governments has been crucial. When funding is terminated, as in the case of Alinsky-inspired organizing, then everything collapses.<sup>52</sup> Yet the supporters of the Riverdale area will argue that the failure of government support is a sign of success because politicians were threatened. Obviously, money can create varied dilemmas. The best alternative is to generate money from the community itself through a deeper commitment from residents. But this has scarcely occurred, for commitment is contingent and inconsistent.

Some critics of community development argue that the organizers

fail to appeal to self-interest among lower income residents and allude only to a vague collectivism.<sup>53</sup> In one sense the critics are right: organizing does not penetrate very deeply. Yet within the present context an appeal to collective self-interest cannot be very persuasive because the neighborhood group's chief role is to protect the home. In working-class as in upper income areas, the expectation is that the creative activity should go on in the home or in leisure-oriented education and the like. Because zoning has homogenized residential districts, rare is the neighborhood that generates an esprit in street life—with shopkeepers and residents mingling—as described by Jane Jacobs.<sup>54</sup> But would collective self-interest be effective? It would eventually be self-defeating and divisive, appealing primarily to the individual. As the matter stands, a vague collectivism implied in the public good of neighborhood externalities is combined with individual self-interest and appealed to in a rather circumscribed way. But in my own neighborhood at least the low-key resident group plays an important role.<sup>55</sup>

Also peripheral yet potentially important are parent-teacher and home and school associations, though again involvement does not run very deeply.<sup>56</sup> Parents are generally peripheral to school activities and reluctant to understand and participate in setting curricula for fear of placing their children in a difficult situation with principals and teachers. Given our society's goals the individual advancement of children is uppermost in parents' minds, so they shrug off their corporate responsibilities by citing the professional rights of teachers and bureaucrats as "experts," even if they complain of high taxes and of incompetent teachers.

Yet in small ways this involvement is expanding. Parents are voting members of elementary school staffing committees that allocate the number of teachers into various graded and special programs. More significantly, trustees and parents are now members of principal selection committees, so citizens can have an influence on the direction a school may take through the selection of its executive officer. This is now being extended to secondary schools, including in some instances the option of student participation. Whether this innovation will be effective is uncertain, given the uneven experience of student participation in universities.<sup>57</sup> Parental participation in elementary schools, however, is improving and broadening even in neighborhoods without a tradition of participation. A few alternative schools with strong parental control, furthermore, are now part of the public system.

A deeper appreciation of economic realities and of positive and direct collective action is found in the urban cooperatives involved in housing and food. In Toronto several housing cooperatives have been developed in recent years by varied groups such as the city council, the Labour Council, even some neighborhood resident associations, and

some specially formed groups.<sup>58</sup> Once they are running, the cooperators have to generate a high degree of participation for success and that means openness about money and management. Assuming a continuing commitment from the city council, the new "co-ops" are in a position to gain strength.

But the problems of the co-ops should not be minimized. First, in a society with a strong goal of home ownership, it will take time to extend the attraction of co-ops; tenants by and large are unwilling to commit themselves to them despite the advantages. Second, some housing cooperatives in Toronto and elsewhere have ended up with paid professional staffs running the development. One doubts whether participation can be enhanced any more in these instances than in the case of condominiums, which are largely externally managed and in which involvement is at the minimal level of a resident association. The third large problem is that building or renovating requires outside capital, so once again there is a dependence on government rather than self-help. The pursuit of federal funding through the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation is an exhausting process. The obvious alternative of funding through credit unions is only now being explored seriously by some of the large cooperative structures, though it would seem that the conservatism of credit unions and their orientation toward consumer credit place a serious obstacle in the way of collective action. Potentially, great power is available through credit unions with their rapidly increasing level of deposits.<sup>59</sup> In Saskatchewan and Quebec with their strong tradition of cooperatives nearly half of the population are members of credit unions.<sup>60</sup> One hopes that this great gathering of money is not simply a consequence of better rates of borrowing but of a rather covert wish to associate with cooperative action. If so, credit unions are latent sources of enormous strength for housing and other cooperatives and hopefully for enhanced participation. The great ideological advantage of the credit union-cooperative movement is that people do not see it as socialism and government bureaucracy, yet obviously it is not capitalism, either.

Food cooperatives are springing up in many places, though they have not developed on a large scale as in Britain or other parts of North America.<sup>61</sup> The motivations for these cooperatives are partially collective and partially individual: collective because many are interested in participating in new forms of shopping other than in supermarkets, individual because many feel they have more control over the quality of food and prices. Although food co-ops demand a lower degree of emotional commitment than do living arrangements, they can provide a means of training in cooperative action that few persons have learned in school, home, or elsewhere. But even though they are expanding they appeal primarily to professional/academic persons, those with the

greatest flexibility in daily living. Whether they can generate deeper commitments of time, money, or energy toward other cooperative structures is not yet clear.

### **Toward Urban Community**

If participation is to mature, all these strands need to be gathered into what one might call "urban community corporations" or "community development corporations" in which residents offer a wide variety of services to one another.<sup>62</sup> Apart from coordinating problems that may not be insurmountable, there remain the basic difficulties of the separation of production from distribution from consumption, the scale of production, the problem of funding, the issue of ideology, and the question of commitment. As Hirsch warns: "We know what needs to be done and cannot or dare not do it."<sup>63</sup>

There is only one organization of which I am aware that has tried to overcome some of these fundamental obstacles. In the Annex, Therapeutics includes a center for therapy and play; and fifty miles away, it operates a large farm producing goods and offering therapy and play, so that production is wedded to distribution.<sup>64</sup> Funding is entirely internal and based on the ability to pay. Persons pay not only for therapy but for the opportunity to do physical work. Paradoxically, the ideology of individualism is attacked through individual therapy by building up individual enjoyment of living, implying collective action. Freedom for the individual results in openness to other persons, not in the American superego dream of conquering others and the environment. As a result, work of this kind, even if on a small scale, becomes a more penetrating experience.

The basis of this group of several hundred in varying degrees of involvement is that the core personnel have developed a discipline built on the therapeutic language of Freud, Reich, and others. In a sense, too, the concerns of cooperators stretching back to Robert Owen are expressed through working together, though this is not fully expressed organizationally. Social justice is reaffirmed by strengthening individual worth and collective discipline, the mutual value of city and country is recaptured to a degree, and creative productivity is rediscovered. Possibly, there may be directives here for the eventual development of urban community corporations that may have a significant humanistic impact on society.

In such an environment a neighborhood might have its land in the country, its workshops both there and in town, its supporting credit



unions for finance, its cooperative shops and housing, and its truly neighborhood schools. Eventually, even government might actually become an emotionally legitimate part of the accepted social fabric. Needless to say, speculative rights in land will have disappeared. The promise of mutual aid and trust so long suppressed in the West or only faintly maintained by a variety of religious groups, local government, some new town experiments, and the sheer need for a modicum of collective living would be authentically fulfilled.

## Notes

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2. Barry Commoner, *The Poverty of Power: Energy and the Economic Crisis* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), pp. 212; 228.
3. William Leiss, *The Limits to Satisfaction: An Essay on the Problem of Needs and Commodities* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 88.
4. Fred Hirsch, *The Social Limits to Growth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), especially ch. 3.
5. Tibor Scitovsky, *The Joyless Economy: An Inquiry into Human Satisfaction and Consumer Dissatisfaction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 248; 283.
6. Hirsch, *Social Limits to Growth*, p. 179.
7. Philip Slater, *The Pursuit of Loneliness: American Culture at the Breaking Point* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970).
8. Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), pp. 109–114; James T. Lemon, "The Weakness of Place and Community in Early Pennsylvania," James R. Gibson, ed., *European Settlement in North America: Essays on Geographical Change in Honour and Memory of Andrew Hill Clark* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978).
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10. Jack C. Greene, "Essay Review: Autonomy and Stability: New England and the British Colonial Experience in Early Modern America," *Journal of Social History* 7 (1974): 171–94, provides a useful summary. See also David H. Flaherty, *Privacy in Colonial New England* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1972), pp. 25–33.
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14. Melvin M. Webber, "The Urban Place and Nonplace Urban Realm," in Melvin M. Webber et al., *Explorations into Urban Structure* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), pp. 79–153.
15. Hirsch, *Social Limits to Growth*, sec. 2.
16. Peter Marin, "The New Narcissism," *Harper's* 251 (October 1975): 48.

17. Noted also by John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Age of Uncertainty: A History of Economic Ideas and Their Consequences* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), p. 321.
18. Hirsch, *Social Limits to Growth*, p. 101; concerning a marriage contract, see "To Love, Honor and . . . Share," in *Ms.* 2, no. 6 (June 1973): 62-64; 102-3.
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20. Hirsch, *Social Limits to Growth*, p. 144, noting the work of Mancur Olson.
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24. Cy Gonick, "Discovering Industrial Democracy," *Canadian Dimension* 12, no. 3 (July 1977): 25-30.
25. Idem, "The West German Model," in *ibid.*, pp. 34-38.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
27. Calvert, "The Bullock Report," p. 42.
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29. Patemen, *Participation and Democratic Theory*, pp. 82-83.
30. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful*, p. 275.
31. Commoner, *Poverty of Power*, p. 208.
32. James T. Lemon, "Toronto: Is It a Model for Urban Life and Citizen Participation?" in David Ley, ed., *Community Participation and the Spatial Order of the City* (Vancouver: Tantalus, 1974), pp. 41-58, was a trifle too cheerful about the power of neighborhood groups; also, Donald Keating, *The Power to Make It Happen* (Toronto: Green Tree, 1975).
33. John P. Robarts, *Report of the Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto*, 2 vols. (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1977).
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 118-20; 303-6.
35. These and other cases are summarized in Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, *In Search of a Framework: A Review of Trends in the Financing and Delivery of Community Services* (Report prepared for the City of Toronto Neighborhood Services Work Group, Toronto, 1976), pp. 63-95; see also Stanley M. Makuch, *A Study of Statutory Powers to Provide Community Services*, Center for Urban and Community Studies Research Paper no. 81 (Toronto, 1976).
36. Robarts, *Metropolitan Toronto*, vol. 2, pp. 203; 215-19; Gerald M. Adler, *Land Planning by Administrative Organization: The Policies of the Ontario Municipal Board* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971). On the history of reform, see *Urban History Review*, no. 2-76 (1976). For the United States, see Sam B. Hays, "The Changing Political Structure of the City in Industrial America," *Journal of Urban History* 1 (1974): 6-38.
37. Hirsch, *Social Limits to Growth*, p. 165.
38. Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), pp. 36-37.
39. Again somewhat optimistically I argued for major party local involvement in James T. Lemon, "Environment, Residents' Groups and Political Parties," *Alternatives* 5 (1976): 31-34. The Movement for Municipal Reform here has been no more successful than major parties have been; Toronto is weaker than Montreal and Vancouver in generating new parties: Donald J. H. Higgins, *Urban Canada: Its Government and Politics* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977), ch. 7.
40. W. Darcy McKeough, *Ontario Budget 1977* (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1977), p. 3, "Balanced Budget"; p. 13, "Capital Construction for Energy Accelerated."
41. *Globe and Mail*, 27 July 1977.
42. Kate Millet, "The Debate Around Women: Ruskin and Mill," in Martha Vicinus, ed., *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,

- 1972), p. 136; Kathleen Woodroffe, *From Charity to Social Work in England and the United States* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 21–22.
43. See note 35 and Colin Vaughan et al., *The Report of Neighborhood Services Work Group* (Toronto: City of Toronto, 1976).
44. John R. Hitchcock, ed., *Case Studies of Neighborhood Planning in Toronto*, University of Toronto Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Planning Paper no. 1 (Toronto, 1973); more generally, see Charles Hampden-Turner, *From Poverty to Dignity* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1975).
45. The Multi-service Neighborhood Centers Committee of the Toronto Board of Education has city and citizen representation.
46. Personal communication from Elizabeth Tyrwhitt, its director.
47. The application for funding from the city and personal communication from Ryva Novick provide this information.
48. Ontario recently set up the Children's Services Division in the Ministry of Community and Social Services. A massive independent study is also being undertaken by the Child in the City Project, funded chiefly by the Hospital for Sick Children Foundation, Toronto.
49. Lemon, "Toronto."
50. Galbraith, *Age of Uncertainty*, p. 322.
51. Gerald D. Suttles, *The Social Order of the Slum* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), uses the term.
52. Keating, *Power to Make It Happen*, especially ch. 9.
53. David J. O'Brien, *Neighborhood Organization and Interest-Group Processes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 215; see also Julian Wolpert, "Opening Closed Spaces," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66 (1976): 1–13; Norman I. Fainstein and Susan S. Fainstein, *Urban Political Movements: The Search for Power by Minority Groups in American Cities* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974); C. G. Pickvance, "On the Study of Urban Social Movements," in C. G. Pickvance, *Urban Sociology: Critical Essays* (London: Methuen/Tavistock, 1976), pp. 198–218, dealing with French and British developments.
54. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).
55. Wellman, *Community Question*; idem, "Who Needs Neighborhoods?" in Alan Powell, ed., *The City: Attacking Modern Myths* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972), pp. 94–100.
56. Personal communications in conversations with my fellow executive members, Huron Street Home and School Community Association, 1975–76.
57. The structure of Innis College, University of Toronto, is based on parity; that is, students comprise half of the council and half of all committees. Elsewhere in the university participation is weaker.
58. Jeffrey R. Stutz, "Non-profit Housing," *Urban Forum/Colloque Urbain* 3 (spring 1977): 10–14; Howard F. Andrews and Helen J. Breslauer, *Cooperative Housing Project: An Overview of a Case Study, Methods and Findings*, University of Toronto Center for Urban and Community Studies Research Paper no. 73 (Toronto, 1976).
59. *Annual Report*, University and Colleges Credit Union and personal communication with the assistant manager indicate in two years a near tripling of deposits from \$6 million.
60. *Globe and Mail*, 31 May, 4 June, 2 July, 7 July, 27 July 1977 (a series on credit unions).
61. In Toronto a federation has been established for mutual buying.
62. Similar proposals are expressed in Hampden-Turner, *From Poverty to Dignity*, and in Milton Kotler, *Neighborhood Government: The Local Foundations of Political Life* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969); see the supportive critique of the latter by O'Brien, *Neighborhood Organization*, p. 220.
63. Hirsch, *Social Limits to Growth*, p. 186.
64. Lea Hindley-Smith et al., "Therafields: A Community for Healing," *Canadian Forum* 52 (January 1973): 12–17.