

makes brief contact with two students sitting under a newly planted tree on a California campus, is highly specific. Its meaning, however, is not impenetrably private: all who read the passage and nod in recognition, whether or not they have taught in an American college or lived in California, share it to some degree.

There is far more to experience than those elements we choose to attend to. In large measure, culture dictates the focus and range of our awareness. Languages differ in their capacity to articulate areas of experience. Pictorial art and rituals supplement language by depicting areas of experience that words fail to frame; their use and effectiveness again vary from people to people. Art makes images of feeling so that feeling is accessible to contemplation and thought. Social chatter and formulaic communication, in contrast, numb sensitivity. Even intimate feelings are more capable of being represented than most people realize. The images of place, here sampled, are evoked by the imagination of perceptive writers. By the light of their art we are privileged to savor experiences that would otherwise have faded beyond recall. Here is a seeming paradox: thought creates distance and destroys the immediacy of direct experience, yet it is by thoughtful reflection that the elusive moments of the past draw near to us in present reality and gain a measure of permanence.

11

Attachment to Homeland

Place exists at different scales. At one extreme a favorite armchair is a place, at the other extreme the whole earth. Homeland is an important type of place at the medium scale. It is a region (city or countryside) large enough to support a people's livelihood. Attachment to the homeland can be intense. What is the character of this sentiment? What experiences and conditions promote it?

Human groups nearly everywhere tend to regard their own homeland as the center of the world. A people who believe they are at the center claim, implicitly, the ineluctable worth of their location. In diverse parts of the world this sense of centrality is made explicit by a geometrical conception of space oriented to the cardinal points. Home is at the center of an astronomically determined spatial system. A vertical axis, linking heaven to the underworld, passes through it. The stars are perceived to move around one's abode; home is the focal point of a cosmic structure. Such a conception of place ought to give it supreme value; to abandon it would be hard to imagine. Should destruction occur we may reasonably conclude that the people would be thoroughly demoralized, since the ruin of their settlement implies the ruin of their cosmos. Yet this does not necessarily happen. Human beings have strong

recuperative powers. Cosmic views can be adjusted to suit new circumstances. With the destruction of one "center of the world," another can be built next to it, or in another location altogether, and it in turn becomes the "center of the world." "Center" is not a particular point on the earth's surface; it is a concept in mythic thought rather than a deeply felt value bound to unique events and locality. In mythic thought several world centers may coexist in the same general area without contradiction. It is possible to believe that the axis of the world passes through the settlement as a whole as well as through the separate dwellings within it. Space that is stretched over a grid of cardinal points makes the idea of place vivid, but it does not make any particular geographical locality *the* place. A spatial frame determined by the stars is anthropocentric rather than place-centric, and it can be moved as human beings themselves move.

If a cosmic world view does not guarantee uniqueness to locality, what beliefs do? Evidence from different cultures suggests that place is specific—tied to a particular cluster of buildings at one location—wherever the people believe it to be not only their home but also the home of their guarding spirits and gods. Ancient cities in the Near East and in the Mediterranean Basin enjoyed this kind of particularity. The original inspiration for building a city was to consort with the gods. Early Mesopotamian towns were essentially temple communities. Ritual centers and the more important settlements in the Nile Valley also had religious foundations, since they were thought to occupy sites on which primordial creation had taken place. It is difficult for the modern mind to appreciate the extent to which religion intermeshed with human activities and values in ancient times. When life seemed uncertain and nature hostile, the divinities not only promoted life and protected it, they were also guarantors of order in nature and in society. The legitimacy of laws and institutions depended on them. The withdrawal of the presiding presences meant chaos and death. Conquerors did not raze a city to the ground simply out of wanton fury; in such destruction they appropriated a people's gods by rendering them homeless, and in appropriating the

gods the conquerors acquired a civilization. This belief throws light on the paradox that, although the city is the embodiment of civilization, the Sumerians listed "the destruction of cities" as one of the divine institutions upon which civilization is founded.¹

In the Mycenaean period Greek cities owed their sacred status to their divine residents. Athena and Helen were Mycenaean goddesses who presided over Athens and Sparta respectively. In these prehistoric times of kingly rule, shrines had an importance they would later lose during the republican period. A Helladic city, however straitened by its enemies, remained viable so long as the shrines housing the divine images were intact. This belief, says John Dunne, "is reflected to some extent in the tradition of the Trojan War according to which it was necessary to steal the Palladium, the image of the city-goddess, from Troy before the city could be taken."² Removal of the image, or destruction of the shrine that housed it, would have deprived a city of its legitimacy since the rules, rites, and institutions under which a people lived all required divine sanction. We cannot know prehistoric sentiments: they are at best matters for conjecture. From the historic period of the ancient Mediterranean world we can find many expressions of love for place. One of the most eloquent was attributed to a citizen of Carthage. When the Romans were about to destroy Carthage at the end of the third Punic War, a citizen pleaded with them thus:

We beseech you, in behalf of our ancient city founded by the command of the gods, in behalf of a glory that has become great and a name that has pervaded the whole world, in behalf of the many temples it contains and of its gods who have done you no wrong. Do not deprive them of their nightly festivals, their processions and their solemnities. Deprive not the tombs of the dead, who harm you no more, of their offerings. If you have pity for us . . . spare the city's hearth, spare our forum, spare the goddess who presides over our council, and all else that is dear and precious to the living. . . . We propose an alternative more desirable for us and more glorious for you. Spare the city which has done you no harm, but, if you please, kill us, whom you have ordered to move away. In this way you will seem to vent your wrath upon men, not upon temples, gods, tombs, and an innocent city.³

It is true that this plea was written in the second century A.D. several hundred years after the event. How the besieged Carthaginians really felt we have no way of knowing. But the plea at least made good sense to Roman readers, for whom it was written, whereas to us it verges on the incredible. Suppose that Martians have invaded America and are at the gates of Minneapolis. It is hard to believe that our city councilors will plead with the Martians to kill us but save Nicollet Mall, which has done them no harm.

Religion could either bind a people to place or free them from it. The worship of local gods binds a people to place whereas universal religions give freedom. In a universal religion, since all is created by and all is known to an omnipotent and omniscient god, no locality is necessarily more sacred than another. Historically, earthbound deities reigned prior to the appearance of universal sky gods. Perhaps people everywhere have entertained the idea of a universal divinity, but his presence was shadowy and remote in comparison with the local spirits that constantly intruded on human affairs. In China the idea of *t'ien* (heaven) evolved and rose to the fore of consciousness in the course of the Chou dynasty (ca. 1027-256 B.C.). *Ti* (earth) was its counterpart, though of somewhat inferior status. *T'u* or soil gods occupied still lower ranks, but they were primordial. *T'ien* and *ti* were sophisticated concepts; in comparison soil gods and the many spirits of nature had much greater reality for the people. In the Mediterranean world the sky gods of Olympus were firmly installed by Homeric times. Men, however, did not at first conceive of these divinities as watching over the whole human race; rather they thought of each as belonging to a particular people and locality.

In religions that bind people firmly to place the gods appear to have the following characteristics in common. They have no power beyond the vicinity of their particular abodes; they reward and protect their own people but are harmful to strangers; they belong to a hierarchy of beings that extends from the living members of a family, with their graded authority, to ancestors and the spirits of dead heroes. Religions of this local

type encourage in their devotees a strong sense of the past, of lineage and continuity in place. Ancestor worship lies at the core of the practice. Security is gained through this historical sense of continuity rather than by the light of eternal and timeless values as propounded in transcendental and universal religions.

Rootedness was an ideal of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The French scholar Fustel de Coulanges explored this theme in detail more than a century ago. He stressed the importance of piety and of ancestor worship. A son was obliged to make sacrifices to the souls of the dead, those of his dead father and other ancestors. To fail in this duty was to commit the greatest act of impiety. An ancestor became a protecting god if provisions were carried to his tomb on the appointed days. He was good and provident to his own family but hostile to those who had not descended from him, driving them from his tomb, inflicting diseases upon them if they approached. Love for one's own kin and hostility, rather than mere indifference, to strangers was a common trait of place-bound religions. Each family had its sacred fire which represented the ancestors. A sacred fire "was the providence of a family, and had nothing in common with the fire of a neighboring family, which was another providence."⁴ The altar or family hearth symbolized sedentary life. It must be placed on the ground, and once established it could not be moved except as the consequence of unforeseen necessity. Duty and religion required that the family remain grouped around its altar; the family was as much fixed to the soil as the altar itself. The city was a confederation of families. Just as each family had its fixed hearth, so the city had its hearth in the council house, where the officials and a few especially honored citizens took their meals.⁵

The people of ancient Greece and Italy believed in exclusiveness. Space had its inviolable bounds. Every domain was under the eyes of household divinities, and an uncultivated hand of soil marked its limit. On certain days of each month and year the father of the family walked around his field. "He drove victims before him, sang hymns, and offered sacrifices. By this ceremony he believed he had awakened the benevo-

lence of his gods towards his field and his house. . . . The path which the victims and prayers had followed were the inviolable limit of the domain."⁶

In antiquity land and religion were so closely associated that a family could not renounce one without yielding the other. Exile was the worst of fates, since it deprived a man not only of his physical means of support but also of his religion and the protection of laws guaranteed by the local gods. In Euripides's play, *Hippolytus*, Theseus would not impose the death penalty on Hippolytus because swift death was regarded as too light a punishment for his heinous crime. Hippolytus had to drain the bitter dregs of his life as an exile on strange soil, this being the proper fate for the impious.⁷

The Greeks valued autochthony. Athenians took great pride in being natives, in the fact that they could trace their long and noble lineage in one locality. Pericles proclaimed, "Our ancestors deserve praise, for they dwelt in the country without break in the succession from generation to generation, and handed it down free to the present time by their valor."⁸ Isocrates argued that Athens was great for many reasons but that her strongest title to distinction lay in the people's autochthony and racial purity. He declaimed:

We did not become dwellers in this land by driving others out of it, nor by finding it uninhabited, nor by coming together here a motley horde composed of many races; but we are of a lineage so noble and so pure that throughout our history we have continued in possession of the very land which gave us birth, since we are sprung from its very soil and are able to address our city by the very names which we apply to our nearest kin; for we alone of all the Hellenes have the right to call our city at once nurse and fatherland and mother.⁹

This profound attachment to the homeland appears to be a worldwide phenomenon. It is not limited to any particular culture and economy. It is known to literate and nonliterate peoples, hunter-gatherers, and sedentary farmers, as well as city dwellers. The city or land is viewed as mother, and it nourishes; place is an archive of fond memories and splendid achievements that inspire the present; place is permanent and hence reassuring to man, who sees frailty in himself and chance and flux everywhere.

"The Maori [in New Zealand]," Raymond Firth wrote, "had a great respect for land *per se*, and an exceedingly strong affection for his ancestral soil, a sentiment by no means to be correlated only with its fertility and immediate value to him as a source of food. The lands whereon his forefathers lived, fought, and were buried were ever to him an object of the deepest feeling. . . . 'Mine is the land, the land of my ancestors' was his cry."¹⁰ The Maori revealed their deep-rooted affection in a number of ways. For example, a prisoner, when about to be slain, might ask to be conducted first to the border of his tribal territory so that he could look upon it once again before death. "Or he might ask that he should be allowed to drink of the waters of some stream which flowed through the borders of his home."¹¹ Tales of heroic deeds added respect to affection for land. Among the most important of these tales were accounts of the arrival of ancestral canoes in New Zealand more than twenty generations ago.¹²

European students are acquainted with the speeches of Pericles and Isocrates in which these patriots proclaimed their piety for Athens and the Athenians. In the United States, where knowledge of classical antiquity is less emphasized, students may nonetheless acquire a feeling for what profound attachment to ancestral land can mean in the eloquent address of an Indian chief. On the sad occasion when native Americans had to cede land to Governor Stevens of Washington Territory, an Indian chief is reported to have said:

There was a time when our people covered the whole land as the waves of a wind-ruffled sea covers its shell-paved floor, but that time has long since passed away with the greatness of tribes now almost forgotten. I will not dwell on nor mourn over our untimely decay, nor reproach my pale-face brothers with hastening it. We are two distinct races. There is little in common between us. To us the ashes of our ancestors are sacred and their final resting place is hallowed ground, while you wander far from the graves of your ancestors, and, seemingly, without regret. . . . Every part of this country is sacred to my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove has been hallowed by some fond memory or some sad experience of my tribe. Even the rocks, which seem to lie dumb as they swelter in the sun along the silent seashore in solemn grandeur, thrill with memories of past events connected with the lives of my people. The very dust

under your feet responds more lovingly to our footsteps than to yours, because it is the ashes of our ancestors, and our bare feet are conscious of the sympathetic touch, for the soil is rich with the life of our kindred.¹³

Profound sentiment for land has not disappeared; it persists in places isolated from the traffic of civilization. The rhetoric of sentiment barely alters through the ages and differs little from one culture to another. Consider the meaning of the German word *Heimat* as given in a South Tyrolean almanac for the year 1953. Leonard Doob, who discovered this superb specimen of *Heimat* sentimentality in our time, provides the following translation:

Heimat is first of all the mother earth who has given birth to our folk and race, who is the holy soil, and who gulps down God's clouds, sun, and storms so that together with their own mysterious strength they prepare the bread and wine which rest on our table and give us strength to lead a good life. . . . *Heimat* is landscape. *Heimat* is the landscape we have experienced. That means one that has been fought over, menaced, filled with the history of families, towns, and villages. Our *Heimat* is the *Heimat* of knights and heroes, of battles and victories, of legends and fairy tales. But more than all this, our *Heimat* is the land which has become fruitful through the sweat of our ancestors. For this *Heimat* our ancestors have fought and suffered, for this *Heimat* our fathers have died.¹⁴

Rootedness in the soil and the growth of pious feeling toward it seem natural to sedentary agricultural peoples. What of nomadic hunters and gatherers? Because they do not stay in one place and because their sense of land ownership is ill-defined, we might expect less attachment; but in fact the strongest sentiment for the nurturing earth can exist among such people. American Plains Indians have migratory habits. The Comanches, for example, change the location of their principal encampment from year to year, yet they worship the earth as mother. It is for them the receptacle and producer of all that sustains life; in honor it is second only to the sun. Mother earth is implored to make things grow so that they may eat and live, to make the water flow so that they may drink, and to keep the ground firm so that they can walk on it.¹⁵ The Lakota of the Northern Plains have the warmest feeling for their

country, particularly the Black Hills. A tribal legend describes these hills as a reclining female from whose breasts issue life-giving forces, and to them the Lakota go like children to their mother's arms. The old people, even more than the young, love the soil; they sit or recline on the ground so as to be close to a nurturing power.¹⁶

The attitude of American Plains Indians may be influenced by their own agricultural past or by contact with agriculturalists. Australian aborigines, who cannot have been affected by the values of soil tillers, provide a clear example of how hunters and gatherers can be intensely attached to place. Aborigines have no rules of landownership and no strict ideas of territorial boundary. They do, however, distinguish two types of territory—"estate" and "range." Estate is the traditionally recognized home or dreaming place of a patrilineal descent group and its adherents. Range is the tract or orbit over which the group ordinarily hunts and forages. Range is more important than estate for survival; estate is more important than range for social and ceremonial life. As the aborigines put it, range is where they could walk about or run; estate is where they could sit. Strong emotional ties are established with the estate. It is the home of ancestors, the dreaming place where every incident in legend and myth is firmly fixed in some unchanging aspect of nature—rocks, hills and mountains, even trees, for trees can outlive human generations. In times of scarcity, which are frequent along the margins of the desert, the people will leave their own range to forage in other groups' ranges, but seldom for long.¹⁷ As a member of the Ilbalintja tribe explained to the anthropologist Strehlow, "Our fathers taught us to love our own country, and not to lust after the lands belonging to other men. They told us that Ilbalintja was the greatest bandicoot totemic centre amongst the Aranda people, and that, in the beginning, bandicoot ancestors had come from every part of the tribe to Ilbalintja alone and had stayed there for ever: so pleasing was our home to them."¹⁸

Landscape is personal and tribal history made visible. The native's identity—his place in the total scheme of things—is not in doubt, because the myths that support it are as real as the

rocks and waterholes he can see and touch. He finds recorded in his land the ancient story of the lives and deeds of the immortal beings from whom he himself is descended, and whom he reveres. The whole countryside is his family tree.¹⁹

Modern society has its nomads—hoboes, migrant workers, and merchant seamen, among others. What are the consequences of rootlessness? Do they long for a permanent place, and if so, how is this longing expressed? Migrant workers with their families adapt to the nomadic life out of necessity, not choice. Merchant seamen, in contrast, opt for the sea and rootless wayfaring. They may join the merchant marine in their teens or in early manhood. The ship is their home, the mates are their family, yet there appears to be a craving for a permanent locality as an anchor for their imagination when out at sea. Robert Davis, in an unpublished M.A. thesis, wrote of the seamen he knew personally thus:

They had a craving for a headquarters somewhere along the shore, a place where they could leave their trunk, if they had one; a place to which they could project their minds, wherever they might wander, and visualize the position of the furniture, and imagine just what the inmates of the place were doing at the different hours of the day; a place to which they could send a picture postcard or bring back a curio; a place to which they could always return and be sure of a welcome.²⁰

Attachment to the homeland is a common human emotion. Its strength varies among different cultures and historical periods. The more ties there are, the stronger is the emotional bond. In antiquity both the city and the countryside may be sacred, the city because of its shrines, which house local gods and heroes, the countryside because of its nature spirits. But people live in the city and form emotional ties of other kinds, whereas they do not live in the sacred mountains, springs, or groves. Sentiment for nature, inhabited only by spirits, is therefore weaker. A people may, however, become strongly attached to a natural feature because more than one tie yoke them to it. As an example, consider the peak of Reani, the crowning point of the island of Tikopia in the South Pacific. This peak is a landmark of singular importance to the seafaring islanders for at least three reasons. First, it enables the ocean

rover to estimate how far he is from land and whether he is on course; this is the practical reason. Second, it is an object of sentiment: the wanderer, when he departs, loses sight of the peak below the ocean waves in sorrow, and, when he returns, greets its first appearance above the waves with joy. Third, it is a sacred place: "it is there that the gods first stand when they come down."²¹

A homeland has its landmarks, which may be features of high visibility and public significance, such as monuments, shrines, a hallowed battlefield or cemetery. These visible signs serve to enhance a people's sense of identity; they encourage awareness of and loyalty to place. But a strong attachment to the homeland can emerge quite apart from any explicit concept of sacredness; it can form without the memory of heroic battles won and lost, and without the bond of fear or of superiority vis-à-vis other people. Attachment of a deep though subconscious sort may come simply with familiarity and ease, with the assurance of nurture and security, with the memory of sounds and smells, of communal activities and homely pleasures accumulated over time. It is difficult to articulate quiet attachments of this type. Neither the rhetoric of an Isocrates nor the effusive prose of a German *Volkskalender* seems appropriate. Contentment is a warm positive feeling, but it is most easily described as incuriosity toward the outside world and as absence of desire for a change of scene. To illustrate this deep undramatic tie to locality, consider three human groups of widely divergent geographical and cultural milieus: the primitive Tasaday of the Mindanao rain forest in the Philippines; the ancient Chinese (their attitude revealed in a Taoist classic); and a modern American farm family in northwestern Illinois.

The outside world discovered the Tasaday in 1971. As yet very little is known about them. They appear to have lived for generations in complete isolation, even from tribes that share the Mindanao rain forest with them. Their material as well as mental culture is perhaps among the simplest in the world. They are food gatherers; their hunting skills are elementary. They seem to lack rituals, ceremonials, or any kind of systematic world view. They are not curious to know about the world beyond the small confines of their homeland. Their language

Attachment to Homeland

contains no word for sea or lake, although the Celebes Sea and Lake Sebu are less than forty miles away.²²

"Why didn't you leave the forest?"
 "We can't go out of our place."
 "Why?"
 "We love to stay in our forest.
 We like it here. It is a quiet place to sleep.
 It is warm. Not loud."²³

In China the ideal of the simple and sedentary life is stated in the Taoist classic, the *Tao Te Ching*. One passage in it reads: "Let us have a small country with few inhabitants. . . . Let the people return to the use of knotted cords [for keeping records]. Let their food be sweet, their clothing beautiful, their homes comfortable, their rustic tasks pleasurable. The neighboring state might be so near at hand that one could hear the cocks crowing and dogs barking in it. But the people would grow old and die without ever having been there."²⁴

The last example is from the American heartland. Six generations of a farm family—the Hammers—have lived and died in Daviess County, northwestern Illinois. Here is a people for whom the riches and wonders of the outside world do not beckon. One middle-aged Hammer explained: "My dad never traveled far and I don't have to. We have so many kinds of recreation right on our own farm. We have a nice stream for fishing, we have hunting. I can hunt deer, squirrels, rabbits—anything you want to hunt. I got them here, right on the farm. I don't have to travel."²⁵ Young Bill Hammer and Dorothy, married in 1961, went to California for their honeymoon but quickly returned because, as Dorothy put it, "It's so unreal to be gone."²⁶ Loyalty to the homeland is taught in childhood. In 1972, nine-year-old Jim Hammer was asked what his mother had taught him. He replied:

"What did Mom teach me? For one thing, she taught me how to mow the lawn. She showed me how to tie my shoes. . . . And she tries to teach me to live decent. Like some people don't have a very good life because they don't settle down in one place and don't stay very long. They could live in Illinois for a while and then move to California. I like Illinois; it's just my home state."²⁷

12

Visibility: the Creation of Place

Place can be defined in a variety of ways. Among them is this: place is whatever stable object catches our attention. As we look at a panoramic scene our eyes pause at points of interest. Each pause is time enough to create an image of place that looms large momentarily in our view. The pause may be of such short duration and the interest so fleeting that we may not be fully aware of having focused on any particular object; we believe we have simply been looking at the general scene. Nonetheless these pauses have occurred. It is not possible to look at a scene in general; our eyes keep searching for points of rest. We may be deliberately searching for a landmark, or a feature on the horizon may be so prominent that it compels attention. As we gaze and admire a famous mountain peak on the horizon, it looms so large in our consciousness that the picture we take of it with a camera is likely to disappoint us, revealing a midget where we would expect to find a giant.

The peak on the horizon is highly visible. It is a monument, a public place that can be pointed to and recorded. In America the first scenic spots to be appreciated had dramatic presence: the water gap, the gorge, the natural bridge, and—in Yellowstone—geysers. A natural feature may be inconspicuous and yet become a place of sufficient importance to attract

*Visibility: the Creation
of Place*

tourists. The source of the Mississippi River, for example, is not eye-catching; it is a small body of water like the thousands of lakes and springs in the same region. Only scientists, after detailed measurements, can tell which pool is the source. Once a particular body of water was marked as the Mississippi's source and the area around it designated a park, it became a place to which people would want to visit and have their pictures taken. Scientists thus appear to have a certain power: they can create a place by pointing their official fingers at one body of water rather than another.

Many places, profoundly significant to particular individuals and groups, have little visual prominence. They are known viscerally, as it were, and not through the discerning eye or mind. A function of literary art is to give visibility to intimate experiences, including those of place. The Grand Tetons of landscape do not require the services of literature; they advertise themselves by sheer size. Literary art can illuminate the inconspicuous fields of human care such as a Midwestern town, a Mississippi county, a big-city neighborhood, or an Appalachian hollow.

Literary art draws attention to areas of experience that we may otherwise fail to notice. Sculptures have the power to create a sense of place by their own physical presence (Fig. 18). A single inanimate object, useless in itself, can be the focus of a world. Wallace Stevens wrote in a poem that a jar placed on a hill "made the slovenly wilderness surround that hill." The jar took dominion. "The wilderness rose up to it, and sprawled around, no longer wild."¹ The human being can command a world because he has feelings and intentions. The art object may seem to do so because its form, as Langer would say, is symbolic of human feeling.² A piece of sculpture appears to incarnate personhood and be the center of its own world. Although a statue is an object in our perceptual field, it seems to create its own space.

We can refuse significance to the jar on the hill; the jar simply occupies space and does not command it. Objects that are held in awe by one people can easily be overlooked by another. Culture affects perception. Yet certain objects, both

*Visibility: the Creation
of Place*

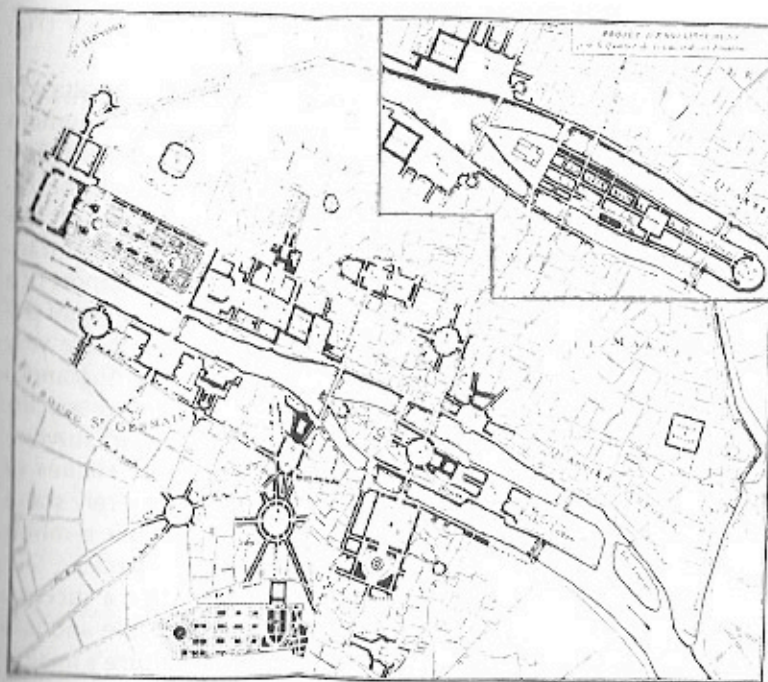


Figure 18. Place as highly visible public symbol, a feature that architects can create. M. Patte's prize-winning plan for the Paris of Louis XV, in which the *place royale* is of great prominence. Each *place royale* has a statue of the monarch at the center, and streets fanning out like rays.

natural and man-made, persist as places through eons of time, outliving the patronage of particular cultures. Perhaps any large feature in the landscape creates its own world, which may expand or contract with the passing concerns of the people, but which does not completely lose its identity. Ayers Rock in the heart of Australia, for example, dominated the mythical and perceptual field of the aborigines, but it remains a place for modern Australians who are drawn to visit the monolith by its awesome bulk (Fig. 19A). Stonehenge is an architectural example. No doubt it is less a place for British tourists than for its original builders: time has caused its dread as well as its stones

to erode, but Stonehenge remains very much a place (Fig. 19B).³

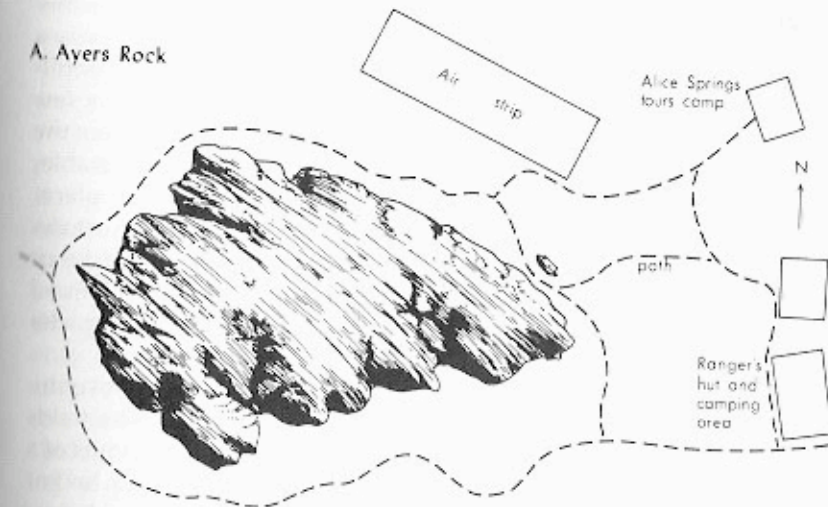
How is it possible for a monument to transcend the values of a particular culture? An answer might be: a large monument like Stonehenge carries both general and specific import. The specific import changes in time whereas the general one remains. Consider the modern Gateway Arch of St. Louis. It has the general import of "heavenly dome" and "gate" that transcends American history, but it also has the specific import of a unique period in American history, namely, the opening of the West to settlement. Enduring places, of which there are very few in the world, speak to humanity. Most monuments cannot survive the decay of their cultural matrix. The more specific and representational the object the less it is likely to survive: since the end of British imperialism in Egypt, the statues of Queen Victoria no longer command worlds but merely stand in the way of traffic. In the course of time, most public symbols lose their status as places and merely clutter up space.

If a piece of sculpture is an image of feeling, then a successful building is an entire functional realm made visible and tangible. As Langer put it, "The architect creates a culture's image: a physically present human environment that expresses the characteristic rhythmic functional patterns which constitute a culture."⁴ The patterns are the movements of personal and social life. They are fluid and enormously complex. It is hardly possible to specify them in detail and design accordingly. An architect has an intuitive grasp, a tacit understanding, of the rhythms of a culture, and he seeks to give them symbolic form. A house is a relatively simple building. It is a place, however, for many reasons. It provides shelter; its hierarchy of spaces answers social needs; it is a field of care, a repository of memories and dreams. Successful architecture "creates the semblance of that World which is the counterpart of a Self."⁵ For personal selfhood that world is the house; for collective selfhood it is a public environment such as temple, town hall, or civic center.

Art and architecture seek visibility. They are attempts to give sensible form to the moods, feelings, and rhythms of func-

ENDURING PLACES — MONUMENTS

A. Ayers Rock



Ayers Rock from the west



3,143 feet above ground level
5.5 miles around base

B. Trilithons of Stonehenge from the east



Height: 16.5 - 22 feet

Figure 19. Enduring places: Ayers Rock in the heart of Australia and Stonehenge at the central node of southern England.

tional life. Most places are not such deliberate creations. They are built to satisfy practical needs. How do they acquire visibility for both local inhabitants and outsiders? Think of the way a new country is settled. At first there is wilderness, undifferentiated space. A clearing is made in the forest and a few houses are built. Immediately differentiation occurs; on the one side there is wilderness, on the other a small, vulnerable, man-made world. The farmers are keenly aware of their place, which they have created themselves and which they must defend against the incursions of wild nature. To the passerby or visitor, the fields and houses also constitute a well-defined place, obvious to him as he emerges from the forest to the clearing.

With the continual extension of clearings the forest eventually disappears. An entire landscape is humanized. The fields belonging to one village adjoin those of another. The limits of a settlement are no longer clearly visible. They are no longer dramatized by the discernible edges of the wilderness. Henceforth the integrity of place must be ritually maintained. In the time of republican Rome the head of a household preserved the borders of his domain by circumambulating the fields, singing hymns, and driving sacrificial victims before him. In Britain the ancient custom of "beating the bounds" required the parish priest to walk around the parish and strike certain markers with a stick. In the Netherlands the village of Anderen is a deeply rooted community. As late as 1949 village elders and teenaged youths continued the annual practice of inspecting the boundary markers. The elders, to ensure that the young would not forget the exact location of the markers, boxed the youngsters' ears.⁶

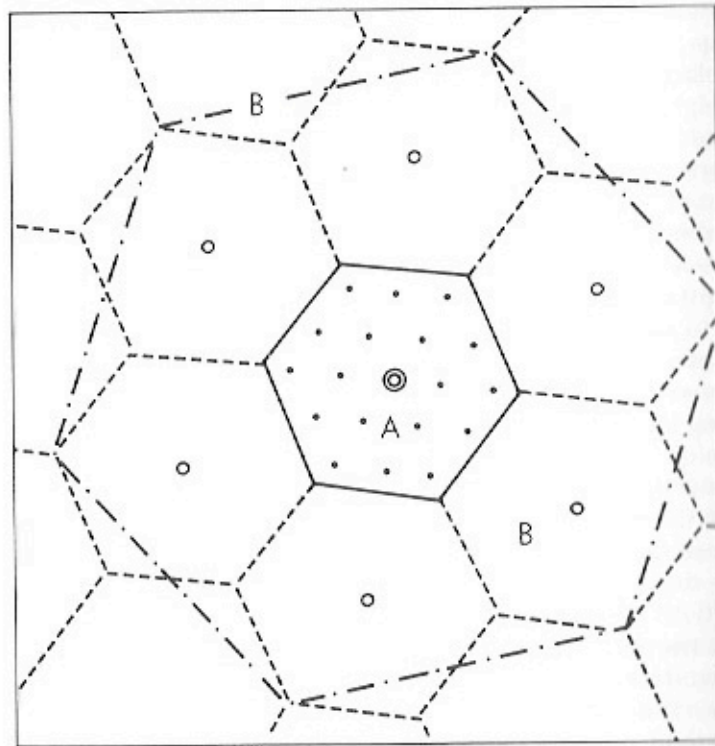
To the casual visitor the limits of village domain are not evident in the landscape. The villages themselves are evident, each surrounded by an apron of fields. To the local people sense of place is promoted not only by their settlement's physical circumscription in space; an awareness of other settlements and rivalry with them significantly enhance the feeling of uniqueness and of identity. French villages, such as those in Lorraine, Burgundy, Champagne, and Picardy, are nucleated

settlements with (often) a church at the center. Peasants socialize in the winter evenings and again on holidays and market days. They work together at harvest time and during the vintage. The casual observer may conclude that the village is one place, a unified community conscious of its identity vis-à-vis neighboring communities. This is true, yet the village itself is divided. Egoism and contentious pride exist within each settlement as well as between settlements. Maurice Halbwachs notes: "Just as a village sometimes ignores, envies and detests a neighboring village, so it happens only too often that families envy each other from one house to the next, without ever a thought of helping each other. . . . There is no natural tendency to work together for the common good."⁷ Egoism and envy are reprehensible traits. However, they promote a conscious sense of self and of the things associated with self, including home and locality.

The question of how the awareness of place in a rural region varies with scale is clarified in William Skinner's work on traditional China (Fig. 20). Skinner believes that "insofar as the Chinese peasant can be said to live in a self-contained world, that world is not the village but the standard marketing community."⁸ The area of a standard marketing community is about twenty square miles. Within it live some seven to eight thousand people distributed among a score or so of settlements. The typical peasant sees his fellow villagers far more often than he does outsiders; his own village is his primary place. Nonetheless a peasant, by the time he is forty to fifty years old, has visited the local market town several thousand times, and in its teahouses he has socialized with peasants from village communities far removed from his own. A middle-aged villager has a nodding acquaintance with almost every adult in all parts of the marketing system.⁹ He is aware, then, of a social world much larger than his own village community. Does he also know this larger world as a bounded region, a place with distinctive traits that set it apart from other comparable units?

The boundary of a nucleated settlement is clearly visible. In contrast, the outer edge of the standard marketing system is

AWARENESS OF PLACE AT DIFFERENT SCALES



- villoge
 - market town
- } visibly bounded places
- A marketing area; distinctive place but without tangible boundary
- B marketing region; conceptual "place"

Figure 20. Awareness of place at different scales. The villages and market towns are visibly bounded places in distinction to the marketing area and the marketing region which have no tangible boundaries. Recognizing the marketing area or region as "place" is more than a matter of looking as a tourist might look.

not a physical feature that strikes the eye. In traditional rural China the marketing area is often a close-knit functional unit. Its high degree of self-sufficiency is suggested by the fact that weights and measures, and even language, show perceptible differences from those of adjacent marketing communities. But do the local people know this fact? The local elite are probably aware of it. Landlords visit not only the neighborhood town but also the town of a higher order in size and function where their special needs, such as books, can be satisfied. From the perspective of the higher-order place, the elite may well discern that their own marketing area is one among several. The standard marketing area is integrated by many activities. Only one, however, is highly visible. This is the religious procession that defines the earthly domain of the temple god. The procession has the effect of dramatizing the marketing area as bounded space. It is "an annual reaffirmation of the community's territorial extent and a symbolic reinforcement of its town-centered structure."¹⁰

The clustered village stands out in the landscape. Approaching a rural settlement we can see the silhouette of houses and trees rising above the cultivated fields. In comparison, urban neighborhoods lack visual prominence. Each neighborhood is a small part of a large built-up area, and it is unclear where one unit ends and another begins. A planner looking at the city may discern areas of distinctive physical and socioeconomic character; he calls them districts or neighborhoods and assigns them names if local ones do not already exist. These neighborhoods are places for him, they have meaning for him as intellectual concepts. What would be the perception of the people who live in such areas? Will they also see that in their area the houses are of a similar build and that the people are mostly of a similar socioeconomic class? The answer is, of course, not necessarily. Local inhabitants have no reason to entertain concepts that are remote from their immediate needs.

The lack of a concept "neighborhood" corresponding to that of the city planner is well illustrated in Herbert Gans's study of Boston's West End. This old working-class district was declared a slum and torn down under a federal renewal program be-

*Visibility: the Creation
of Place*

tween 1958 and 1960. Defenders of the district had difficulty marshaling the support of the local people. West Enders never used the term "neighborhood." They showed little concern for the district as a physical and social entity; their interest was confined essentially to their own street and to the stores they frequented.¹¹ Politicians, recognizing this extreme localism, promised improvements for individual streets rather than for the district as a whole. They did not try to raise the consciousness of their constituents beyond the small world of immediate experience. When the West End as a whole was threatened with demolition, the people were shocked into awareness. Even then some felt sure that while the entire district was coming down, their own street would be spared. The local people who participated in the Save the West End Committee were a handful of intellectuals and artists. Unlike their neighbors, these people did have a concept of "neighborhood." Gans explained: "Although they were active within their own peer groups, their career and creative interests separated them from these groups psychologically. . . . As a result, they developed a strong symbolic identification with the West End. Partially because of their skills and their marginality, they were able to develop a holistic concept of the West End as a neighborhood."¹²

The street where one lives is part of one's intimate experience. The larger unit, neighborhood, is a concept. The sentiment one has for the local street corner does not automatically expand in the course of time to cover the entire neighborhood. Concept depends on experience, but it is not an inevitable consequence of experience. The concept can be elicited and clarified by questioning, directed first at the concrete and then at the more abstract. Questions and answers may proceed in the following manner:

What is or what constitutes *my* neighborhood?

Answer: It is where I live and where I go shopping; from which I gather that each person has his own neighborhood.

What is *our* neighborhood?

Answer: It is the locale of my own kind of people, that is to say, the Irish in a mixed Italian-Irish working-class area.

*Visibility: the Creation
of Place*

What is *the* neighborhood?

Answer: It is the Italian-Irish working-class area, a physical and social unit that I am vaguely aware of as different from adjoining areas.

The larger unit acquires visibility through an effort of the mind. The entire neighborhood then becomes a place. It is, however, a conceptual place and does not involve the emotions. Emotion begins to tinge the whole neighborhood—drawing on, and extrapolating from, the direct experience of its particular parts—when the neighborhood is perceived to have rivals and to be threatened in some way, real or imagined. Then the warm sentiment one has for a street corner broadens to include the larger area. Although an external event, such as urban renewal, enables a people to see the larger unit, this perception becomes vividly real if the unit, in fact, has strong local flavor, visual character, and clear boundaries. Houses and streets do not of themselves create a sense of place, but if they are distinctive this perceptual quality would greatly help the inhabitants to develop the larger place consciousness.

Working-class and poor people do not live in homes and neighborhoods of their own design. They move either into residences that have been abandoned by the well-to-do, or into new subsidized housing. In both cases the physical structures do not reflect their dwellers' ideals. Sentiment, if it exists, has developed as slowly as familiarity. In contrast, the affluent are able to occupy an environment of their own design. Their dreams are quickly convertible into houses and lawns. From the start the affluent can live in a place of their own, surrounded by their own kind of people, and they are well aware of this fact. The rich neighborhood is, from the start, highly visible to both residents and outsiders. Its architecture is likely to show character and the grounds may be walled off, with a guard at the gate.

Beacon Hill in Boston is a famous old neighborhood. It began, however, as a suburban dream of affluent Bostonians living in the post-Independence decades. Now steeped in history, it was once a showy residential estate. The rich sense of place at Beacon Hill and its high visibility result from a combi-

nation of factors. Architectural distinction is one; houses are of a style that differentiates them from buildings in adjoining areas. Time is another; time has given Beacon Hill residents long memories. Notable events and persons are a third; they have given the neighborhood luster. Kin and neighborhood ties are strong, expressed not (of course) in the borrowing of cups of sugar but in social calls and the exchange of intimate dinners. Residents are proud of the place's traditions; they have the leisure and the education to produce a pamphlet literature that tastefully draws people's attention to the neighborhood's heritage. Public rites enhance Beacon Hill's visibility. At Christmastime, for example, the display of candle lights in the homes attracts a large number of tourists. These informal means of promoting the place's identity are supplemented by the effort of formal organizations such as the Beacon Hill Association, which was founded for the purpose of keeping undesirable people and enterprise out of the area.¹³

A district's reputation may depend far more on the propaganda of outside groups than of local residents. Even Greenwich Village, rich in artists whose calling is to articulate values, owes its Bohemian image not a little to promotion by outside media and real estate agents.¹⁴ Slums and skid rows are distinctive places in many large North American cities. Some are so peculiar from the standpoint of middle-class values that they become tourist attractions. Air-conditioned buses take upright small-town citizens through Chicago's skid row as if it were a titillating peep show. Derogatory names like "Jew Town," "Nigger Town," and "Back of the Yard" are imposed by fearful outsiders on the local inhabitants. At first the local people may not themselves be aware of their membership in the larger neighborhood; they know only that they live on a certain block in the poorer part of the city. In time, however, the outside message sinks in. The local people begin to see that they live in, say, "Back of the Yard," an area with a certain character and with boundaries that outsiders fear to cross. "Back of the Yard" as a whole becomes a shadowy reality for the residents, a reality viewed with a mixture of helplessness, resentment, and

perhaps also pride if the possibility for political action goes with the consciousness of place.

The city is a place, a center of meaning, par excellence. It has many highly visible symbols. More important, the city itself is a symbol. The traditional city symbolized, first, transcendental and man-made order as against the chaotic forces of terrestrial and infernal nature. Second, it stood for an ideal human community: "What is the Citie, but the People? True, the People are the Citie" (Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, act 3, scene 1). It was as transcendental order that ancient cities acquired their monumental aspect. Massive walls and portals demarcated sacred space. Fortifications defended a people against not only human enemies but also demons and the souls of the dead. In medieval Europe priests consecrated city walls so that they could ward off the devil, sickness, and death—in other words, the threats of chaos.¹⁵

A city draws attention to itself, achieving power and eminence through the scale and solemnity of its rites and festivals. Ancient capitals began as ritual centers of high import. Splendid architectural settings were required for the enactment of sacred dramas. In time ceremonial centers attracted secular population and activities. Economic functions multiplied and submerged the city's religious identity. However, the feeling for drama and display remained as did the form and style of religious rites which branched into the secular sphere. In medieval Europe the cathedrals and churches, far more vividly colored than now, were the centers of celebrations that punctuated the church's calendar year. Secular events called for display no less than religious ones. In medieval London, crowds turned out not only on royal occasions, but also for visitations by far lesser dignitaries; even the progress of a prisoner to jail was cause for a festive mood in the streets.¹⁶

It hardly needs saying that the visibility of a modern city suffers from the lack of public occasions to which the people are drawn and for which the halls and streets function as supportive stage. Of course the city was and is an elaborate conglomeration of innumerable stages for the performance of pri-

*Visibility: the Creation
of Place*

vate and semi-public dramas—birthdays, high school graduations, basketball tournaments—but these are at most local pageantries often held at some distance from the city core. Ceremonials such as laying the cornerstone of a civic building, planting a tree in the public square, and consecrating a church seem to have become increasingly empty gestures of another age, to which the busy and skeptical citizens of today attach little meaning. In the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth century urban Americans still had a sense of occasion, a feeling that certain city events called for some form of public festivity. Consider Minneapolis. In 1896 Colonel Stevens's house, the first house built within the city limits, was put on wheels and pulled by relay teams of nearly ten thousand school children from its original site near Hennepin Bridge to Minnehaha Park. It was an occasion that stirred the local citizenry. People lined the streets to watch the house go by. Such an event will hardly excite sophisticated Minneapolitans today. Here is another illustration. When the city's Foshay Tower was completed in 1929 its owner saw fit to invite the governors of the forty-eight states to attend its opening ceremony. On the other hand, when the IDS building was completed in 1972 it became Minneapolis's tallest skyscraper and preeminent landmark, yet its opening passed with little fanfare.

A city does not become historic merely because it has occupied the same site for a long time. Past events make no impact on the present unless they are memorialized in history books, monuments, pageants, and solemn and jovial festivities that are recognized to be part of an ongoing tradition. An old city has a rich store of facts on which successive generations of citizens can draw to sustain and re-create their image of place. Confident of their past, citizens can afford to speak with a soft voice and go about the business of putting their hometown on a pedestal with taste. New cities, such as the frontier settlements of North America, lacked a venerable past; to attract business and gain pride their civic leaders were obliged to speak with a loud voice.¹⁷ Strident boosterism was the tech-

*Visibility: the Creation
of Place*

nique to create an impressive image, and to a lesser extent it still is. The boosters could rarely vaunt their city's past or culture; hence the emphasis tended to be on abstract and geometrical excellences such as "the most central," "the biggest," "the fastest," and "the tallest." Boosterism has by now become something of an American tradition, and it is practised with the panache of a Pop-art form. Jan Morris, in an article on Tennessee, asked:

Did you know that Chattanooga had the biggest Sunday School in the world? that it is the Electrical Capital of the world? that it supports more churches per head than anywhere else in the world? that the steepest funicular railway in the world runs up Lookout Mountain to the highest railway station in America? that the Choo-Choo Restaurant is the biggest eating-house in the world? that Chattanooga is America's Saddlery? that the view you are enjoying is the Longest View in the South, embracing seven States? "Made in Chattanooga," says the proud boast in many a local store, "by Chattanoogaans"—which is to say, created on the spot by the Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning.¹⁸

Sense of self, whether individual or collective, grows out of the exercise of power. Cities may have achieved their maximum visibility as independent political units, that is, as city-states. Take Greek city-states for example. Several factors contributed to their vivid personalities. One was small size. Even Attica, dominated by Athens, was small enough so that its most distant parts could be reached in two long days' walk. Sparta grew ungainly through conquests, but most states were smaller than Sparta.¹⁹ A Greek polis was not an abstract entity: a citizen could know it personally. Even if he had not paced the country from end to end, he should at least be able to see the physical limits of the state to which he owed allegiance. In the clear air he might discern the chain of hills beyond which lay other states that competed with his own. Another factor that enhanced the city's sense of self was the small size of its population. People learned to know one another. A wide net of social communication does not in itself generate public enterprise. The Greeks, however, believed that manhood demanded full participation in the functions of the state, whether

*Visibility: the Creation
of Place*

as administrators or as soldiers. Public service and the winning of glory far outranked the quiet and often traceless satisfactions of private life.

Competition among the city-states fueled patriotic fervor and promoted in each state a heightened awareness of its own individuality. Competition took the form of wars and athletic contests. Wars were fought for territory and for dominion over a weaker neighbor. Athletic rivalry flared every four years at Olympia in honor of Zeus. The games were extremely nationalistic in spirit; cities were more vain of victories won at Olympia than on battle fields. Quieter ways to boast also existed. Athens was proud of its government. As Pericles put it, "Our form of government does not enter into rivalry with the institution of others. We do not copy our neighbors, but are an example to them."²⁰ Sparta was proud of its citizen soldiers; unlike other cities it did not need a physical wall for defense.

Tyrants promoted the identity of their capital cities. In ancient Greece tyrannies emerged in response to a pressing need to restore order to the state. The tyrant, to keep his position, must seek public approval. He had two tried methods of winning it. One was adventure abroad; foreign wars fostered national sentiment and at the same time made the people forget their political servitude. The other method called for munificence, such as large-scale public works, including temple construction, and the subsidization of art. Grand artworks provided a focus and an outlet for patriotic zeal.²¹

The city-state was small enough that most of its citizens could know it personally. The modern nation-state is far too large to be thus experienced. Symbolic means had to be used to make the large nation-state seem a concrete place—not just a political idea—toward which a people could feel deep attachment. The belief that the nation demands the supreme loyalty of man is a modern passion. Since the end of the eighteenth century it has infected more and more people throughout the world. Despite universalist ideals on the one hand and the pull of localism on the other, the nation-state is now the world's dominant political unit. To be a modern nation, local

*Visibility: the Creation
of Place*

attachments based on direct experience and intimate knowledge have to be overcome. Thus Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769–1860), an early apostle of German nationalism, wrote:

Where is the German's Fatherland?
Is it Swabia? Is it the Prussian land?
Is it where the grape grows on the Rhine?
Where sea-gulls skim the Baltic's brine?
O no! more great, more grand
Must be the German's Fatherland!²²

The sentiment that once tied people to their village, city, or region had to be transferred to the larger political unit. The nation-state, rather than any of its parts, was to achieve maximum visibility. How could this be done? One method was and is to make the state the object of a religious cult. The French Legislative Assembly decreed in June 1792 that "in all the communes an altar to the Fatherland shall be raised, on which shall be engraved the Declaration of Rights with the inscription, 'the citizen is born, lives, and dies for *la Patrie*.'"²³ In patriotic fervor men say, "We must protect our sacred soil." They are saying, in effect, that "the land which is our country must be protected as if all of it were like a church." The field and the cesspool upon the land are details, mundane and irrelevant.²⁴ To make the idea of the sacred country seem real, sacred places that can be directly experienced are created. In the United States these are not churches and cathedrals. They are places like Independence Hall in Philadelphia, the shrines of General Lee in Lexington and of General Grant in New York, and the stately monuments of the city of Washington.²⁵

History books helped to transform the nation-state into place—and indeed into person. Patriotic literature is replete with personifications such as "the national will," and "national destiny." Image-building through history books flourished in the nineteenth century. In earlier periods, as Carleton Hayes observed, history had been local, "world" or religious history, "chronicles of kings, biographies of warriors or saints, philosophical disquisitions upon the course of God's dealings

*Visibility: the Creation
of Place*

with man, but almost never national history as such. During the nineteenth century, however, very little history was written which was not national in scope or import."²⁶

Maps in school atlases and history books show nation-states as sharply bounded units. Small-scale maps encourage people to think of their countries as self-sufficient, discrete entities. Visible limits to a nation's sovereignty, such as a row of hills or a stretch of river, support the sense of the nation as place. From the air, however, mountains and rivers are merely elements of physical geography, and man-made markers like fences and guard posts are invisible. Aerial photographs are useless in history books. Maps, which also present the vertical view, are another matter. Cartography can clearly be made to serve a political end. In a school atlas the world's nations appear as a mosaic of clashing colors. Pink Canada looms large over butter-tinted United States; there can be no doubt about where one ends and another begins, nor of their sharply contrasting identities.

In summary, we may say that deeply-loved places are not necessarily visible, either to ourselves or to others. Places can be made visible by a number of means: rivalry or conflict with other places, visual prominence, and the evocative power of art, architecture, ceremonials and rites. Human places become vividly real through dramatization. Identity of place is achieved by dramatizing the aspirations, needs, and functional rhythms of personal and group life.

13

Time and Place

How time and place are related is an intricate problem that invites different approaches. We shall explore three of them here. They are: time as motion or flow and place as a pause in the temporal current; attachment to place as a function of time, captured in the phrase, "it takes time to know a place"; and place as time made visible, or place as memorial to times past.

Place is an organized world of meaning. It is essentially a static concept. If we see the world as process, constantly changing, we should not be able to develop any sense of place. Movement in space can be in one direction or circular, implying repetition. A common symbol for time is the arrow; others are the circular orbit and the swinging pendulum. Thus images of space and time merge. The arrow represents directional time but also movement in space to a goal. Goal is both a point in time and a point in space. My goal, let us say, is to be a vice-president in a motorcar company. The goal lies in my future; it is the ultimate place in society I wish to attain. The vice-presidency dominates my hope so that intermediate positions, such as foreman and manager, are mere steps up the ladder (Fig. 21A). I do not expect to remain a foreman for long, hence I hesitate to acquire the accouterments of the job. This

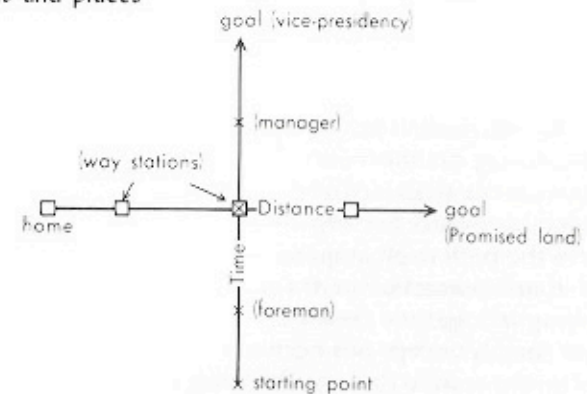
type of thinking, which is oriented to a future and compelling goal, may be a characteristic trait in the attitude of a whole people. Consider the Israelites and their view of time. The destination of the Chosen People was the Kingdom of God. All intermediate kingdoms were suspect. Unlike the ancient Greeks the Israelites hesitated to establish a political organization that suggested permanence. Earthly places were all temporary, at best stages on the way to the ultimate goal. Religions of transcendental hope tend to discourage the establishment of place. The message is, don't hang on to what you have; live in the present as if it were a camp or wayside station to the future.¹

The manager's office may be only two doors from the vice-president's office, but it will take the manager years of hard work to get there. The vice-president's office is a temporal goal. Goal is also a place in space, the promised land on the other side of the ocean or mountain. Months may lapse before the emigrants will reach their destination; however, what seems daunting to them at the start of the trip is not the time but the space that has yet to be traversed. Goal is one of the three categories of place that can be distinguished when movement is in one direction, with no thought of return; the other two are home and camps or wayside stations. Home is the stable world to be transcended, goal is the stable world to be attained, and camps are the rest stops for the journey from one world to the other. The arrow is the appropriate image (Fig. 21A).

Most movements are not major undertakings structured around the antipodal points of home base and goal. Most movements complete a more or less circular path, or swing back and forth like a pendulum (Fig. 21B). In the home pieces

Figure 21. Movement, time, and place: A. Linear paths and places; B. Cyclical/pendulumlike paths and places. A comment on Bii: In ancient China, people probably lived in the city through the winter months. As spring approached they moved out, lived in huts built in the countryside and cultivated land that was divided into a rectangular pattern. After harvest the people returned to the city and were engaged in various services, trades, and crafts. Thus life was divided into two poles—city and countryside, winter and summer, *yin* and *yang*.

A. Linear paths and places

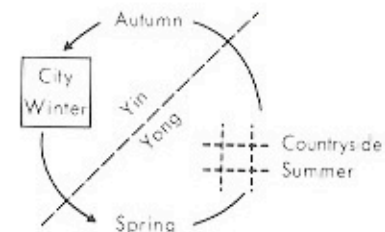


B. Cyclical/pendulumlike paths and places

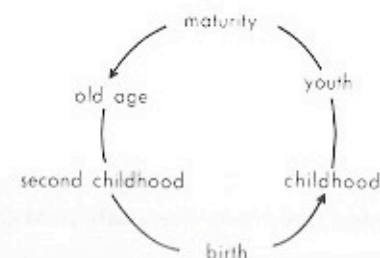
i. Daily



ii. Seasonal (the two poles—places—of ancient China)



iii. Stages (places) of life: cyclical model



and smells, a unique harmony of natural and artificial rhythms such as times of sunrise and sunset, of work and play. The feel of a place is registered in one's muscles and bones. A sailor has a recognizable style of walking because his posture is adapted to the plunging deck of a boat in high sea. Likewise, though less visibly, a peasant who lives in a mountain village may develop a different set of muscles and perhaps a slightly different manner of walking from a plainsman who has never climbed. Knowing a place, in the above senses, clearly takes time. It is a subconscious kind of knowing. In time we become familiar with a place, which means that we can take more and more of it for granted. In time a new house ceases to make little demands on our attention; it is as comfortable and unobtrusive as an old pair of slippers.

Attachment, whether to a person or to a locality, is seldom acquired in passing. Yet the philosopher James K. Feibleman noted: "The importance of events in any life is more directly proportionate to their intensity than to their extensity. It may take a man a year to travel around the world—and leave absolutely no impression on him. Then again it may take him only a second to see the face of a woman—and change his entire future."⁴ A man can fall in love at first sight with a place as with a woman. The first glimpse of the desert through a mountain pass or the first plunge into forested wilderness can call forth not only joy but, inexplicably, a sense of recognition as of a pristine and primordial world one has always known. A brief but intense experience is capable of nullifying the past so that we are ready to abandon home for the promised land. Still more curious is the fact that people can develop a passion for a certain type of environment without the benefit of direct encounter. A story, a descriptive passage or picture in a book suffices. For example, the scholar C. S. Lewis was overcome with a longing for remoteness and severity, for pure "northernness," when he was a child. Helen Gardner, in an appraisal of Lewis's life and work, wrote:

Northernness [was] a vision of huge, clear spaces hanging above the Atlantic in the endless twilight of Northern summer. Lewis never cooled to his early love. The sadness and sternness of the northern

world appealed to something very deep in his nature. But he had never lived in northern lands, nor did he feel the urge to travel northward and confront his personal vision with sensuous experience. He had become infatuated with a landscape through literary and musical means such as illustrations to stories from Wagner and records of "The Ring."⁵

Many years in one place may leave few memory traces that we can or would wish to recall; an intense experience of short duration, on the other hand, can alter our lives. This is a fact to bear in mind. Another is this. In relating the passage of time to the experience of place it is obviously necessary to take the human life cycle into account: ten years in childhood are not the same as ten years in youth or manhood. The child knows the world more sensuously than does the adult. This is one reason why the adult cannot go home again. This is also one reason why a native citizen knows his country in a way that cannot be duplicated by a naturalized citizen who has grown up elsewhere. Experienced spans of time, at different stages in life, are not commensurable. The West Indian writer, V. S. Naipaul, makes a character in a novel say this of emigrants:

They went. But they came back. You know, you are born in a place and you grow up there. You get to know the trees and plants. You will never know any other trees and plants like that. You grow up watching a guava tree, say. You know that brown-green bark peeling like old paint. You try to climb that tree. You know after you climb it a few times the bark gets smooth-smooth and so slippery you can't get a grip on it. You get that ticklish feeling in your foot. Nobody has to teach you what the guava is. You go away. You ask, "What is that tree?" Somebody will tell you, "An elm." You see another tree. Somebody will tell you, "That's an oak." Good; you know them. But it isn't the same. Here you wait for the poui to flower one week in the year and you don't even know you are waiting. All right, you go away. But you will come back. Where you born, man, you born.⁶

A young child's experience of time differs from that of an adult. To the young child time does not "flow"; he stands as it were outside it, remaining at the same tender age seemingly forever. To the grown person time rushes on, propelling him forward willy-nilly. Since small children are seldom able to reflect on their experiences and describe them, we need to make

use of the recall and observations of adults. Here is how the playwright Eugene Ionesco recalls his childhood. At the age of eight or nine, everything for him was joy and presentness. Time seemed a rhythm in space. The seasons did not mark the passage of the year; rather they spread out in space. As a young child he stood at the center of a world that was a decorative background, with its colors, now dark, now bright, with its flowers and grass appearing, then disappearing, moving toward him, moving away from him, unfolding before his eyes while he himself stayed in the same place, outside time, watching time pass. At fifteen or sixteen it was all over. The teenaged Ionesco felt as though a centrifugal force had thrown him out of his immutability into the midst of things that come and go and go away for good. He was in time, in flight, in finiteness; the present had disappeared. There was nothing left for him but a past and a tomorrow, a tomorrow that he was already conscious of as past.⁷

Sense of time affects sense of place. To the extent that a small child's time is not that of an older person, neither is his experience of place. An adult cannot know a place as a child knows it, and this is not only because their respective sensory and mental capacities differ but also because their feelings for time have little in common.

As one lives on, the past lengthens. What is this personal past like? Simone de Beauvoir examined her own past and wrote rather gloomily,

The past is not a peaceful landscape lying there behind me, a country in which I can stroll wherever I please, and which will gradually show me all its secret hills and dales. As I was moving forward, so it was crumbling. Most of the wreckage that can still be seen is colorless, distorted, frozen. . . . Here and there, I see occasional pieces whose melancholy beauty enchants me.⁸

What can the past mean to us? People look back for various reasons, but shared by all is the need to acquire a sense of self and of identity. I am more than what the thin present defines. I am more than someone who at this moment is struggling to put thought into words: I am also a published writer, and here is the book, hardbound, resting reassuringly by my side. We are

what we have. We have friends, relatives, and ancestors; we have skills and knowledge, and we have done good deeds. But these possessions may be neither visible nor readily accessible. Friends live far away, or have died. Skills and knowledge are not at this time called into use, and may well have rusted. As for worthy deeds, they are ghosts that can take on flesh only when occasions arise that justify our telling them to others.

To strengthen our sense of self the past needs to be rescued and made accessible. Various devices exist to shore up the crumbling landscapes of the past. For example, we can visit the tavern: it provides an opportunity to talk and turn our small adventures into epics, and in some such fashion ordinary lives achieve recognition and even brief glory in the credulous minds of fellow inebriates. Friends depart, but their letters are tangible evidence of their continuing esteem. Relatives die and yet remain present and smiling in the family album. Our own past, then, consists of bits and pieces. It finds a home in the high school diploma, the wedding picture, and the stamped visas of a dogeared passport; in the stringless tennis racket and the much-traveled trunk; in the personal library and the old family home. What objects best image our being? The grandfather clock and the heirloom silverware? The contents of a desk drawer? Books? "A book in one's own library," says the pseudonymous Aristides, "is in a sense a brick in the building of one's being, carrying with it memories, a small block of one's personal intellectual history, associations unsortable in their profusion."⁹

Objects anchor time. They need not, of course, be personal possessions. We can try to reconstruct our past with brief visits to our old neighborhood and the birthplaces of our parents. We can also recapture our personal history by maintaining contact with people who have known us when we were young. Personal possessions are perhaps more important for old people. They are too weary to define their sense of self by projects and action; their social world shrinks and with it the opportunities to proclaim fair deeds; and they may be too fragile to visit places that hold for them fond memories. Personal possessions—old letters and the family settee—remain as

accessible comforts, the flavor of times past hovering about them.

Young people live in the future; what they do rather than what they possess defines their sense of selfhood. Yet the young occasionally look back; they can feel nostalgic toward their own short past and proprietary about things. In modern society the teenager, as both his body and his mind undergo rapid change, may have an infirm grasp of who he is. The world seems at times beyond his control. Security lies in routine, in what the teenager perceives to be his own sheltered childhood and in the objects identified with an earlier, more stable phase of life.¹⁰ In general, we may say that whenever a person (young or old) feels that the world is changing too rapidly, his characteristic response is to evoke an idealized and stable past. On the other hand, when a person feels that he himself is directing the change and in control of affairs of importance to him, then nostalgia has no place in his life: action rather than mementos of the past will support his sense of identity.

Some people try hard to recapture the past. Others, on the contrary, try to efface it, thinking it a burden like material possessions. Attachment to things and veneration for the past often go together. A person who likes leather-bound books and oak beams in the ceiling is *ipso facto* an acolyte of history. In contrast, one who disdains possessions and the past is probably a rationalist or a mystic. Rationalism is unsympathetic to clutter. It encourages the belief that the good life is simple enough for the mind to design independently of tradition and custom, and that indeed tradition and custom can cloud the prism of rational thought. Mysticism likewise disdains clutter, material and mental. It declares historical time to be an illusion. Man's essential being belongs to eternity. A mystic frees himself from the burden of material things. He lives in a hermit's cell or by Walden Pond. He is disencumbered of his past.

Societies, like human individuals, differ in their attitudes toward time and place. Nonliterate cultures are, in Lévi-Strauss's word, "cold." Cold societies seek to annul the possible effects of historical events on their equilibrium and continuity. They deny change and try, "with a dexterity we underestimate," to

make the status of their development as permanent as possible.¹¹ The Pygmies of the Congo rain forest have a very shallow sense of time. They lack a creation story; genealogy and even animal life cycles are of little interest. They appear to live wholly in the present. What is there in their environment to remind them of a lengthening past? The rain forest is unchanging. Whatever is made by the Pygmies is made quickly and almost as quickly disintegrates, so that there are few objects that can be handed down from generation to generation as tokens of times gone by.

The Australian aborigines, in comparison, have a much stronger sense of history. Events leading to their present world are recorded in features of the landscape, and each time people pass a particular cleft, cave, or pinnacle they are enabled to recall the deed of an ancestor and culture hero. Still, without a written record and a sophisticated counting system the sense of time cannot be deep. Of the Nuer people in Africa, Evans-Pritchard wrote: "Valid history ends a century ago, and tradition, generously measured, takes us back only ten to twelve generations in lineage structure, and if we are right in supposing that lineage structure never grows, it follows that the distance between the beginning of the world and the present day remains unalterable. . . . How shallow is Nuer time may be judged from the fact that the tree under which mankind came into being was still standing in Western Nuerland a few years ago!"¹²

Among nonliterate peoples, not only the means but the desire to think historically is lacking. The ideal is not development but equilibrium, a state of unvarying harmony. The world as it exists is to be maintained, or restored to pristine perfection. Maturity rather than primitive beginnings is valued. A boy is reborn at the initiation ceremony, which enables him to discard his immature years as he prepares to assume the dignity of manhood. Among such people the fumbling steps toward achievement, including the achieved social order, are readily forgotten. Institutions are sanctioned by timeless myths and an unvarying cosmos. Objects as well as places are venerated because they have power or are associated with beings of power,

not because they are old. Antiquarianism is alien to primitive thought.

In the literate Oriental societies of China and Japan the historical sense is well developed. The Chinese are famed for ancestor worship, for keeping dynastic annals, and for deferring to the wisdom of the past. However, the Oriental sense of history differs markedly from that of the Western world in the modern period, that is to say, from the eighteenth century onward. In traditional China the image of an ideal world, in which society conforms to the nature of things, tends to override any sense of history as cumulative change. The constant references to a Golden Age in the past are exhortations to restore harmony to the present in accordance with an idealized model. They call for the return to a former social order and to the rites that sustain it. Their tone is not sentimental or nostalgic. The Chinese do not postulate that the material furnishings of life were more gracious in the past and hence merit the compliment of imitation. What ought to be imitated and perpetuated are the abstract and rather austere rules of social harmony.

The form is more important than the particular substance, which is corruptible. Form can be resurrected whereas the matter of which it consists inevitably decays. In Japan this idea of regeneration explains an ancient Shinto custom. At stated intervals Shinto temples are entirely rebuilt and their furnishings and decorations renewed. The great shrines of Ise in particular, the very center of the religion, are rebuilt every twenty years.¹³ In contrast, the great Christian shrines of St. Peter's, Chartres, and Canterbury endure for centuries. The forms change in the long process of construction but the substance, once it is in place, remains unaltered.

Stone is the West's material for building monuments. In China and Japan wood is often used, and wood does not last as long. The Chinese civilization is old but the Chinese landscape offers few man-made structures of great antiquity. Very little that can be seen dates back more than a few centuries. The Great Wall itself, or what can be seen of it, is largely the work of Ming dynasty (A.D. 1366-1644). One of the oldest structures

extant in China is the flat-arched An-chi Bridge of Hopei province, which was built between A.D. 605 and 616.¹⁴ The walled city, the hump-backed stone bridge, the rock-and-water garden, the pagoda, and the pavilion have an aura of age and permanence. Like works of nature, they seem changeless. The landscape evinces no clear story line; relics that point to stages of the past are not evident.

History has depth, and time bestows value. These ideas are perhaps more likely to develop in people who live surrounded by artifacts that they know to have taken a long time to make. A great cathedral in the Middle Ages is the result of construction effort sustained over a century and longer. Several human generations can be measured against the steady rise of a monumental edifice. The edifice is a public timepiece. The city in which it is located also has temporal depth objectified in the city's successive walls that accrue like the annual rings of an aged tree (Fig. 22). In China, on the other hand, neither large buildings nor even cities take many years to construct. The Chinese build speedily, and not with an eye to eternity, unless it be that of form. For example, work on Ch'ang-an, the Han capital, began in the spring of 192 B.C. and was completed in the autumn of 190 B.C.¹⁵ Emperor Wen, when he assumed power in A.D. 581, aspired to build a capital on an unprecedented scale. He took up residence in his new city only two years later. The Sui emperors also built an eastern capital, Lo-yang, in less than a year (A.D. 605-606), with a labor force of some two million people.¹⁶ Kublai Khan's Cambaluc was raised from new foundations. A wall girdled the city in 1267. Work began on the main halls and palace in 1273 and was completed early the following year. When Marco Polo arrived in 1275 Cambaluc was only a few years old, yet it already bustled with activity.¹⁷

The European landscape, unlike the Chinese, is historical, a museum of architectural relics. Prehistoric megaliths, Greek temples, Roman aqueducts, medieval churches, and Renaissance palaces stand in sufficient number to affect the atmosphere of the present scene. Striking changes in architectural style encourage the discerning eye to see history as a long

GROWTH RINGS (SUCCESSIVE WALLS) OF PARIS

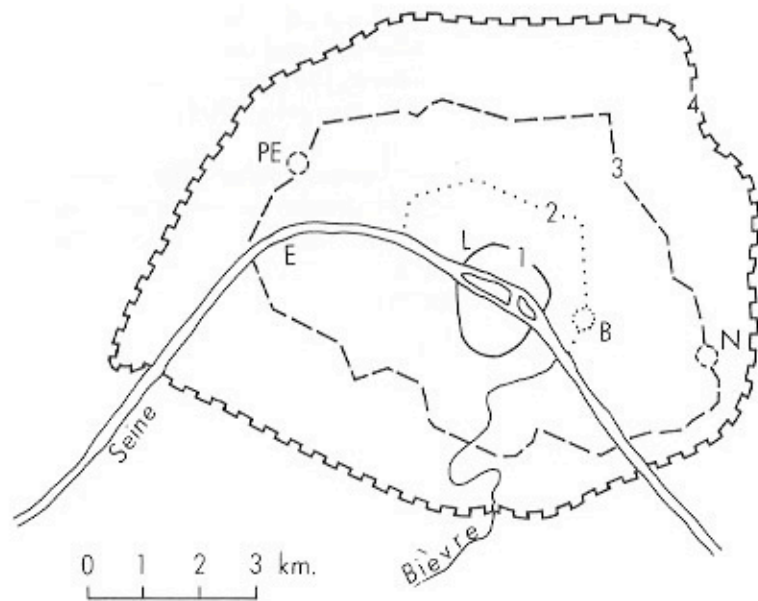


Figure 22. Growth rings (successive walls) of Paris. 1. Wall of Philip Augustus, thirteenth century. 2. Wall at the time of Louis XIV, seventeenth century. 3. Wall of 1840. B. Place de la Bastille. E. Eiffel Tower. L. Louvre. N. Place de la Nation. PE. Place de l'Etoile. Time is made visible in the concentric growth rings of a city. Lucien Gallois, "Origin and growth of Paris," *Geographical Review*, vol. 13, 1923, page 360, figure 12. Reprinted with permission from the American Geographical Society.

chronicle with plots that do not repeat themselves. However, a landscape littered with old buildings does not compel anyone to give it a historical interpretation; one needs a "discerning eye" for such a viewpoint. Until the eighteenth century, time to Europeans had in fact little depth. Remember how in the 1650s Archbishop James Ussher established the creation of the earth itself at 4004 B.C. Remember also that people in the Middle Ages and Renaissance tended to view history primarily as a

succession of noble and ignoble deeds and of natural and supernatural events. They showed little awareness of the habits and manners of their forebears living in different periods of the past. They were indeed little aware of the periods themselves. History as the parade of people in fancy costumes and as changing fashions in furniture, so well understood by the modern man who may otherwise be ignorant of history, was alien to medieval thought.¹⁸

The concept "antique" is modern, as is the idea that old furniture and buildings have a special value bestowed by time and that they should be preserved. Consider the fate of the Colosseum in Rome. Its vast four-storied oval served as a housing site in the Middle Ages. People did not gawk at it; they found shelter in its niches as they would in the caves and on the shelves of a natural scarp. From the fifteenth century on, the Colosseum was robbed of its travertine blocks, which were used in such major buildings as the Palazzo Venezia and St. Peter's. Pope Sixtus V, the great planner of Baroque Rome, had little respect for the artifacts of antiquity; he mined many of the ancient ruins for building material. When toward the end of his short reign he appraised the Colosseum, he did so with the eye of an industrialist rather than that of a historian: he thought the massive structure could be transformed into a colony of workshops for wool-spinners.¹⁹

Interest in the past waxed with the desire to collect and possess material objects and with the growing prestige of disciplined curiosity. The museum appeared in response to these desires. It began as the private collection of wealthy people who expanded their hoard of familiar art treasures to include oddities, natural and man-made, from widely different parts of the world. At first the collection catered to the pleasure, pride, and enlightenment of a select group only. By the eighteenth century the public was allowed access. At first the collector was not primarily interested in the past; his concern lay in valuable and odd objects, objects that were often considered valuable because odd—odd rather than old. Obviously collection gained interest as the items were labeled and classified. And to

the Western mind the simplest taxonomy called for the coordinates of time and place: a coin or a piece of bone belonged to a certain period in the past and came from a certain locality.

In the Age of Enlightenment cultivated Europeans showed increasing fascination with the past, with the idea of development and of memory. As they catalogued items in their museum collections they were led to ponder on the length of the human time span. The new sciences of natural history and geology reminded them that nature's myriad forms had antecedents. In philosophy a major interest of the age was the phenomenon of memory. By remembering, philosophers pointed out, man could escape the purely momentary sensations, the nothingness that lay in wait for him between moments of existence.²⁰ And what better aid to memory than the tangible evidences of the past—old furniture, old buildings, and museum collections?

The cult of the past, as manifested in the establishment of museums and in the preservation of old buildings, was a type of consciousness that emerged at a certain stage in Europe's history. It has little in common with the fact of being rooted in place. The state of rootedness is essentially subconscious: it means that a people have come to identify themselves with a particular locality, to feel that it is their home and the home of their ancestors. The museum reflects a habit of mind opposed to one that perceives place to be rooted, sacred, and inviolable. The museum, after all, consists wholly of displaced objects. Treasures and oddities are torn from their cultural matrices in different parts of the world and put on pedestals in an alien environment. When London Bridge was dismantled and transported across an ocean and a continent to be rebuilt in the desert of Arizona, the media described the event as a typical example of American folly. It was unique, however, only in scale, for the undertaking reveals an attitude to time and place that is essentially the same as that of Lord Elgin (1766–1841), who removed Athenian marbles to exhibit them in the halls of the British Museum.

The cult of the past calls for illusion rather than authenticity. Ruins in the landscape garden, fashionable for a time in the eighteenth century, made no pretense to being genuine. What

mattered was that they provided a mood of time-soaked melancholy. In a museum the complete original artifact is the desideratum, but entire pots are put together from a few fragments and whole animals are re-created from small pieces of bone. The principle for restoring a historic room is similar. Try to obtain the original furnishings. If they cannot be found, antiques resembling the originals may be sought. When antiques are not available, modern reproductions are substituted. An important service of museums is to generate didactic illusions.

Americans of the Revolutionary and post-Independence period wished to deny the European legacy, including the value placed on the past, but they could not be more than partially successful. As a nation born in the eighteenth century America inherited some of Europe's veneration for classical Rome and Greece, as well as Europe's fascination with time and memory. Thomas Jefferson, an iconoclast in some moods, nevertheless designed his university in the classical style, and when he viewed the Blue Ridge landscape his mind was drawn to reflect on its great antiquity.²¹ Historical societies soon appeared in the young nation, first in Boston in 1791 and then in New York in 1804. Others followed. In every case their purpose was to collect and preserve documents that would tell the story of their area. Old furniture, tools, and other bric-a-brac were three-dimensional documents that became the core of future museum collections.²²

When a people deliberately change their environment and feel they are in control of their destiny, they have little cause for nostalgia. Historical societies need not be backward-looking; they may be founded to preserve materials that mark the stages of confident growth and point to the future. When, on the other hand, a people perceive that changes are occurring too rapidly, spinning out of control, nostalgia for an idyllic past waxes strong. In the United States, soon after the centennial celebrations the nostalgic past began to overshadow the past perceived as stages of dynamic growth.²³ Historical societies and museums proliferated to serve both perceptions of time. By the 1960s some 2,500 history museums were open in

the United States as against the 274 museums known to be operating on the Indian subcontinent.²⁴

Preserving historic buildings, and even whole neighborhoods, is a concern of architect-planners and citizens in both Europe and America. Why preserve? What is the principle behind saving one building rather than another? To simplify the problem these questions raise, look first at the life of a human individual rather than that of a city. A man, let us say, has lived in the same house for many years. By the time he is fifty his house is cluttered with the accumulations of a busy life. They are comfortable mementos of his past, but eventually some of them have to be discarded; they threaten to stand in the way of his present and future projects. He decides to throw much away and keep what is of value to him. He is called upon to evaluate his own past. What does he wish to remember? Evidences of failure, such as rejections slips from publishers and the old copying machine he never learned to use, are quickly junked. A man is not an archivist of his own life, obliged to preserve documents impartially for a future historian to interpret: he wants a commodious house filled with objects that support his sense of self. Valuables are kept, as are old letters and knickknacks that have sentimental worth and do not take up much space. What about the four-poster bed in the guest room? It has been in the family for a long time, it shows good workmanship, but it is also hard on the human spine and leaves little room for closets. Should his guest be made to suffer for his piety?

City authorities and citizens are faced with an essentially similar problem. What facets of the city's past should be preserved? Not the evidences of societal failure, such as old prisons, mental hospitals, and workhouses. These are removed with no regret or second thought on the inviolate nature of history. Art treasures and books are kept. They end up in galleries and libraries. Documents and records are filed away. Such things individually and collectively use little space on the scale of a city. But what about old houses that once belonged to important personages, and malfunctioning department stores that have architectural merit? Unlike precious pictures

and books, old buildings occupy much city space and come into conflict with current needs and aspirations.

The passion for preservation arises out of the need for tangible objects that can support a sense of identity. This theme has already been explored. If we turn to the preservationist's reasons for wanting to maintain aspects of the past, they appear to be of three kinds: aesthetic, moral, and morale-boosting. An old edifice, it is argued, should be saved for posterity because it has architectural merit and because it is an achievement of one's forebears. The reason is based on aesthetics, tinged with piety. An old house ought to be preserved because it was once the home of a famous statesman or inventor. Here the appeal is to piety and to the end of building a people's morale, their sense of pride. An old run-down neighborhood should be saved from urban renewal because it seems to satisfy the needs of the local residents, or because, despite a decaying physical environment, it promotes certain human virtues and a colorful style of life. The appeal is to qualities inherent in established ways and to the people's moral right to maintain their distinctive customs against the forces of change.²⁵

Why risk change? The past really existed. All that we are we owe to the past. The present also has merit; it is our experiential reality, the feeling point of existence with its inchoate mixture of joy and sorrow. The future, in contrast, is a vision. Many visions go unrealized and some turn into nightmares. A political revolutionary promises us a new earth and may give us chaos or tyranny. An architectural revolutionary promises us a new city and may give us empty lawns and full parking lots. On the other hand, without vision and the desire for change life turns stale; and it is a fact that all creative effort—including the making of an omelette—is preceded by destruction. What future achievement might justify the removal of any urban tissue that still shows signs of life? Planners and citizens, sensitive to past errors, rightly hesitate to sacrifice the present, with all its problems, for a vision of the future that may not be realized. Yet there are striking examples of successful responses to unsought challenges. Cities have repeatedly succumbed to the violence of nature and of war. Thus when fire hollowed out

medieval London, an earthquake demolished much of San Francisco, and Nazi bombers flattened Rotterdam, human vision and will were able to overcome disaster. Out of the ruins new cities of no less distinction and greater functionality emerged.²⁶

We have examined briefly certain relationships between time and the experience of place. The main points are these: (1) If time is conceived as flow or movement then place is pause. In this view human time is marked by stages as human movement in space is marked by pauses. Just as time may be represented by an arrow, a circular orbit, or the path of a swinging pendulum, so may movements in space; and each representation has its characteristic set of pauses or places. (2) While it takes time to form an attachment to place, the quality and intensity of experience matters more than simple duration. (3) Being rooted in a place is a different kind of experience from having and cultivating a "sense of place." A truly rooted community may have shrines and monuments, but it is unlikely to have museums and societies for the preservation of the past. The effort to evoke a sense of place and of the past is often deliberate and conscious. To the extent that the effort is conscious it is the mind at work, and the mind—if allowed its imperial sway—will annul the past by making it all present knowledge.²⁷

14

Epilogue

Human beings, like other animals, feel at home on earth. We are, most of the time, at ease in our part of the world. Life in its daily round is thoroughly familiar. Toast for breakfast is taken for granted, likewise the need to be in the office on time. Skills once learned are as natural to us as breathing. Above all, we are oriented. This is a fundamental source of confidence. We know where we are and we can find our way to the local drugstore. Striding down the path in complete confidence, we are shocked when we miss a step or when our body expects a step where none exists.

Learning is rarely at the level of explicit and formal instruction. The infant acquires a sense of distance by attending to the sound of a human voice that signals the approach of his mother. A child is walked to school a few times and thereafter he can make the trip on his own, without the help of a map; indeed, he is unable to envisage the route. We are in a strange part of town: unknown space stretches ahead of us. In time we know a few landmarks and the routes connecting them. Eventually what was strange town and unknown space becomes familiar place. Abstract space, lacking significance other than strangeness, becomes concrete place, filled with meaning. Much is learned but not through formal instruction.