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THE PHENOMENON OF PLACE

Our everyday life-world consists of concrete "phenomena." It consists of people, of animals, of flowers, trees and forests, of stone, earth, wood and water, of towns, streets and houses, doors, windows, and furniture. And it consists of sun, moon, and stars, of drifting clouds, of night and day and changing seasons. But it also comprises more intangible phenomena such as feelings. This is what is "given," this is the "content" of our existence. Thus Rilke says: "Are we perhaps *here* to say: house, bridge, fountain, gate, jug, fruit tree, window,—at best: Pillar, tower."[1] Everything else, such as atoms and molecules, numbers, and all kinds of "data," are abstractions or tools which are constructed to serve other purposes than those of everyday life. Today it is common to mistake the tools for reality.

The concrete things which constitute our given world are interrelated in complex and perhaps contradictory ways. Some of the phenomena may for instance comprise others. The forest consists of trees, and the town is made up of houses. "Landscape" is such a comprehensive phenomenon. In general we may say that some phenomena form an "environment" to others. A concrete term for environment is *place*. It is common usage to say that acts and occurrences *take place*. In fact it is meaningless to imagine any happening without reference to a locality. Place is evidently an integral part of existence. What, then, do we mean with the word "place?" Obviously we mean something more than abstract location. We mean a totality made up of concrete things having material substance, shape, texture, and colour. Together these things determine an "environmental character," which is the essence of place. In general a place is given as such a character or "atmosphere." A place is therefore a qualitative, "total" phenomenon, which we cannot reduce to any of its properties, such as spatial relationships, without losing its concrete nature out of sight.

Everyday experience moreover tells us that different actions need different environments to take place in a satisfactory way. As a consequence, towns and houses consist of a multitude of particular places. This fact is of course taken into consideration by current theory of planning and architecture, but so far the problem has been treated in a too abstract way. "Taking place" is usually understood in a quantitative, "functional" sense, with implications such as spatial distribution and dimensioning. But are not "functions" inter-human and similar everywhere? Evidently not. "Similar" functions, even the most basic ones such as sleeping and eating, take place in very different ways, and demand places with different properties, in accordance with different cultural traditions and different environmental conditions. The functional approach therefore left out the place as a concrete "here" having its particular identity.

Being qualitative totalities of a complex nature, places cannot be described by means of analytic, "scientific" concepts. As a matter of principle science "abstracts" from the given to arrive at neutral, "objective" knowledge. What is lost, however, is the everyday life-world, which ought to be the real concern of man in general and planners and architects in particular.[2] Fortunately a way out of the impasse exists, that is, the method known as *phenomenology*. Phenomenology was conceived as a "return to things," as opposed to abstractions and mental constructions. So far phenomenologists have been mainly concerned with ontology, psychology, ethics, and to some extent aesthetics, and have given relatively little attention to the phenomenology of the daily environment. A few pioneer works however exist but they hardly contain any direct reference to architecture.[3] A phenomenology of architecture is therefore urgently needed.

Some of the philosophers who have approached the problem of our life-world, have used language and literature as sources of "information." Poetry in fact is able to concretize those totalities which elude science, and may therefore suggest how we might proceed to obtain the needed understanding. One of the poems used by [Martin] Heidegger to explain the nature of language, is the splendid "A Winter Evening" by Georg Trakl.[4] The words of Trakl also serve our purpose very well, as they make present a total life-situation where the aspect of place is strongly felt:

A Winter Evening
Window with falling snow is arrayed,
long tolls the vesper bell,
The house is provided well,
The table is for many laid.
Wandering ones, more than a few,
Come to the door on darksome courses,
Golden blooms the tree of graces
Drawing up the earth's cool dew.
Wanderer quietly steps within;
Pain has turned the threshold to stone.
There lie, in limpid brightness shown,
Upon the table bread and wine.[5]

We shall not repeat Heidegger's profound analysis of the poem, but rather point out a few properties which illuminate our problem. In general, Trakl uses *concrete* images which we all know from our everyday world. He talks about "snow," "window," "house," "table," "door," "tree," "threshold," "bread and wine," "darkness," and "light," and he characterizes man as a "wanderer." These images, however, also imply more general structures. First of all the poem distinguishes between an *outside* and an *inside*. The *outside* is presented in the first two lines of the first stanza, and comprises *natural* as well as *man-made* elements. Natural place is present in the falling snow which implies winter, and by the evening. The very title of the poem "places" everything in this natural context. A winter evening, however, is something more than a point in the calendar. As a concrete presence, it is experienced as a set of particular qualities, or in general as a *Stimmung* or "character," which forms a background to acts and occurrences. In the poem this character is given by the snow falling on the window, cold, soft and soundless, hiding the contours of those objects which are still recognized in the approaching darkness. The word "falling" moreover creates a sense of *space*, or rather: an implied presence of earth and sky. With a minimum of words, Trakl thus brings a total natural environment to life. But the outside also has man-made properties. This is indicated by the vesper bell, which is heard everywhere, and makes the "private" inside become part of a comprehensive, "public" totality. The vesper bell, however, is something more than a practical man-made artifact. It is a symbol, which reminds us of the common values which are at the basis of that totality. In Heidegger's words: "the tolling of the evening bell brings men, as mortals, before the divine."[6]

The *inside* is presented in the next two verses. It is described as a house, which offers man shelter and security by being enclosed and "well provided." It has, however, a window, an opening which makes us experience the inside as a complement to the outside. As a final focus within the house we find the table, which "is for many laid." At the table men come together, it is the *centre* which more than anything else constitutes the inside. The character of the inside is hardly told, but anyhow present. It is luminous and warm, in contrast to the cold darkness outside, and its silence is pregnant with potential sound. In general the inside is a comprehensible world of *things*, where the life of "many" may take place.

In the next two stanzas the perspective is deepened. Here the *meaning* of places and things comes forth, and man is presented as a wanderer on "darksome courses." Rather than being placed safely within the house he has created for himself, he comes from the outside, from the "path of life," which also represents man's attempt at "orienting" himself in the given unknown environment. But nature also has another side: it offers the grace of growth and blossom. In the image of the "golden" tree, earth and sky are unified and become a *world*. Through man's labour this world is brought inside as bread and wine, whereby the inside is "illuminated," that is, becomes meaningful. Without the "sacred" fruits of sky and earth, the inside would remain "empty." The house and the table receive and gather, and bring the world "close." *To dwell in a house therefore means to inhabit the world.* But this dwelling is not easy; it has to be reached on dark paths, and a threshold separates the outside from the inside. Representing the "rift" between "otherness" and manifest meaning, it embodies suffering and is "turned to stone." In the threshold, thus, the *problem* of dwelling comes to the fore.[7]

Trakl's poem illuminates some essential phenomena of our life-world, and in particular the basic properties of place. First of all it tells us that every situation is local as well as general. The winter evening described is obviously a local, nordic phenomenon, but the implied notions of outside and inside are general, as are the meanings connected with this distinction. The poem hence concretizes basic properties of existence. "Concretize" here means to make the general "visible" as a concrete, local situation. In doing this the poem moves in the opposite direction of scientific thought. Whereas science departs from the "given," poetry brings us back to the concrete things, uncovering the meanings inherent in the life-world.[8]

Furthermore Trakl's poem distinguishes between natural and man-made elements, whereby it suggests a point of departure for an "environmental phenomenology." Natural elements are evidently the primary components of the given, and places are in fact usually defined in geographical terms. We must repeat however, that "place" means something more than location. Various attempts at a description of natural places are offered by current literature on "landscape," but again we find that the usual approach is too abstract, being based on "functional" or perhaps "visual" considerations.[9] Again we must turn to philosophy for help. As a first, fundamental distinction Heidegger introduces the concepts of "earth" and "sky," and says: "Earth is the serving bearer, blossoming and fruiting, spreading out in rock and water, rising up into plant and animal..." "The sky is the vaulting path of the sun, the course of the changing moon, the glitter of the stars, the year's seasons, the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night, the clemency and inclemency of the weather, the drifting clouds and blue depth of the ether..."[10] Like many fundamental insights, the distinction between earth and sky might seem trivial. Its importance however comes out when we add Heidegger's definition of "dwelling:" "the way in which you are and I am, the way in which we humans *are* on the earth, is dwelling..." But "on the earth" already means "under the sky."[11] He also calls what is *between* earth and sky *the world*, and says that "the world is the house where the mortals dwell."[12] In other words, when man is capable of dwelling the world becomes an "inside."

In general, nature forms an extended comprehensive totality, a "place," which according to local circumstances has a particular identity. This identity, or "spirit," may be described by means of the kind of concrete, "qualitative" terms Heidegger uses to characterize earth and sky, and has to take this fundamental distinction as its point of departure. In this way we might arrive at an existentially relevant understanding of *landscape*, which ought to be preserved as the main designation of natural places. Within the landscape, however, there are subordinate places, as well as natural "things" such as Trakl's "tree." In these things the meaning of the natural environment is "condensed."

The man-made parts of the environment are first of all "settlements" of different scale, from houses and farms to villages and towns, and secondly "paths" which connect these settlements, as well as various elements which transform nature into a "cultural landscape." If the settlements are organically related to their environment, it implies that they serve as *foci* where the environmental character is condensed and "explained." Thus Heidegger says: "the single houses, the villages, the towns are works of building which within and around themselves gather the multifarious in-between. The buildings bring the earth as the inhabited landscape close to man, and at the same time place the closeness of

neighbourly dwelling under the expanse of the sky."[13] The basic property of man-made places is therefore concentration and enclosure. They are "insides" in a full sense, which means that they "gather" what is known. To fulfill this function they have openings which relate to the outside. (Only an *inside* can in fact have openings.) Buildings are furthermore related to their environment by resting on the ground and rising towards the sky. Finally the man-made environments comprise artifacts or "things," which may serve as internal foci, and emphasize the gathering function of the settlement. In Heidegger's words: "the thing things world," where "thinging" is used in the original sense of "gathering," and further: "Only what conjoins itself out of world becomes a thing."[14]

Our introductory remarks give several indications about the *structure* of places. Some of these have already been worked out by phenomenologist philosophers, and offer a good point of departure for a more complete phenomenology. A first step is taken with the distinction of natural and man-made phenomena. A second step is represented by the categories of earth-sky (horizontal-vertical) and outside-inside. These categories have spatial implications, and "space" is hence re-introduced, not primarily as a mathematical concept, but as an existential dimension.[15] A final and particularly important step is taken with the concept of "character." Character is determined by *how* things are, and gives our investigation a basis in the concrete phenomena of our everyday life-world. Only in this way we may fully grasp the *genius loci*; the "spirit of place" which the ancients recognized as that "opposite" man has to come to terms with, to be able to dwell.[16] The concept of *genius loci* denotes the essence of place.

THE STRUCTURE OF PLACE

Our preliminary discussion of the phenomena of place led to the conclusion that the structure of place ought to be described in terms of "landscape" and "settlement," and analyzed by means of the categories "space" and "character." Whereas "space" denotes the three-dimensional organization of the elements which make up a place, "character" denotes the general "atmosphere" which is the most comprehensive property of any place. Instead of making a distinction between space and character, it is of course possible to employ one comprehensive concept, such as "lived space."[17] For our purpose, however, it is practical to distinguish between space and character. Similar spatial organizations may possess very different characters according to the concrete treatment of the space-defining elements (the *boundary*). The history of basic spatial forms have been given ever new characterizing interpretations.[18] On the other hand it has to be pointed out that the spatial organization puts certain limits to characterization, and that the two concepts are interdependent.

"Space" is certainly no new term in architectural theory. But space can mean many things. In current literature we may distinguish between two uses: space as three-dimensional geometry, and space as perceptual field.[19] None of these however are satisfactory, being abstractions from the intuitive three-dimensional totality of everyday experience, which we may call "concrete space." Concrete human actions in fact do not take place in an homogeneous isotropic space, but in a space distinguished by qualitative differences, such as "up" and "down." In architectural theory several attempts have been made to define space in concrete, qualitative terms. [Sigfried] Giedion, thus uses the distinction between "outside" and "inside" as the basis for a grand view of architectural history.[20]

Kevin Lynch penetrates deeper into the structure of concrete space, introducing the concepts of "node" ("landmark"), "path," "edge," and "district," to denote those elements which form the basis for man's orientation in space.[21] Paolo Portoghesi finally defines space as a "system of places," implying that the concept of space has its roots in concrete situations, although spaces may be *described* by means of mathematics.[22] The latter view corresponds to Heidegger's statement that "spaces receive their being from locations and not from 'space.'"[23] The outside-inside relation which is a primary aspect of concrete space, implies that spaces possess a varying degree of *extension* and *enclosure*. Whereas landscapes are distinguished by a varied, but basically continuous extension, settlements are enclosed entities. Settlement and landscape therefore have a *figure-ground* relationship. In general, any enclosure becomes manifest as a "figure" in relation to the extended ground of the landscape. A settlement loses its identity if this relationship is corrupted, just as much as the landscape loses its identity as comprehensive extension. In a wider context any enclosure becomes a *centre*, which may function as a "focus" for its surroundings. From the centre space extends with a varying degree of continuity (rhythm) in different directions. Evidently the main directions are horizontal and vertical, that is, the directions of earth and sky. *Centralization, direction*, and *rhythm* are therefore other important properties of concrete space. Finally it has to be mentioned that natural elements (such as hills) and settlements may be clustered or grouped with a varying degree of *proximity*.

All the spatial properties mentioned are of a "topological" kind, and correspond to the well-known "principles of organization" of Gestalt theory. The primary existential importance of these principles is confirmed by the researches of Piaget on the child's conception of space.[24] Geometrical modes of organization only develop later in life to serve particular purposes, and may in general be understood as a more "precise" definition of the basic topological structures. The topological enclosure thus becomes a circle, the "free" curve a straight line, and the cluster a grid. In architecture geometry is used to make a general comprehensive system manifest, such as an inferred "cosmic order."

Any enclosure is defined by a boundary: Heidegger says: "A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that, from which something begins its presencing."[25] The boundaries of a built space are known as *floor, wall,* and *ceiling*. The boundaries of a landscape are structurally similar, and consist of ground, horizon, and sky. This simple structural similarity is of basic importance for the relationship between natural and man-made places. The enclosing properties of a boundary are determined by its *openings*, as was poetically intuited by Trakl when using the images of window, door, and threshold. In general the boundary, and in particular the wall, makes the spatial structure visible as continuous and/or discontinuous extension, direction and rhythm.

"Character" is at the same time a more general and a more concrete concept than "space." On the one hand it denotes a general comprehensive atmosphere, and on the other the concrete form and substance of space-defining elements. Any real *presence* is intimately linked with a character.[26] A phenomenology of character has to comprise a survey of manifest characters as well as an investigation of their concrete determinants. We have pointed out that different actions demand places with a different character. A dwelling has to be "protective," an office "practical," a ball-room "festive," and a church

"solemn." When we visit a foreign city, we are usually struck by its particular character, which becomes an important part of the experience. Landscapes also possess character, some of which is of a particular "natural" kind. Thus we talk about "barren" and "fertile," "smiling" and "threatening" landscapes. In general we have to emphasize that *all places have character*, and that character is the basic mode in which the world is "given." To some extent the character of a place is a function of time; it changes with the seasons, the course of the day, and the weather, factors which above all determine different conditions of *light*.

The character is determined by the material and formal constitution of the place. We must therefore ask: *how* is the ground on which we walk, *how* is the sky above our heads, or in general: *how* are the boundaries which define the place. How a boundary is depends upon its formal articulation, which is again related to the way it is "built." Looking at a building from this point of view, we have to consider how it rests on the ground and how it rises towards the sky. Particular attention has to be given to its lateral boundaries, or walls, which also contribute decisively to determine the character of the *urban* environment. We are indebted to Robert Venturi for having recognized this fact, after it had been considered for many years "immoral" to talk about "facades."[27] Usually the character of a "family" of buildings which constitute a place, is "condensed" in characteristic *motifs*, such as particular types of windows, doors, and roofs. Such motifs may become "conventional elements," which serve to transpose a character from one place to another. In the boundary, thus, character and space come together, and we may agree with Venturi when he defines architecture as "the wall between the inside and the outside."[28]

Except for the intuitions of Venturi, the problem of character has hardly been considered in current architectural theory. As a result, theory has to a high extent lost contact with the concrete life-world. This is particularly the case with technology, which is today considered a mere means to satisfy practical demand. Character however, depends upon *how things are made*, and is therefore determined by the technical realization ("building"). Heidegger points out that the Greek word *techne* meant a creative "re-vealing" (*Entbergen*) of truth, and belonged to *poiesis*, that is, "making."[29] A phenomenology of place therefore has to comprise the basic modes of construction and their relationship to formal articulation. Only in this way architectural theory gets a truly concrete basis.

The structure of place becomes manifest as environmental totalities which comprise the aspects of character and space. Such places are known as "countries," "regions," "landscapes," "settlements," and "buildings." Here we return to the concrete "things" of our everyday life-world, which was our point of departure, and remember Rilke's words: "Are we perhaps *here* to say..." When places are classified we should therefore use terms such as "island," "promontory," "bay," "forest," "grove," or "square," "street," "courtyard," and "floor," "wall," "roof," "ceiling," "window," and "door."

Places are hence designated by *nouns*. This implies they are considered real "things that exist," which is original meaning of the word "substantive." Space, instead, as a system of relations, is denoted by *prepositions*. In our daily life we hardly talk about "space," but about things that are "over" or "under," "before," or "behind" each other, or we use prepositions such as "at," "in," "within," "on," "upon," "to," "from," "along," "next." All these prepositions denote topological relations of the kind mentioned before. Character,

finally, is denoted by *adjectives*, as was indicated above. A character is a complex totality, and a single adjective evidently cannot cover more than one aspect of this totality. Often, however, character is so distinct that one word seems sufficient to grasp its essence. We see, thus, that the very structure of everyday language confirms our analysis of place.

Countries, regions, landscapes, settlements, buildings (and their sub-places) form a series with a gradually diminishing scale. The steps in this series may be called "environmental levels."[30] At the "top" of the series we find the more comprehensive natural places which "contain" the man-made places on the "lower" levels. The latter have the "gathering" and "focussing" function mentioned above. In other words, man "receives" the environment and makes it focus in buildings and things. The things thereby "explain" the environment and make its character manifest. Thereby the things themselves become meaningful. That is the basic function of *detail* in our surroundings.[31] This does not imply, however, that the different levels must have the same structure. Architectural history in fact shows that this is rarely the case. Vernacular settlements usually have a topological organization, although the single houses may be strictly geometrical. In larger cities we often find topologically organized neighbourhoods within a general geometrical structure, etc. We shall return to the particular problems of structural correspondence later, but have to say some words about the main "step" in the scale of environmental levels: the relation between natural and man-made places.

Man-made places are related to nature in three basic ways. Firstly, man wants to make the natural structure more precise. That is, he wants to *visualize* his "understanding" of nature, "expressing" the existential foothold he has gained. To achieve this, he *builds* what he has seen. Where nature suggests a delimited space he builds an enclosure; where nature appears "centralized," he erects a *Mal*,[32] where nature indicates a direction, he makes a path. Secondly, man has to *symbolize* his understanding of nature (including himself). Symbolization implies that an experienced meaning is "translated" into another medium. A natural character is for instance translated into a building whose properties somehow make the character manifest.[33] The purpose of symbolization is to free the meaning from the immediate situation, whereby it becomes a "cultural object," which may form part of a more complex situation, or be moved to another place. Finally, man needs to *gather* the experienced meanings to create for himself an *imago mundi* or *microcosmos* which concretizes his world. Gathering evidently depends on symbolization, and implies a transposition of meanings to one place, which thereby becomes an existential "centre."

Visualization, symbolization and gathering are aspects of the general processes of settling; and dwelling, in the existential sense of the word, depends on these functions. Heidegger illustrates the problem by means of the *bridge*; a "building" which visualizes, symbolizes, and gathers, and makes the environment a unified whole. Thus he says:

> The bridge swings over the stream with ease and power. It does not just connect banks that are already there, the banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream. The bridge designedly causes them to lie across from each other. One side is set off against the other by the bridge. Nor do the banks stretch along the stream as indifferent border strips of the dry land. With the banks, the bridge brings to the stream the one and the other expanse of the landscape lying behind them. It brings stream and bank and land into each other's neighbourhood. The bridge gathers the earth as landscape around the stream.[34]

Heidegger also describes *what* the bridge gathers and thereby uncovers its value as a symbol. We cannot here enter into these details, but want to emphasize that the landscape as such gets its value *through* the bridge. Before, the meaning of the landscape was "hidden," and the building of the bridge brings it out into the open.

"The bridge gathers Being into a certain 'location' that we may call a 'place.' This 'place,' however, did not exist as an entity before the bridge (although there were always many 'sites' along the river-bank where it could arise), but comes-to-presence with and as the bridge."[35] The existential purpose of building (architecture) is therefore to make a site become a place, that is, to uncover the meanings potentially present in the given environment.

The structure of a place is not a fixed, eternal state. As a rule places change, sometimes rapidly. This does not mean, however, that the *genius loci* necessarily changes or gets lost. Later we shall show that *taking place* presupposes that the places conserve their identity during a certain stretch of time. *Stabilitas loci* is a necessary condition for human life. How then is this stability compatible with the dynamics of change? First of all we may point out that any place ought to have the "capacity" of receiving *different* "contents," naturally within certain limits.[36] A place which is only fitted for one particular purpose would soon become useless. Secondly it is evident that a place may be "interpreted" in different ways. To protect and conserve the genius loci in fact means to concretize its essence in ever new historical contexts. We might also say that the history of a place ought to be its "self-realization." What was there as possibilities at the outset, is uncovered through human action, illuminated and "kept" in works of architecture which are simultaneously "old and new."[37] A place therefore comprises properties having a varying degree of invariance.

In general we may conclude that *place* is the point of departure as well as the goal of our structural investigation; at the outset place is presented as a given, spontaneously experienced totality, at the end it appears as a structured world, illuminated by the analysis of the aspects of space and character.

THE SPIRIT OF PLACE

Genius loci is a Roman concept. According to ancient Roman belief every "independent" being has its *genius*, its guardian spirit. This spirit gives life to people and places, accompanies them from birth to death, and determines their character or essence. Even the gods had their *genius*, a fact which illustrates the fundamental nature of the concept.[38] The *genius* thus denotes what a thing is, or what it "wants to be," to use a word of Louis Kahn. It is not necessary in our context to go into the history of the concept of *genius* and its relationship to the *daimon* of the Greeks. It suffices to point out that ancient man experienced his environment as consisting of definite characters. In particular he recognized that it is of great existential importance to come to terms with the *genius* of the locality where his life takes place. In the past survival depended on a "good" relationship to the place in a physical as well as a psychic sense. In ancient Egypt, for instance, the country was not only cultivated in accordance with the Nile floods, but the very structure of the landscape served as a model for the lay-out of the "public" buildings which should give a man a sense of security by symbolizing an eternal environmental order.[39]

During the course of history the *genius loci* has remained a living reality, although it may not have been expressively named as such. Artists and writers have found inspiration in local character and have "explained" the phenomena of everyday life as well as art, referring to landscapes and urban milieu. Thus Goethe says: "It is evident, that the eye is educated by the things it sees from childhood on, and therefore Venetian painters must see everything clearer and with more joy than other people."[40] Still in 1960 Lawrence Durrell wrote: "As you get to know Europe slowly tasting the wines, cheeses and characters of the different countries you begin to realize that the important determinant of any culture is after all—the spirit of place."[41] Modern tourism proves that the experience of different places is a major human interest, although also this value today tends to get lost. In fact modern man for a long time believed that science and technology had freed him from a direct dependence on places.[42] This belief has proved an illusion; pollution and environmental chaos have suddenly appeared as a frightening *nemesis*, and as a result the problem of place has regained its true importance.

We have used the word "dwelling" to denote the total man-place relationship. To understand more fully what this word implies, it is useful to return to the distinction between "space" and "character." When man dwells, he is simultaneously located in space and exposed to a certain environmental character. The two psychological functions involved, may be called "orientation" and "identification."[43] To gain an existential foothold man has to be able to *orientate* himself; he has to know where he is. But he also has to *identify* himself with the environment, that is, he has to know *how* he is in a certain place.

The problem of orientation has been given a considerable attention in recent theoretical literature on planning and architecture. Again we may refer to the work of Kevin Lynch, whose concepts of "node," "path," and "district" denote the basic spatial structures which are the object of man's orientation. The perceived interrelationship of these elements constitute an "environmental image," and Lynch asserts: "A good environmental image gives its possessor an important sense of emotional security."[44] Accordingly all cultures have developed "systems of orientation," that is, spatial structures which facilitate the development of a good environmental image. "The world may be organized around a set of focal points, or be broken into named regions, or be linked by remembered routes."[45] Often these systems of orientation are based on or derived from a given natural structure. Where the system is weak, the image-making becomes difficult, and man feels "lost." "The terror of being lost comes from the necessity that a mobile organism be oriented in its surroundings."[46] To be lost is evidently the opposite of the feeling of security which distinguishes dwelling. The environmental quality which protects man against getting lost, Lynch calls "imageability," which means "that shape, colour, or arrangement which facilitates the making of vividly-identified, powerfully-structured, highly useful mental images of the environment."[47] Here Lynch implies that the elements which constitute the spatial structure are concrete "things" with "character" and "meaning." He limits himself, however, to discuss the spatial function of these elements, and thus leaves us with a fragmentary understanding of dwelling.

Nevertheless, the work of Lynch constitutes an essential contribution to the theory of place. Its importance also consists in the fact that his empirical studies of concrete urban structure confirm the general "principles of organization" defined by Gestalt psychology and by the researches into child psychology of [Jean] Piaget.[48]

Without reducing the importance of orientation, we have to stress that dwelling above all presupposes *identification* with the environment. Although orientation and identification are aspects of one total relationship, they have a certain independence within the totality. It is evidently possible to orientate oneself well without true identification; one gets along without feeling "at home." And it is possible to feel at home without being well acquainted with the spatial structure of the place, that is, the place is only experienced as a gratifying general character. True belonging however presupposes that both psychological functions are fully developed. In primitive societies we find that even the smallest environmental details are known and meaningful, and that they make up complex spatial structures.[49] In modern society, however, attention has almost exclusively been concentrated on the "practical" function of orientation, whereas identification has been left to chance. As a result true dwelling, in a psychological sense, has been substituted by alienation. It is therefore urgently needed to arrive at a fuller understanding of the concepts of "identification" and "character."

In our context "identification" means to become "friends" with a particular environment. Nordic man has to be friends with fog, ice, and cold winds; he has to enjoy the creaking sound of snow under the feet when he walks around, he has to experience the poetical value of being immersed in fog, as Hermann Hesse did when he wrote the lines: "strange to walk in fog! Lonely is every bush and stone, no tree sees the other, everything is alone..."[50] The Arab, instead, has to be a friend of the infinitely extended, sandy desert, and the burning sun. This does not mean that his settlements should not protect him against the natural "forces"; a desert settlement in fact primarily aims at the exclusion of sand and sun. But it implies that the environment is experienced as *meaningful*. [Otto Friedrich] Bollnow says appropriately: "Fede Stimmung ist Übereinstimmung," that is, every character consists in a correspondence between outer and inner world, and between body and psyche.[51] For modern urban man the friendship with a natural environment is reduced to fragmentary relations. Instead he has to identify with man-made things, such as streets and houses. The German-born American architect Gerhard Kallmann once told a story which illustrates what this means. Visiting at the end of the Second World War his native Berlin after many years of absence, he wanted to see the house where he had grown up. As must be expected in Berlin, the house had disappeared, and Mr. Kallmann felt somewhat lost. Then he suddenly recognized the typical pavement of the sidewalk: the floor on which he had played as a child! And he experienced a strong feeling of having returned home.

The story teaches us that the objects of identification are concrete environmental properties and that man's relationship to these is usually developed during childhood. The child grows up in green, brown, or white spaces; it walks or plays on sand, earth, stone, or moss, under a cloudy or serene sky; it grasps and lifts hard and soft things; it hears noises, such as the sound of the wind moving the leaves of a particular kind of tree; and it experiences heat and cold. Thus the child gets acquainted with the environment, and develops perceptual *schemata* which determine all future experiences.[52] The schemata comprise universal structures which are inter-human, as well as locally-determined and culturally-conditioned structures. Evidently every human being has to possess schemata of orientation as well as identification.

The *identity* of a person is defined in terms of the schemata developed, because they determine the "world" which is accessible. This fact is confirmed by common linguistic usage. When a person wants to tell who he is, it is in fact usual to say: "I am a New Yorker," or "I am a Roman." This means something much more concrete than to say: "I am an architect," or perhaps: "I am an optimist." We understand that human identity is to a high extent a function of places and things. Thus Heidegger says: "Wir sind die Be-Dingten."[53] It is therefore not only important that our environment has a spatial structure which facilitates orientation, but that it consists of concrete objects of identification. *Human identity presupposes the identity of place.*

Identification and orientation are primary aspects of man's being-in-the-world. Whereas identification is the basis for man's sense of *belonging*, orientation is the function which enables him to be that *homo viator* which is part of his nature. It is characteristic for modern man that for a long time he gave the role as a wanderer pride of place. He wanted to be "free" and conquer the world. Today we start to realize that true freedom presupposes belonging, and that "dwelling" means belonging to a concrete place.

The word to "dwell" has several connotations which confirm and illuminate our thesis. Firstly it ought to be mentioned that "dwell" is derived from the Old Norse *dvelja*, which meant to linger or remain. Analogously, Heidegger related the German "wohnen" to "bleiben" and "sich aufhalten."[54] Furthermore he points out that the Gothic *wunian* meant to "be at peace," "to remain in peace." The German word for "peace," *Friede*, means to be free, that is, protected from harm and danger. This protection is achieved by means of an *Umfriedung* or enclosure. *Friede* is also related to *zufrieden* (content), *Freund* (friend), and the Gothic *frijön* (love). Heidegger uses these linguistic relationships to show that *dwelling means to be at peace in a protected place*. We should also mention that the German word for dwelling *Wohnung*, derives from *das Gewohnte*, which means what is known or habitual. "Habit" and "habitat" show an analogous relationship. In other words, man knows what has become accessible to him through dwelling. We here return to the *Übereinstimmung* or correspondence between man and his environment, and arrive at the very root of the problem of "gathering." To gather means that the everyday life-world has become "gewohnt" or "habitual." But gathering is a concrete phenomenon, and thus leads us to the final connotation of "dwelling." Again it is Heidegger who has uncovered a fundamental relationship. Thus he points out that the Old English and High German word for "building," *buan*, meant to dwell, and that it is intimately related to the verb *to be*. "What then does *ich bin* mean? The old word *bauen*, to which the *bin* belongs, answers: *ich bin*, *du bist*, mean: I dwell, you dwell. The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on earth, is *buan*, dwelling."[55] We may conclude that dwelling means to gather the world as a concrete building or "thing," and that the archetypal act of building is the *Umfriedung* or enclosure. Trakl's poetic intuition of the inside-outside relationship thus gets its confirmation, and we understand that our concept of *concretization* denotes the essence of dwelling.[56]

Man dwells when he is able to concretize the world in buildings and things. As we have mentioned above, "concretization" is the function of the work of art, as opposed to the "abstraction" of science.[57] Works of art concretize what remains "between" the pure objects of science. Our everyday life-world *consists of* such "intermediary" objects, and we understand that the fundamental function of art is to gather the contradictions and

complexities of the life-world. Being an *imago mundi*, the work of art helps man to dwell. [Friedrich] Hölderlin was right when he said:

Full of merit, yet poetically, man
Dwells on this earth.

This means: man's merits do not count much if he is unable to dwell *poetically*, that is, to dwell in the true sense of the word. Thus Heidegger says: "Poetry does not fly above and surmount the earth in order to escape it and hover over it. Poetry is what first brings man onto the earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling."[58] Only poetry in all its forms (also as the "art of living") makes human existence meaningful, and *meaning* is the fundamental human need.

Architecture belongs to poetry, and its purpose is to help man to dwell. But architecture is a difficult art. To make practical towns and buildings is not enough. Architecture comes into being when a "total environment is made visible," to quote the definition of Suzanne Langer.[59] In general, this means to concretize the *genius loci*. We have seen that this is done by means of buildings which gather the properties of the place and bring them close to man. The basic act of architecture is therefore to understand the "vocation" of the place. In this way we protect the earth and become ourselves part of a comprehensive totality. What is here advocated is not some kind of "environmental determinism." We only recognize the fact that man is an integral part of the environment, and that it can only lead to human alienation and environmental disruption if he forgets that. To belong to a place means to have an existential foothold, in a concrete everyday sense. When God said to Adam: "You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the Earth"[60] he put man in front of his most basic problem: to cross the threshold and regain the lost place.

1   R. M. Rilke, *The Duino Elegies*, IX Elegy, (New York: 1972).
2   The concept "everyday life-world" was introduced by Husserl in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936).
3   Martin Heidegger, "Bauen Wohnen Denken"; Bollnow, "Mensch und Raum"; Merleau-Ponty, "Phenomenology of Perception"; Bachelard, "Poetics of Space"; also L. Kruse, *Räumliche Umwelt* (Berlin: 1974).
4   Heidegger, "Language," in Albert Hofstadter, ed., *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: 1971).
5   Ein Winterabend
     Wenn der Schnee ans Fenster fällt,
     Lang die Abendglocke läutet,
     Vielen ist der Tisch bereitet
     Und das Haus ist wohlbestellt.
     Mancher auf der Wanderschaft
     Kommt ans Tor auf dunklen Pfaden.
     Golden blüht der Baum der Gnaden
     Aus der Erde kühlem Saft.
     Wanderer tritt still herein;
     Schmerz versteinerte die Schwelle.
     Da erglänzt in reiner Helle
     Auf dem Tische Brot und Wein.
6   Heidegger, *Poetry*, op. cit., 199.
7   Ibid., 204.
8   Christian Norberg-Schulz, "symbolization," in *Intentions in Architecture* (Oslo and London: 1963).
9   See for instance J. Appleton, *The Experience of Landscape* (London: 1975).
10   Heidegger, *Poetry*, op. cit., 149.
11   Ibid., 147, 149.
12   Heidegger, *Hebel der Hausfreund* (Pfullingen: 1957), 13.
13   Ibid., 13.
14   Heidegger, *Poetry*, op. cit., 181–182.
15   Norberg-Schulz, *Existence, Space and Architecture* (London and New York: 1971), where the concept "existential space" is used.
16   Heidegger points out the relationship between the words *gegen* (against, opposite) and *Gegend* (environment, locality).
17   This has been done by some writers such as K. Graf von Dürckheim, E. Straus, and O.F. Bollnow.
18   We may compare with Alberti's distinction between "beauty" and "ornament."
19   Norberg-Schulz, *Existence*, op. cit., 12ff.
20   S. Giedion, *The Eternal Present: The Beginnings of Architecture* (London: 1964).
21   K. Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge: 1960).
22   P. Portoghesi, *Le inibizioni dell'architettura moderna* (Bari: 1975), 88ff.
23   Heidegger, *Poetry*, op. cit., 154.
24   Norberg-Schulz, *Existence*, op. cit., 18.
25   Heidegger, *Poetry*, op. cit., 154. "Presence is the old word for being."
26   O.F. Bollnow, *Das Wesen der Stimmungen* (Franfurt am Mein: 1956).
27   Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: 1967), 88.
28   Ibid., 89.
29   Heidegger "Die Frage nach der Technik," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze Pfullingen* (1954), 12.
30   Norberg-Schulz, *Existence*, op. cit., 27.
31   Ibid., 32.
32   D. Frey, *Grundlegung zu einer vergleichenden Kunstwissenschaft* (Vienna and Innsbruck: 1949).
33   Norberg-Schulz, *Intentions*, op. cit.
34   Heidegger, *Poetry*, op. cit., 152.
35   W. J. Richardson, *Heidegger, Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: 1974), 585.
36   For the concept of "capacity" see Norberg-Schulz, *Intentions*, op. cit.
37   Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction*, op. cit.
38   Paulys, *Realencyclopedie der Klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* VII, I, col. 1155ff.
39   Norberg-Schulz, *Meaning in Western Architecture* (London and New York: 1975), 10ff.
40   Goethe, *Italienische Reise* 8 (October 1786).
41   L. Durrell, *Spirit of Place* (London: 1969), 156.
42   See M.M. Webber, *Explorations into Urban Structure* (Philadelphia: 1963), who talks about "non-place urban realm."
43   Norberg-Schulz, *Intentions*, op. cit., where the concepts "cognitive orientation" and "cathectic orientation" are used.
44   Lynch, *The Image of the City*, op. cit., 4.
45   Ibid., 7.
46   Ibid., 125.
47   Ibid., 9.
48   For a detailed discussion, see Norberg-Schulz, *Existence*, op. cit.
49   A. Rapoport, "Australian Aborigines and the Definition of Place," in P. Oliver, ed., *Shelter, Sign and Symbol* (London: 1975).
50   Seltsam, *im Nebel zu wandern! Einsam ist jeder Busch und Stein, kein Baum sieht den anderen, jeder ist allein.*
51   Bollnow, *Stimmungen*, op. cit., 39.