3 Lived Emplacement and the Locality of Being: A Return to Humanistic Geography?

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In this chapter, I offer a first-person account of humanistic geography, which Cloke and colleagues aptly describe as 'bringing human beings in all of their complexity to the centre-stage of human geography' (Cloke et al. 1991: 58). I began my graduate studies in 1970 at one of the academic centers of early humanistic work—Clark University's Graduate School of Geography in Worcester, Massachusetts (Canter and Craik 1987). I did my doctoral work under the direction of Anne Buttimer, who came to be recognized as one of the major figures in humanistic geography (e.g. Buttimer 1971, 1974, 1976, 1993). My dissertation examined the nature of everyday environmental experience and was published in 1979 as *A Geography of the Lifeworld: Movement, Rest, and Encounter* (Seamon 1979).

Drawing partly on my Clark experience and professional efforts since, in this chapter I consider how humanistic geography began, what its precedents were and whether it plays a role in geographical research today. I emphasize a first-person account because, too often, standard philosophies of geography unintentionally portray the discipline's shifting conceptual traditions as temporally finite. Newer philosophical perspectives are pictured as supplanting preceding perspectives that themselves are largely defunct (Johnston 1997; Peet 1998; Cresswell 2013). In these standard interpretations, humanistic geography is said to have largely disappeared by the 1980s as its perspective and conclusions were absorbed, transformed, or disproven by more dominant structural, Marxist, and feminist research. In fact, the central motivational and thematic concerns of humanistic geography thrive today, though more often facilitated by disciplinary and professional representatives outside geography (Seamon 2013b). In the last part of this chapter, I highlight some of these current developments and argue that the core aims and principles of humanistic geography remain robust and may become powerful again as younger researchers come to question and react against the poststructuralist, critical, and relationalist perspectives that currently dominate geography (Cresswell 2013: chaps. 10–13).

Precedents and Starting Points for a Humanistic Geography

Though a formal explication of humanistic geography would not appear until the 1970s, the spirit of the approach was notable in the work of several earlier geographers. Examples include Alexander von Humboldt's interest in artistic renditions of the world's geographical regions (Bunske 1981); Johannes Gabriel Granö's sensory and

perceptual explications of natural and human-made landscapes (Granö 1929/1997); Paul Vidal de la Blache's *genres de vie* (Buttimer 1971); J. K. Wright's focus on *geosophy*, the study of subjective geographical knowledge (Wright 1947); and David Lowenthal's masterly description of commonalities and differences in human beings' geographical experiences, understandings, and creative imaginings (Lowenthal 1961). All these thinkers sought ways to comprehend geographical phenomena as they contributed to and were reflected in human action, knowledge, and aesthetic expression.

Though this earlier work paid heed to geographical experiences and meanings, geographers did not formally recognize the possibilities of a humanistic geography until the early 1970s. Standard disciplinary accounts explain its genesis via a growing intellectual disgruntlement with the quantitative research that, at the time, dominated geography and defined the discipline as a "spatial science" concerned with measurable, predictable spatial patterns and interrelationships expressed terrestrially (e.g. Cloke et al. 1991; Cresswell 2013). At Clark University and at many other academic institutions in the early 1970s, this scientific approach to geographic research was strongly questioned by graduate students and faculty, particularly as the Vietnam War and civil unrest in American cities called into question the tidy, cause-and-effect mathematical models that claimed to explain geographic phenomena spatially.

Unless one lived through the 1960s, it is difficult to fathom the era's overarching impact as, seemingly overnight, personal freedom, societal flexibility, and tolerance toward others supplanted the rigid American conservatism, conformity, and provincialism of the 1950s. Expressed particularly in the era's eclectic music and films, an overwhelmingly palpable ethos was "in the air" everywhere and touched almost everyone, whether personally, professionally, or both. Denis Wood, at the time a doctoral student in geography at Clark, described what this ethos was like there:

> [I am not] being silly when I insist that *A Hard Day's Night*—the Beatles in general—and our discovery of the Supremes and James Brown and the Famous Flames, and Chuck Berry—unbelievable in his appearance at Clark—that these had as much to do with [Geography] at Clark as anything else, not the films and music *per se,* though they were crucial, so much as what they suggested about what was and what could be, about how it could be, about the possibilities that existed for change, that existed for being: for what happened at Clark… was above all else a change of air, an opening of windows, a smashing of academic taboos, an iconoclasm of methods… (1987: 419)

Among Clark geographers, this vibrant energy of change invoked contrasting intellectual directions (Seamon 1987). One group of faculty and graduate students adopted Marxist philosophy, aiming to facilitate societal betterment by better understanding how space and place relate to economic structure and political power (Peet 2000: 953). A second faculty and student group worked on what at the time was called 'environmental perception and behavioral geography' (Craik and Canter 1987). Much more so than the Marxist geographers, this second group was crucial to the development of humanistic work at Clark because these researchers had shifted focus from measurable aggregate indicators of spatial and environmental behaviors to people's environmental attitudes, preferences, images and world views (Downs and Stea 1973). Though much of this research remained quantitative and limited to the cognitive dimensions of environmental behavior, this work was crucial for many of us graduate students because it pointed

toward a more qualitative, interpretive way of understanding people's lived relationships with their geographical worlds (Saarinen, Seamon and Sell 1984).

In fall 1970, the same semester I began my graduate studies, Anne Buttimer arrived at Clark as a postdoctoral fellow (Buttimer 1987). She quickly became an important contributor to the thinking of both the Marxist and behavioral-geography groups. Drawing on her mastery of continental philosophy and her earlier research on humanist French geographers, Buttimer generated enthusiasm for phenomenological, existential, and critical studies in Geography. During the 1970s at Clark, she played a major role in contributing to the research of doctoral students who would eventually produce important work relating to humanistic and behavioral themes (Buttimer and Seamon 1980). The larger point to be made is that humanistic geography probably would not have happened at Clark and at other institutions without the questioning ethos, profound openness, and helpful serendipity spilling out from the 1960s.

But after its mercurial rise in the 1970s, humanistic geography fell into disciplinary hibernation in the 1980s and 1990s, though its point of view remained alive in other academic traditions. Before this decline and a potential renaissance is discussed, however, it is important to introduce the major works in humanistic geography that arose from its remarkably creative beginnings in the 1970s.

Key Works in Humanistic Geography, 1970–1974

Prodded by Anne Buttimer's intellectual passion and thoroughness, we Clark graduate students carefully kept track of geographical and related research contributing to humanistic concerns. Looking back at the 1970s, one recognizes that there were five geographers who contributed most to this work: Anne Buttimer, David Ley, Marwyn Samuels, Yi-Fu Tuan, and Edward Relph. Though research in humanistic geography incorporated a considerable range of conceptual approaches, which included idealism (Guelke 1971) and pragmatism (Smith 1984), these five geographers drew largely on existentialism and phenomenology, the two closely related conceptual approaches grounding much of humanistic geography (Cloke et al. 1991: 68–80; Cresswell 2013: 111–12). Existentialists probe the nature of human existence so that people might find helpful meaning in their lives through informed knowledge and action (Samuels 1971, 1978). Phenomenologists describe and interpret the nature of human experience, particularly its tacit, transparent dimensions marked by what phenomenologists call the *lifeworld*—the taken-for-granted nature of daily life to which people normally give no reflective attention (Buttimer 1976; Finlay 2011; Seamon 2013b).

The first significant work relating to humanistic geography appeared in fall 1970—Edward Relph's *Canadian Geographer* article, 'An Inquiry into the Relations between Phenomenology and Geography' (Relph 1970). Relph described the nature and methods of phenomenology and contended that 'all knowledge proceeds from the world of experience and cannot be independent of that world' (1970: 193). He suggested that the phenomenological approach could be important for providing 'new insights into understanding the relationships between [human beings] and nature' (1970: 196). I still remember vividly the spirited discussion this article stimulated among us Clark graduate students. At the time, the possibility of qualitative research dealing with geographical experience and meaning was a hugely novel idea for young researchers who had been taught to assume that geography was a quantitative science.

A year later in the same journal, several themes brought forward by Relph were elaborated by Yi-Fu Tuan in his article 'Geography, Phenomenology, and the Study of Human Nature' (Tuan 1971). He overviewed several lived dualities relating to geographical experience, including home–journey and back region–front region. He concluded that an existential–phenomenological approach was useful for geographers because it 'studies neither ["human being"] in the abstract nor the "world" in the abstract but "[human-being]-in-the-world," which is also a major focus of the geographer' (1971: 191). Also that year, Marwyn Samuels completed, at the University of Washington, his provocative dissertation, *Science and Geography: An Existential Appraisal* (Samuels 1971). This work was one of the earliest efforts by a geographer to critically evaluate the positivist–scientific claim that "what is real is necessarily objective, quantitative, and law-abiding" (1971: 81). The problem, Samuels explained, is not so much that human beings cannot be objectified but that this objectification "cannot deal with the whole [person], only with fragments" (1971: 97).

The next year fruitful for humanistic work was 1974, in which David Ley published his innovative urban-place study *The Black Inner City as Frontier Outpost* (Ley 1974) and Anne Buttimer published *Values in Geography,* a work that drew on existential and phenomenological claims to demonstrate how particular sets of principles and values always ground knowledge, though often in unself-conscious ways that academics and professionals are not always aware of, but should be (Buttimer 1974). Also in 1974, Yi-Fu Tuan published two significant works, the first of which was a chapter in *Progress in Human Geography*, 'Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective'. This article included Tuan's perceptive identification of two different modes of place: *public symbols*—places of prominence like London's Trafalgar Square that yield their meaning to the eye—and *fields of care,* places like one's local neighborhood, only known through prolonged experience and typically undistinguished visually or architecturally (Tuan 1974a: 236–45). Tuan's second important 1974 work was *Topophilia,* a book that explored the lived nature of place and became one of his most influential geographical works, particularly as referenced by academics outside geography. This work would contribute to the popularization of the term *topophilia,* by which Tuan meant emotional attachment to and love of place (Tuan 1974b; Manzo and Devine-Wright 2014; Seamon 2014b).

Key Works in Humanistic Geography, 1976–1978

The year 1976 could be said to mark the apex of work in humanistic geography. In 'Grasping the Dynamism of Lifeworld', an article in the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers,* Buttimer considered how the phenomenological concept of lifeworld might offer insights into sense of place, social space, and time–space rhythms (Buttimer 1976). She argued that bringing self-conscious attention to the 'prereflective, taken-for-granted dimensions of experience, the unquestioned meanings, and routinized determinants of behavior' could facilitate a 'heightened self-awareness… and enable one to empathize with the worlds of other people' (1976: 281). Also in this issue of the *Annals* was Yi-Fu Tuan's 'Humanistic Geography', an article that provided the first comprehensive formalization of the humanistic perspective, which Tuan argued might contribute to raising society's 'level of consciousness' (1976: 266). He concluded that the primary strength of the humanistic geographer is facilitating a better understanding of the human condition in relation to geographical concerns.

The most significant work in humanistic geography to be published in 1976 was Edward Relph's *Place and Placelessness*, an existential phenomenology of place, which he defined as a fusion of human and natural order and any valued spatial center of a person or group's lived experience (Relph 1976: 141). Of all the 1970s humanistic work in geography, this book had the most lasting influence because it pinpointed the existential crux of place experience in terms of *insideness* and *outsideness*—the degree to which a person or group feels a sense of belonging and identification with place, on one hand, or a sense of alienation and rupture, on the other (1976: 49–55; Seamon 2008). Relph also introduced the term *placelessness,* which he described as the 'casual eradication of distinctive places and the making of standardized landscapes that results from an insensitivity to the significance of place' (Relph 1976: ii).

The end of the first phase of humanistic geography is marked by the 1978 publication of Ley and Samuel's *Humanistic Geography,* an edited collection demonstrating the considerable topical and conceptual range that humanist perspectives could offer geography (Ley and Samuels 1978). In their introduction, the editors emphasized how a focus on human experience and meaning shed new disciplinary light on how material space becomes meaningful place and how interpretive understanding presupposes and makes explicit a "holistic vision of human geography" (1978: 11). They concluded:

> As [human beings] and environment engage each other dialectically, there is no room in a humanistic perspective for a passive concept of [people] dutifully acquiescing to an overbearing environment. But neither [are people] fully free, for [they inherit] given structural conditions and, indeed, may be unaware of the full extent of [their] bondage. (1978: 12)

The Exile of Humanistic Geography

In Ley and Samuel's comment that human beings are not fully free because of structural factors, one recognizes a key criticism that would contribute to humanistic geography's decline—its seeming unwillingness to deal with broader societal and structural forces that set the stage for human experience and meaning. Although several significant volumes in humanistic geography were published from the 1980s into the 2000s (e.g. Adams et al. 2000; Buttimer 1993; Buttimer and Seamon 1980; Entrikin 1991; Relph 1981; Sack 1997; Seamon 1993; Seamon and Mugerauer 1985; Tuan 1982, 2012), Marxist and feminist geographers began to question humanistic principles in the 1980s (Cloke et al. 1991; Cresswell 2013; Peet 1998; Rose 1995; Seamon and Sowers 2008: 670–71). The criticism implied by Ley and Samuels and made directly by Marxist geographers was that humanistic geography emphasized individual *human agency* and ignored broader economic and political structures shaping lifeworlds and places. A second criticism, brought forward by both Marxist and feminist geographers, was that humanistic geography was *essentialist*—that it assumed a universal human condition only understood when all 'contingent' qualities such as history and culture were set aside, revealing some invariant, core structure of human experience and meaning. A third criticism, pointed out by feminist geographers, was that humanistic work incorporated an implicitly *masculinist* perspective in that it assumed that the experience of academic professionals, mostly men, could represent and know all human situations. Feminist geographers argued that there is no 'universal human being', as humanistic geographers seemed to

claim. These critics contended that the more important focus should be the experiences and situations of disadvantaged, marginal and less powerful individuals and groups that conventional geographic research too often misunderstood or ignored—for example, women, children, gays and lesbians, the less able, the homeless, and so forth.

At the time, these and other criticisms were responded to only in piecemeal fashion (e.g. Duncan and Ley 1984; Seamon 1982), and no humanistic geographers produced a sustained counterargument to refute Marxist and feminist concerns. With hindsight, drawing on developments in phenomenological and hermeneutical thinking since the 1980s, one sees more clearly how these criticisms of humanistic geography might have been countered. The first charge of essentialism misunderstood the humanistic recognition that there are different dimensions of human experience and existence which must all be considered in a thorough understanding of geographical experience and meaning. On one hand, all human beings are unique, and a humanistic perspective can readily give attention to individual lived dimensions relating to gender, sexuality, degree of ableness, and so on (Finlay 2011; Simms and Stawarska 2013: Toombs 2001; van Manen 2014). At the same time, a humanistic perspective can deal with environmental experiences and meanings as they relate to a person or group's particular historical, social, or cultural situation—e.g. the era and locale in which one lives, his or her economic and political circumstances, and his or her educational, religious, and societal background (e.g. Finlay 2011; Murton 2012; Simms 2008; Sowers 2010). This conceptual and methodological ability to examine the many different dimensions of human life and meaning demonstrates that humanistic geography can move beyond the so-called "universal" or "essential" qualities of "man" and "human being" criticized by the feminist researchers. A humanistic perspective can probe specific lifeworlds and particular lived situations; in current phenomenological research, for example, one finds such sub-specialties as "feminist phenomenology," "phenomenology of less-ableness," "phenomenology of children," "phenomenology of mobility," "phenomenology of homelessness," and so forth (e.g. Finlay 2011; Moores 2012; Simms and Stawarska 2013; van Manen 2014).

More difficult to refute is the Marxist charge that humanistic work favored human agency at the expense of societal structure and was therefore *voluntarist*—i.e. it tacitly viewed society and the world as a product of intentional, willed actions of individuals and autonomous human agency. Largely assuming a conceptual perspective emphasizing self-awareness as a vehicle of personal and societal change, humanistic geography did give most attention to individual experience, understanding, and freedom. On one hand, humanistic geography typically involved an underlying ideological assumption that individual will and personal growth provide the major means for making a difference in the larger world, including constructive social and political change. On the other, humanistic work *can examine* phenomena such as power, exclusion, resistance, justice, and political process, though in the 1970s little work was done in this direction, perhaps because most humanistic geographers instinctively favored experience, selfhood, and personal and group autonomy. More recently, there have been some "humanistic" efforts to consider structural concerns and political action—e.g. geographers Soren Larsen and Jay Johnson's use (2012) of a reinvigorated place concept to facilitate community action or political theorist Daniel Kemmis's consideration (1990, 1995) of how citizens' sense of responsibility for the place in which they live might facilitate a civilized politics.

In the 1980s, however, the essentialist, masculinist, and voluntarist criticisms of feminists and Marxists probably led many geographers to forsake humanistic work. Sadly, Cresswell was correct when he wrote recently that 'Few geographers now refer to themselves as humanistic' (2013: 119). Ironically, starting in the 1990s, non-geographers gave

renewed attention to such 'humanistic' topics as *place* (Casey 2009; Kogl 2008; Malpas 1999; Moores 2013; Mugerauer 1994; Stefanovic 2000), *home* and *dwelling* (Ingold 1995; Malpas 2008; Mugerauer 2008); *landscape* (Lane 2000; Tilley 2008); *environmental encounter and ethics* (Bortoft 1996; Brown and Toadvine 2003; Cataldi and Hamrick 2007; Geib 2007; Seamon and Zajonc 1998), and *environmental design and policy as place making* (Alexander 2012; Davis 2012; Kemmis 1995). To suggest how this work might contribute to a rejuvenated humanistic geography, I draw on recent research examining the lived dimensions of place. I emphasize phenomenological work because that conceptual approach underlies many of the most recent place studies.

The Locality of Being

The humanistic approach to place in the 1970s was largely subjectivist in that place was interpreted as a subjective representation, whether cognitive or affective, *inside* experiencers and ontologically distinct from an objective environment *outside*. As phenomenological philosopher Jeff Malpas (1999: 30) pointed out, this subjectivist approach is insufficient ontologically because 'it provides no real explication of the concept of place as such, since it merely conjoins the idea of a part of objective physical space with the subjective emotional or affective quality or set of qualities and so treats place as derivative of these more basic ideas'. As they probed the nature of place in the 1990s and 2000s, Malpas (1999, 2008, 2009) and phenomenological philosopher Edward Casey (1997, 2009) argued that place must be understood as a primary ontological structure that subsumes both human experience and the material world in which that experience happens. As Casey stated succinctly, 'Who we are very much reflects where we are' (2001b: 226). Or, as Malpas explained more fully,

> what we are as living, thinking, experiencing beings is inseparable from the places in which we live—our lives are saturated by the places, and by the things and other persons intertwined with those places, through which we move, in which our actions are located, and with respect to which we orient and locate ourselves. (2001: 231)

This contention that human being is always human-being-in-place—the 'locality of being', as Malpas (1999: 8, n. 30) called it—marks a radical development in geographical thinking, because it presupposes that '[t]he very possibility of the appearance of things—of objects, of self, and of others—is possible only within the all-embracing compass of place' (Malpas 1999: 15). If the world presents itself only through place, then this lived fact means that human connections with place are not contingent, accidental, or determined by more primary social or political constructs (Malpas 1999, 29–33). Rather, to be human is always already to be emplaced: "It is through our engagement with place that our own human being is made real, but it is also through our engagement that place takes on a sense and a significance of its own" (Malpas 2009: 33).

One cannot emphasize enough how potentially transformative this understanding of lived emplacement is conceptually and practically. Place is powerful because, just by being what it is, it gathers worlds spatially and environmentally, delineating centers of human action, meaning, and intention that, in turn, contribute to the making of place. This conceptualization means that place is not a physical environment separate from people associated with it but, rather, the indivisible, typically taken-for-granted situation

of people-experiencing-place. This phenomenon is complex and dynamic, and incorporates generative processes via which a place and its experiences and meanings shift or remain the same (Seamon 2013b, 2014b). This lived emplacement also means that the quality of human life is intimately related to the quality of place in which that life unfolds and vice versa. As Malpas explained:

> Since life is indeed constituted in and through its relation to the places in which it is lived, so the richness of that life, and the development of a sense of its own unitary character and self-identity, is directly tied to the way in which the lived relation to place comes to be articulated and expressed in that life. In that case, to live in a way that is neglectful of place will be to live in a way that is neglectful of that life itself—it will be to live in a way likely to give rise to an impoverished and perhaps even fragmented mode of existence. To care for and attend to our own lives thus demands that we also care for and attend to place. (2001: 232)

As one way to understand the significance of lived emplacement more fully, some phenomenologists drew on the concept of *lived body*—a body that simultaneously experiences, acts in, and negotiates a world that, typically, responds with immediate meaning and contextual presence (Casey 2009; Finlay 2011; Seamon 2013a, 2014a; Toombs 2001). In regard to lived emplacement, phenomenologists recognized that the lived body is an essential constituent of place and place experience because 'lived bodies belong to places and help to constitute them' just as, simultaneously, 'places belong to lived bodies and depend on them' (Casey 2009: 327). Through bodily actions and encounters, the person or group contributes to the particular constitution of a place as, at the same time, those actions and encounters contribute to the person or group's sense of lived involvement and identification with that place. In short, lived bodies and places 'interanimate each other' (Casey 2009: 327).

This *interanimation* of lived bodies and places is significant because it suggests that the habitual, unself-conscious familiarity of the lived body is one way by which individuals and groups actualize a taken-for-granted involvement with place (Seamon, 2013a). In this regard is the possibility that, in a supportive physical environment, individuals' bodily routines can come together in time and space, thereby contributing to a larger-scale environmental ensemble, or *place ballet*—an interaction of individual bodily routines rooted in a particular environment, which often becomes an important place of interpersonal and communal exchange and attachment: for example, a popular neighborhood café or a vibrant stretch of city street (Fullilove 2004; Oldenburg 1999; Seamon 1979, 2012; Simms 2008). Place ballet points to the possibility that everyday habitual routines regularly unfolding in physical space can transform that space into a lived place with a unique character and ambience (Moores 2012: 52–6). One can also consider how the habitual bodies of individuals and groups are drawn together or kept apart by such environmental features as architectural form and scale (Alexander 2012; Davis 2013) and the spatial configuration of pathways (Hillier 1996; Seamon 2004, 2012, 2013a).

Criticisms of Lived Emplacement

Though the 'locality of being' delineated by Edward Casey and Jeff Malpas is a significantly new way to understand the singular importance of place in human life, few

geographers have so far considered its theoretical and practical implications (Entrikin 2001; Hooper 2001; Massey 2005: 183–84). In his book-length introduction to place, Tim Cresswell (2004) recognized the far-reaching differences between the phenomenological understanding of place as 'the locality of being' and the social-constructionist understanding of place, which is reduced to little more than the secondary product of more primary societal processes (2004: 30). He concluded, however, that the phenomenological explications of lived emplacement are 'short on empirical detail' and say little 'about the processes that went into making [a] place what it is' (2004: 32). Cresswell's concerns here are legitimate, and the need is to probe lived emplacement in phenomenological ways whereby an understanding of the lived experiences, meanings, and dynamics of place are located in the qualities of place itself rather than in the social, economic, political, cultural, gender, or discourse processes identified as central in social-constructionist and critical understandings of place.

Research on the experiential structures and dynamics of lived emplacement has only begun recently, but consequential examples can already be pointed to: phenomenologists Anthony Steinbock (1995) and Janet Donohoe's use (2010) of philosopher Edmund Husserl's homeworld–alienworld explication to generate a lived dialectic of place (Seamon 2013c); philosopher Ingrid Leman Stefanovic's (2000) rethinking of sustainability through the place concept; psychologist Eva Simms's research (2008) on the shifting place meanings and time–space dynamics for a disadvantaged neighborhood in Pittsburgh; geographer Edward Relph's delineations of "spirit of place" versus "sense of place" (Relph 2009); geographer Jacob Sowers's phenomenology of Wonder Valley, a remote southern California desert community inhabited by three contrasting groups of residents identified as "homesteaders," "dystopics," and "utopics" (Sowers 2010); geographers Soren Larsen and Jay Johnson's effort (2012) to link a place-grounded ontology with affinity politics; geographer Brian Murton's use (2012) of the "geographical self" to clarity Māori understanding of personhood, landscape, and place; and my attempt (Seamon 2014b) to identify an interconnected web of generative processes by which places evolve, devolve, or remain more or less the same. All this work seeks underlying descriptive structures and interrelationships originally arising from real-world experiences and useful for understanding more broadly lived emplacement and related geographical phenomena like at-homeness, community attachment and identity, out-of-place-ness, environmental personhood, and sustaining or debilitating processes shaping place.

Place as Static and Exclusionary?

Whether the place-grounded ontology of Malpas and Casey gains conceptual traction in geography is a question that future researchers will decide. Currently, the critical, poststructuralist, and social-constructionist concerns relating to place are much more focused on whether and how contemporary, real-world places incorporate or move beyond the existential qualities claimed by humanistic and phenomenological interpretations of place (Seamon 2013b: 160–63). One group of critics argues that these interpretations too readily emphasize the centered, exclusionary aspects of place (Cresswell 2004: 18–26; Massey 1991, 2005; Rose 1993: 41–61). This criticism is partly accurate in that the early phenomenological studies of place in the 1970s and 1980s drew heavily on first-generation phenomenological philosophers like Gaston Bachelard (1964) and Martin Heidegger (1971), who largely conceptualized place as static, bounded,

conservative, and parochial. Critics of this contained, inertial place perspective speak instead of a 'progressive sense of place' (Massey 1991: 29). They ask how places relate and respond to their larger social, economic, and geographic contexts. For these critics, places remain important, but the significant practical and conceptual need is to delineate ways whereby the particular place becomes more interconnected and porous in regard to other places. How, in other words, might place incorporate diversity, the integration of differences, and constructive relationships with other places? The aim is 'a politics of outwardlookingness from place beyond place' (Massey 2005: 192).

A second group of critics claims that, because of current trends toward globalization and virtual realities, real-world places are, in many ways, marginal and obsolete. These critics call into question the rigid, unchanging stasis of place described in humanistic accounts. They speak instead of shifting movements and flows among places, ideas, peoples, and nation-states. These critics favor mobility, hybridity, flux, non-places, hyper-worlds, and heterotopias. Drawn from the work of poststructuralist philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987), a central concept is the *rhizome*—a geographically spatial structure of free, unpredictable flows and movements generating centerless networks that mostly ignore boundaries or containments (Kogl 2008: 57–77).

Though this poststructuralist critique is thought-provoking, a humanistic geographer might respond by pointing out that, even as globalization and flows undermine some places today, these same processes strengthen other places and facilitate new kinds of places. Most centrally, places retain their significance because 'the human body is always local, living a particular life in a particular place, with others, for better or worse' (Kogl 2008: 143). In this sense, place remains one of the great stabilizing constituents of human life, in that it automatically holds lived bodies in place and thereby provides one mode of spatial order and environmental identity. Unless human life becomes entirely virtual, non-material, and secondhand because of continuing developments in digital technologies and robotics, places will remain a part of human being. Though not all individuals or groups are equally identified with and attached to the places of their lives, those places are still integral in the sense that they always already provide the everyday, taken-for-granted spatial and environmental context for each person and group's lifeworld, at least in terms of environmental embodiment.

This inescapable corporeality of place is often ignored by the first group of place critics, who seek a more progressive sense of place. These critics are correct that, in our postmodernist age, we must locate ways whereby the stasis of a particular place might be invigorated and in turn invigorate other places through an exuberant interconnectedness that facilitates diversity and contributes to the acceptance of difference. But a good portion of such dynamic exchange will remain grounded in the habitual regularity of emplaced bodies. Nor can these critics discount the reality that a dynamic interchange among places presupposes a robust integrity of each place itself; this robust integrity is at least in part founded in the inertial regularity of lived bodies in physical space.

In this sense, physical places will more than likely retain a central role in human life, and one can ask how, in our hypermodern world, the unself-conscious place making of the past might be regenerated self-consciously, through thoughtful planning, fair-minded policy, and inventive design (Alexander 2012; Davis 2012; Kemmis 1995; Seamon 2004, 2013a, 2014a). One can also ask how lived emplacement and real-world places might change because of advances in robotics, digitalization, virtual realities, and the possibility of use of cyborgs and avatars. If virtual reality is eventually able to simulate

"real reality" entirely, how does such a development transform the nature of lifeworld, environmental embodiment, and place (Relph 2007; Seamon 2014a)?

An Environmental Humility

In this chapter, I have argued that the humanistic tradition in geography refers to a particular conceptual and ethical perspective as to what scholarly understanding should be: a progressive discovery of the nature of human life, experience, and meaning in relation to geographical phenomena such as space, place, landscape, region, and the natural and human-made environments. Integral to this style of understanding is a sense of wonder at the geographical phenomena of the world and a wish to understand them as they are *in their own right* without having to pay heed to any conceptual, ideological, or practical obligations. This research impulse arises from the wish to know, the satisfaction of knowing, and the intellectual and emotional pleasure taken in finding ways to explore the phenomenon in which one is interested. This manner of understanding incorporates self-knowledge, whereby through studying the *lived* nature of place, space, and environment, we discover more about ourselves. We perhaps become better human beings because of that understanding. We move toward what Edward Relph has perspicaciously identified as *environmental humility*—a way of living in, being with, and encountering the world whereby the "others" of that world, whether things, places, people, or other living beings, are respected just for being what they are and, therefore, are "put first and given kindly attention" (Relph 1981: 161–7). Environmental humility involves "an appeal *for* guardianship, for taking care of things merely because they exist, for tending and protecting them. In this there is neither mastery nor subservience, but there is responsibility and commitment" (1981: 187).

The open, empathetic mode of understanding that environmental humility cultivates is considerably different from current poststructuralist, critical, and relationalist approaches that deny any foundational, generative structures underpinning the lived reality of everyday life (Cresswell 2013, chaps. 10–13). The humanistic search for order, unity, synthesis, generalization, and truth is replaced by the poststructuralist focus on indeterminacy, diversity, local narratives, particularity, and contingent possibilities (Rosenau 1992). Poststructuralist, critical, and relationalist geographies reject external standards of reason and trustworthiness; rather, any claim to validity or accuracy is considered provisional, local, and no more correct or real than any others. As Rosenau makes the point, "there is no truth, and all is construction" (1992: 90). Relph reports that, when Mahatma Gandhi was asked what worried him most, he replied, "The hardness of heart of the educated" (1981: 107). This is perhaps the central question for a reinvigorated humanistic geography: How do we invoke a compassionate, emotional engagement so that our accounts of geographical phenomena are generous, heartfelt, accurate, and alive? Relph writes that the need is for "a way of seeing that strives to omit nothing yet imposes nothing. It takes the world whole and as it is given, and attends carefully to the particularity of places and situations. It is the attempt to see clearly what there is" (1981: 177). This mode of understanding involves charity, grace, respect, and resilience. Its impetus fueled humanistic geography in the 1970s. It may yet be revived as younger geographers grow weary of the dense, cerebral hard-heartedness of the current dominant geographies.

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