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Humanistic and New Cultural Geography: Review and Contemporary Reading

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation presents a bibliographical review of four classics of humanistic and new cultural geography in order to evaluate their contemporary academic relevance. The analysis and investigation conducted on the research published by Relph (1976), Tuan (1977), Cosgrove (1984), and Jackson (1989) demonstrates their fundamental influence on the development of their discipline. In spite of the critics that have been moved in the last few decades according to the advancement of geographical thinking, they have proved themselves to be still pertinent to contemporary issues thanks to their multidisciplinary approach. They have established theoretical frameworks, notions, and future challenges that have resulted in the flourishing of new stimulating research even in other fields of knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

The subject of Human Geography has undergone a continuous process of evolution due to academic and social changes and technology advancements that the world has undergone during the last decades. There exists a variety of sub-disciplines which have flourished in the discipline of geography related with human and cultural aspects: among them, humanist and new cultural geography have certainly gained relevance and reliability through the years. The aim of this paper is to analyse the development of the ideas of some of the most influential XX century human geographers in order to "map" the advancement of the subject and some of its main objects of study: space, place and landscape. To accomplish such task, this work will present a literary review of four classics of the discipline.

Before starting with the analysis, it is necessary to generally present some details useful to the comprehension of the development of the two sub-disciplines. Phenomenology and hermeneutics come to influence the wider discipline of geography starting from the 1970s, when some writers and geographers attempted to overcome 'positivist' geographies by opening their discipline to new approaches and notions and studying a more corporeal experience of the life-world (Janz, 2017).

Koops and Masa (2017) distinguish the approaches adopted in different phases of the analysis of place. They define a descriptive approach dominant especially in regional

studies; a phenomenological approach in humanist and behavioural works; and a social-constructionist approach in radical and post-structuralist geographies.

Janz (2017) distinguishes instead the three main phases of the development of human geography in the second half of the XX century. The first one is denoted by a strong enthusiasm for the introduction of a qualitative paradigm drawing from diverse and new backgrounds. The result of this trend between the 1970s and 1980s is a 'phenomenological geography', and it is in this period that humanistic geography flourishes. Among the most influential authors are Relph and Tuan with their popular publications. The second one is that of the new cultural geography, between the 1980s and the 1990s. Their geography is characterized by a qualitative approach to landscape, society, and communities, challenging the Saurian traditions. Moreover, it is 'anti-positivist' in proposing a perspective on social and spatial relations inspired by new approaches in the discipline that have emerged with the cultural turn, which on their own have provided many new ways to perform geographical research. Between these reformers Cosgrove and Jackson are frontrunners. The last phase exposes some criticisms regard the 'representational' character of the new cultural geographies and hence the theory they propose is defined 'non-representational'.

The first chapter and the second chapter analyse – in chronological order of publication – respectively two works for each sub-discipline which have revealed themselves fundamental to the broader discipline. Humanistic geography is represented by Edward Relph's 'Place and Placelessness' and Yi-Fu Tuan's 'Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience', while the new cultural geography is read through the words of Denis Cosgrove's 'Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape' and Peter Jackson's 'Maps of Meaning: An Introduction to Cultural Geography'.

The last chapter is instead a bibliographical collection of some contemporary readings of humanistic and new cultural geography, to understand which directions the discipline is taking in response to the stimuli given by the analysed works. The final task will be then to compare those ideas to the contemporary geography and verify if those theories and concepts are sufficient to satisfy contemporary necessities. The research aims at verifying the fortune the authors' theories for the future have obtained in contemporary geography. Were their future perspectives correct? Were they pointing at the right

direction? Were their ideas useful for the development of current cultural geography studies? Are there questions and topics that still need to be faced?

The interest in people-place relations has been growing in academic research, involving for instance branches of social sciences such as psychology, sociology or demography. At, present the rich literature on people-place relations includes both empirical research and results, and conceptual discussions and theories (Lewika, 2011) which can offer a variety of perspective to re-propose or continue research on place to face contemporary challenges, and this dissertation will explore how this is being done in the XXI century geographies.

1. HUMANISTIC GEOGRAPHY

The 1970s was a decade of major importance for the flourishing of humanistic geography. Seamon and Lundberg (2017) have tried to summarize the steps that allowed humanistic geography to gain relevance and the main traits that distinguish it as a specific human geography branch. As a matter of fact, the sub-discipline only becomes explicit during this decade, but humanistic approaches, themes, and methods have started spreading well before that, reaching in the mid-twentieth century a sort of a formal recognition. It is precisely in 1947 that J. K. Wright publishes an article to invite geographers to involve humanistic, and therefore people's values and perspectives into geographical studies, delineating the field of 'geosophy', the 'examination of geographical knowledge in all manner of human forms. Just a few years later, W. Kirk introduces a further concept to add to Wright's innovation, that of 'behavioural environment' which is the environment as it is seen, perceived, and understood by individuals or groups. They manage to foster a wider geographical research, one that would consider human consciousness, cognition, and their construction and experience of space. It is from such opening to new horizons that humanistic geography rises, from the new focus on human relationships and experiences with place and space and their meanings – concepts later examined in the chapter.

The name itself may have two possible roots: on one side, the influence of psychology and sociology which both defined a 'humanistic' subfield of their own; on the other, the adjective comes from the XV century Italian Humanism, a philosophical, intellectual, and ideological view displaying human beings as capable of affecting the worlds and lives by using their knowledge and experiences.

Sapkota (2017) reckons the fast advancement of the discipline during the 1970s results from some geographers' dissatisfaction with an abstract spatial science based on mechanistic and quantitative methods and approaches which lacks attention to the human world and its impact on space. The humanistic perspective on the other hand, considers human experiences of places, space, or landscape essential for the understanding of their deep relationship with the environment, and puts them, as thinking beings, at the centre of a geography constructed or affected by people for people. A core notion of humanist geography is indeed sense of place, the study of people's physical or cultural interactions

with environments, involving aspects coming from other disciplines such as history, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and particularly philosophy. Its innovation lays in introducing conceptual perspectives which allow descriptive methods instead of scientific ones which in their opinion often results in misinterpretation of the phenomena. In particular it works with epistemological and phenomenological perspectives, emphasising the 'methodologies of engagement', accurately studying and understanding subjective worlds and experiences, and the analysis of those experiences related to geographical phenomena – place, home, or environmental experience. Moreover, they regard self-knowledge and first-hand experiences as fundamental to understand the essence of humanistic geography (Seamon and Lundberg, 2017).

In 1976 Yi-Fu Tuan releases an article in the 'Annals of the Association of American Geographers' which finally conceptualises humanistic geography, distancing it from earth sciences and placing it instead in the group of the humanities and social sciences which all aim at studying the human world. Humanistic geography wants to understand humans' condition by studying its relationship with nature and their behaviour and feelings in and of space and place. Tuan explains the humanistic perspective as focusing 'on activities and their products that are distinctive to the human species' and then analyses some of the main themes of his enquiry. The five of them – that he will develop in his following book – are: geographical knowledge, that necessary to biological survival; territory, place and its identity creation, and people's attachment to them through symbolic thought; crowding and privacy, their impact on people's life, behaviour, and emotions; livelihood and economics; and finally, religion and the search for meanings. At the base of the research concerning all these topics, is also an historical and regional approach, for certain moments and events in history have affected space, and history is as well the product of people's conscious reconstruction of group memory for their purposes, which in turn serves a role in the creation of people sense of places – for instance, patriotism or national pride. Tuan does not believe his geography should be completely separated from scientific knowledge, for geography builds its discourse starting from it, and, moreover, it is interested in the processes of learning, development, and acquisition of knowledge and skills which characterize the human body and mind. He wants to prove the effective usefulness of his discipline, portraying it as a medium to clarify, make explicit, or reveal symbols and concepts regarding space and place.

Yi-Fu Tuan is to be indisputably considered one of the most relevant authors within the discipline of that time and his article has been almost revolutionary in defining humanistic geography. But his research accomplishments further continue and expands in the years, as with his next publication he manages to obtain the same academic attention.

The following chapter aims at presenting two of the most important milestones of humanistic geography that during the '70s defined some basic concepts for the development of the discipline and promoted its interdisciplinarity, one of which is coming again from Tuan, 'Space and Place', while the other is Edward Relph's 'Place and Placelessness'. They will be analysed in chronological order of publication: first Relph, who outlines a 'spectrum of spatial experience' (Sapkota, 2017) based on human direct experience of place and their level of awareness and involvement in the process, that is their insideness or outsideness. He delineates the difference between space and place as well, defining two fundamental notions for the whole field of human geography. The meanings and significance place can gain is intertwined with human activities, intensions and perceptions which together form an identity of place. When lacking, placelessness – a new phenomenon characterising modernity – spreads. 'Space and Place' again deepens the features and differences of space and place, as the same title hints, and their foundation in experience. Experience itself undergoes a careful examination in which the major components that may compose it are explored. The development of the self, both emotionally and biologically interferes with people's imposition of significance on place and understanding of space.

As the chapter will demonstrate, experience and awareness are the main contact points of the two books, the factors which allow humanistic geography to accomplish his task of studying the profound relationship between human and environment.

1.1   PLACE AND PLACELESSNESS

Professor Edward Relph publishes his book 'Place and Placelessness' in 1976 with the aim of suggesting the advancement of geographical studies regarding the relevance of experience in the creation and reading of places. His discussion focuses in proposing new approaches for the discipline to adapt the study of places and landscapes to modern

insights and ideas, and moreover in involving a meticulous attention to the lived-world and the ways in which people may experience place. The points he highlights as most relevant for his research are, indeed, the relationship between space and place; the components, features, and intensity of place experiences; the identity of place and the identity of people with and within places; and finally, the manifestation of sense of place and attachment to place in the creation of places and in landscapes. To examine the condition of modern places in relation with the gradually decreasing consideration of human direct experience, the author also introduces the notion of placelessness. His method holds some philosophical discourses and foundations, in particular those of phenomenology, which analyses the lived world of experiences through observation and description.

According to his approach, the human condition involves living and knowing one's place. However, place is not only a location in space, but its meaning is related to the expression of geographical experiences. His perception is that geographers keep perpetrating the confusion about the term and concept of place. Relph therefore explains geographical reality as both the place where someone is, and the landscapes they remember – a direct experience of the world which is meaningful and fundamental for human existence. He turns to the reflections of two other authors that in his opinion manage to clarify the concept of place and its features – those of Lukermann and May. Lukermann describes place as a location enriched by everything that occupies it and then identifies six major components of places: first, a locative idea: a place is in spatial relations with other places and objects; places have a spatial dimension and extension, an inside and outside, and the location can be described for its internal characteristics – site –, or external connections with other places – and situation. Second, natural and cultural elements define them: in this way, each place becomes unique; there exists a 'framework of circulation' which is composed of a system of interconnected places; places are localised; then, a historical component defines them as either emerging or becoming, depending on the addition or disappearance of certain elements which characterize them in time. Finally, they are meaningful because they are influenced by the values of human beings.

Relph is still unsatisfied for such explorative work lacks a differentiation between the terms 'place', 'region', 'area' and their use. He found it in May, who provides three

ways in which geographers have used the notion of place: it may refer to the entire surface of Earth; to a unit of space (i.e., a city, a province, and all those giving the sense of 'region'); to a particular and specific part of space and its inside.

1.1.1 Space

Space is conceived by Relph as a continuum delimited by experience and abstract thought at its extremities and characterized by certain types of space lying along it.

Pragmatic or primitive space is the space where people move and act unselfconsciously subjected to instinct. At this primitive level of unconsciousness experiences are guided by the body and the senses, they do not involve any image or spatial relation.

Perceptual space, that which is perceived at one's most basic degree of awareness, is an egocentric space, the centre of people's basic needs and practices. The construction of such centres of significance is due to experience and derives from the intent to exploit place for one's use.

Substantive space is the space characterized by that content resulted from human intention and imagination.

Existential or lived space is the inner structure of space which people perceive in direct experience as members of a specific cultural group and therefore intersubjective as a result of the member's common signs, symbols, and set of experiences. As such, it is in a constant unconscious process of modification and creation. In antique and modern societies, it acquires different connotations: a sacred space of religious experience and filled with symbols and significances which comes to represent centres of the world; geographical space is instead the 'reflection of man's basic awareness of the world', the space of a culture that is humanised through the naming of places – the process of defining place by giving it a determined, oriented structure – and by being adapted to the needs and qualities of mankind. The main elements composing and outlining the structure of geographical space have been studied by Cullen and Lynch. The former examines the experiences from the point of view of the people on the street to obtain the basis of such experiences, while the latter seeks these elements in the images or mental pictures people create of a certain place – usually a city. Norberg-Schulz realizes instead a structure with

both a vertical and a horizontal orientation which explains the levels of existential space (Fig.1).
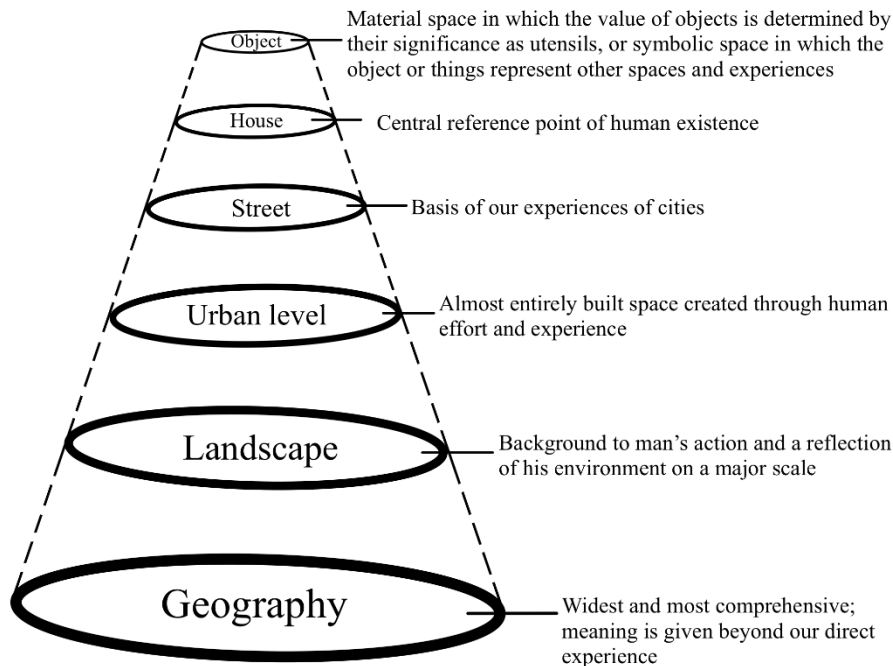

Fig. 1: Vertical orientation of the levels of existential space (adapted by Norberg-Schulz, in Relph, 1976, p. 21)

Their structure is a representation of an increasingly humanised space. Each level of the vertical structure in Fig.1 has a further horizontal not-oriented structure, involving three main elements: a set or regions of significance imposed according to the interests and experiences of the groups living them; these are organised in paths or routes intended as the structural axis of the existential space as they express direction and intensity of the intentions; the paths connect the major meaningful centres within space – namely, places. Architectural space and planning space are the intentional creation of spaces, usually refusing the idea resulting from experience and focusing on functionality and two-dimensions spaces. Relph refers to Siegfried Giedion to find the manifestations of this kind of space. Giedion proposes the three major ones by correlating them to phases of the development of architecture through time: firstly, space created by an interplay of volumes, commonly found in antique Greek or Egyptian buildings; secondly, the hollowed-out interiors, characteristic of most buildings from the Pantheon to the late XVIII century buildings; and finally, the simultaneous work on space from different

perspectives, a feature of contemporary architecture. Urban planning and architectural spaces are more and more intertwined, for they both take space as an object to manipulate to be functional and efficient.

Cognitive space is an abstract construct of space, a homogeneous, uniform, and neutral space for spatial organization. It is the space of geometry and maps and therefore essential for plans and design.

Abstract space is a creation of imagination, which does not need to prove its descriptions through empirical observation. Places within it are just points and symbols, elements of a bigger system of abstract elements.

One fundamental idea to consider, is that none of these types of space is a strict category, but they are all linked through thought and experience. Within space, places are only differentiated through humans' intentions and discretion. Intentions and awareness also represent the defining factors of the phenomena of place and placelessness, focus of the next two sections.

1.1.2 Place and Placelessness

Retaking the title of the book, the following section will analyse the notions of place and placelessness, all their features, functions, compositions, and manifestations, summarizing the attempts of definition Relph proposes throughout his whole research.

Relph spends a major part of his work trying to define place in all of its aspects. He considers place as a phenomenon of experience and, as such, having several properties and established relations that together enrich people's sense of place and create the essence of place.

One condition of place is that of location, which is not however fundamental nor sufficient for its essence. Its appearance, physical form, is the landscape, which holds its spirit and possibility of being described. Place has a close relation with time, dependent on the modification or persistence of its elements in time; continuity and change are indeed necessary conditions to emphasize experiences and attachment to places themselves. Thus, places are related to the activities, development, and decline of those cultures by which they are lived. Tradition, social participation, and worship for the past and ancestors, with all their related rituals and myths, are further elements of attachment to place, manifestations of the strong relationship between people and place for they

imbue place with significance. Places consequently become the concrete representation of the present time, reminding as well of the past. The bond with people is strong enough to become a relevant part of the identity of places, as community and place support and boost each other, expressing their relationships in landscapes – receptors of common values and beliefs. Place is not just a communal experience, but also an individual one. Strong individual experiences of private space may be lived in physically defined places which hold a significant meaning for a person, or even be remembered. Usually, such intense sentiment or attachment is a result of a sense of familiarity perceived in a specific place. These feelings are the factors which compose rootedness, a sense of knowledge, care, concern, and commitment for that place where to feel secure. The first example of place people experience as children is their parents; then, it is their home. Home is deeply perceived as the centre of one's life – even for a group or a community – a meaningful part of their identity. The tie to place is so pervasive that it can provoke two opposed reactions in whoever experiences it – nostalgia or imprisonment. People's experience of place also consists in managing to balance this dichotomy between willingness to stay attached and willingness to escape, to avoid either feelings of unrootedness or oppression.

As centres of significance and action, places have a reciprocal influence with the events and experiences happening within it, guided by the intentions of individuals and communities which are part of them. It is this intentionality of shaping the world with certain meanings which makes human-place relationships so solid. Meaningful experiences are lived in a specific background which is accordingly and functionally defined. The essence of place, its core meaning, according to Relph 'lies in the largely unselfconscious intentionality that defines places as profound centres of human existence'.

Places have identities. Identity itself is a sort of a persistent character which allows to distinguish an object from the others, a character which may be innate or conferred by people and their specific cultures. Although being persistent, it is not necessarily uniform, static, or unchangeable because it is subjected to events and attitudes towards it. Identity of place is essentially the result of three components which coexist and intervene in all experiences of place: the static physical setting, the activities within it, and the meanings acquired. They can be divided into subcomponents which, when combined in many different structures, create unique identities of place. Another aspect that intervenes to

affect identity is the 'spirit of place', which in turn derives from the interaction of appearance, topography, socio-economic functions, and significances.

When identity is attributed to places by individuals it acquires a double relevance as the identity of place itself, but also the identity of a group with that place, that is whether they experience it as insiders or outsiders. Place is structured in an egocentric scheme having individuals at the centre of their perceptual space and therefore, they set their own boundaries of inside and outside. The duality of condition of insideness and outsideness again depends on one's intentions or interests and the two can be experienced at different levels of intensity.

Selfconscious

OUTSIDENESS   INSIDENESS

Existential outsideness   Vicarious insideness

Objective outsideness   Behavioural insideness

Incidental outsideness   Empathetic insideness

                                 Existential insideness
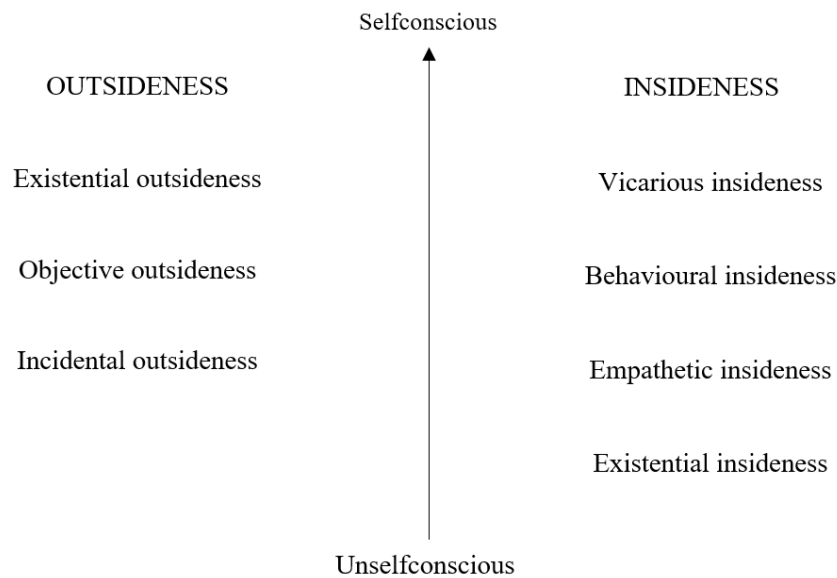
Unselfconscious

Fig. 2: Intensity of insideness and outsideness

Of the three levels of outsideness, existential outsideness is the one with a self-conscious uninvolvement in experiences of place, where places are rejected as centres of existence. They are mere backgrounds to actions and events only characterized by superficial qualities.

Objective outsideness involves a conscious disinterest for identity and essence of place to only consider it as the location or space where an event or activity is located. Relph recognises this behaviour in many geographers and in Professor Bartels' 'instrumental rationality', through which scholars detach emotionally form the place to work on them with logic, reason, and efficiency.

Finally, incidental outsideness is the mostly unselfconscious tendency to perceive places as only incidental to activities which receive the whole attention.

When it comes to insideness, vicarious insideness proposes 'second-hand' experiences of place, that is feeling a deep involvement through the experiences reported by others. It is the case of arts like painting or literature depending on the artist's ability to convey meanings and images and people's capacity to perceive them.

Behavioural insideness involves consciously attending to the appearance of place, presenting qualities of landscape or townscape; it stands as the opposite of incidental outsideness.

Empathetic insideness is similar to behavioural insideness but it focuses more on the empathetic involvement with place through sociality. It means to identify with place, and it is possible through some awareness of it and through the recognition of its community-established meanings.

On the opposite pole of existential outsideness lies the last level of insideness, the most fundamental and unconscious one, existential insideness. It involves implicit recognition of being part of a specific dynamic place, to live it, and to identify with it by balancing expectations, experiences, and images. Relph reports Boulding's definition of an image as 'a mental picture that is the product of experiences, attitudes, memories, and immediate sensations. It is used to interpret information and to guide behaviour, for it offers a relatively stable ordering of relationships between meaningful objects and concepts. When applied to notions of place, images acquire a vertical and a horizontal structure, corresponding respectively to establishing intensity and depth of experience with its layers of insideness and outsideness, and the social distribution of knowledge of place within people and groups. Images of place are subjected, within each person, to experiences, feelings, and imagination, so to result variable. As an image, identity of place come from the interaction between the 'I, the Other, and the We' that whenever combined achieve a communal, shared value. This agreement is called consensus identity of place and it can take two forms which Relph finds in C. W. Mills' works: the first is public identity, physical and verifiable features of places shared by certain communities of knowledge; the other is mass identity, superficial and created by 'opinion-makers' and spread through mass-medias.

An identity of place survives as long as it remains plausible and keeps fostering social interactions, and, moreover, until it holds the meanings attributed by the communities. The main causes of loss of plausibility may be the change of environmental conditions with a consequent inability to host social interactions, or to adapt to communities' changes in attitude, fashion, or beliefs.

Once the profile of place is outlined, the concept of placelessness is conversely defined as the 'casual eradication of distinctive places and the making of standardised landscapes that result from an insensitivity to the significance of place', and the 'weakening of distinct and diverse experiences and identities of place'. Relph hypothesise a condition of loss of significance suffered from places and experiences – a placeless geography –, in favour of an attitude apparently connoted by, on one side, increasing functionalism, superficiality, uniformity and planning strategies, and, on the other, weakening of identity and sense of place.

Finally, the two opposed notions explored in this section may be defined as:

I. Places: result of the union of human and natural orders which have become centres of significance of people's experiences. They are indeed experienced phenomena imbued with meaning and location for objects and activities. They then represent sources of individual and group identity.

II. Placelessness: term which refers to environments lacking significance, relations with humans, roots, and symbols, where order, uniformity, and efficiency are guiding concepts. It is an unselfconscious attitude combined with mass cultures which results in anonymous spaces – including those that will be defined in the next section as 'other-directed' and kitsch – overshadowing the importance of place.

1.1.3 Awareness and authenticity

The shift from place to placelessness can be understood through an analysis of the attitudes and level of awareness in people's sense of place and its creation.

'Sense of place' basically means to be able to recognize places and their identities. Such capacity can work at different levels of awareness, and it can be either authentic or inauthentic, concepts that Relph borrows from phenomenology. The present section

examines these two notions and their correlation with people's awareness in the experience of place.

Authenticity is defined by the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries as 'the quality of being true or what somebody claims it is', that is giving the sense of being genuine and lacking hypocrisy.

In the context of sense of place, Relph conceives authentic attitudes as the direct, genuine experiences of the identity of place, deriving either from the awareness of place as a product of human's intension and meaning, or from an unselfconscious identity with that place. In this last case, the relationship between people and place overshadows the distinction between the two, a mutual relationship characteristic of primitive cultures – although today some people may still perceive a really deep connection with place. A self-conscious and authentic experience consists in turning places in an object of reflection to truly understand their identity while living them, an outsider's open attitude to finding their uniqueness.

The creation of place may be subjected both to selfconscious or unselfconscious sense of place as well for human-built landscape is based on meaningful systems with specific structures and forms. Unselfconsciously made places are manifest in their unselfconscious design processes which tend to find traditional solutions to traditional problems. Moreover, by simply living and experiencing places – which creation is continuous – they still acquire some kind of authenticity. Selfconsciously made places are instead characterized by design processes aiming at concrete results and problem solving which may require to come up with new solutions. To do so authentically means to work without forgetting the significance of place.

Authenticity is therefore a total 'awareness and acceptance of responsibility for your own existence', which in the process of creating places may appear at varying degrees of intensity, that is, with varying degrees of authenticity.

Inauthenticity is on the contrary a close-minded attitude towards the world and human abilities, expressed through the so-called "dictatorship of the 'They'", the adoption of mass attitudes or actions. This 'dictatorship' is the unselfconscious and subjective expression of inauthenticity which do not involve reflection about it and then subjects the individual to the 'anonymous they'. The selfconscious one is related to the artificial 'public' world, where decisions are taken according to public interest and in

homogeneous spaces and times. Its manifestation may be found in the application of techniques and planning on places. Planners objectively think places for mass consumption, not considering how people may individually experience them. Public spaces additionally may possess 'high imageability' which depends on some variable features that make them 'stand-out' in the area where they are located. They are not given any deep or real significance by people, but they manage to persist and attract experiences – even if more superficial ones.

There is not indeed any sense of place, for there is not any awareness of the meanings of places or their identities. Places are mere functional and useful backgrounds in which experiences are quite superficial. An example of inauthenticity is the 'kitsch', an attitude that Relph agrees with Abraham Moles consisting in a particular relationship between human beings and objects in which objects have the only purpose of satisfying mass public consumptions – and resulting then in style-less and mediocre souvenirs.

Inauthenticity is an attitude which fosters placelessness, the 'weakening of identity of place' which may result in similar places offering poor experiences of place. This attitude and its consequences are mainly transmitted through mass-communication and mass-movement. Phenomena of placelessness have spread due to the easy mobility and transmission of fashions and habits not just by actual, physical transportation, but also through medias, making direct contact unnecessary and cancelling geographical constraints. This is the product of mass culture or mass values, where uniform trends about both products and places are imposed and transmitted by mass-medias, allowing also to intervene on problems and needs with more generalized approaches to replicate on large scale.

To better explain the difference between authentic and inauthentic attitudes and experiences of place, Relph exemplifies them in one of their clearest manifestations – the home and tourism. Home is lived as an authentic experience because it is an individual centre of existence and identity to feel attached to, which in older societies even had a religious meaning conveying further deep feelings of attachment. Tourism is inauthentic for ideas about places are usually developed by other's opinions – usually the already mentioned 'opinion-makers' – that become socially accepted. It is often characterized by a lack of real interest toward the experience of place itself, so people end up valuing more the act of travelling than the actual destination or journey. Tourism is a 'homogenizing

influence' which in a way destructs local landscape preferring to enhance popular or conventional touristic designs or pseudo-places. Relph reproposes J. J. Jackson's theory of 'other-directed architecture', a set of designs projected for and directed to the outsiders for the only purpose of consumption, creating what they call 'consumerlands'. They recognize four kinds of other-directed place: Disneyfication, Museumization, Futurization, and Subtopia.

Disneyfication produces surrealistic, absurd, and artificial places which deliberately combine historical, mythical, real, or fantastic elements without any correlation with the geographical location. The intent is also that of providing an escape from reality, and such pseudo-places may even be considered as utopias of happiness and amusement although eradicating any imaginative effort.

Museumization is a form of Disneyfication consisting in the reproduction of an idealised history, like pioneers' villages, castles, or forts with careful accuracy in details. The result is however a mere facade in a fake reconstructed historical atmosphere.

Futurization is a selfconscious construction of futuristic landscapes and places based on assumptions on future prospects. The biggest representation is the international exhibitions that since the XIX century unite the world in presenting projects and, to some extent, utopias of progress, their design based on utilitarianism and their predictions on what the world will be like in the future. What they propose is ideally to become a future point of reference for innovation, design, and taste to be spread and reproduced. The effect would be to transform futurist landscape in actual International', placeless landscapes guided by standardising criteria of technology. This is an ongoing process, as still nowadays international exhibitions like the Expo seem to serve a similar purpose.

Subtopia may be just described as the everyday landscape of suburbia and urban areas affected by other-direction, commercialization, and Disneyfication. The main effect is to render all localities single-purpose look-alikes, with little space for direct experience, as it is not considered in the objective planning and mapping process.

Such landscapes are not created by individuals or culture groups, but usually by big businesses, which products directly reflect their interests. They thus reinforce the processes of worldwide standardisation of cultural landscapes. Their activity is in a way supported by governments and central authorities which seem to work in the same path. Governments serve as sort of businesses for certain urban needs, like housing or resource

managing, preserving the business' guiding approaches of standardisation and uniformity. The economic sphere, through the work of corporations and governments, eventually becomes a fundamental aspect that affects the modern world and life. Even sense of place and attachment lose importance in favour of economic values and efficiency which then cause placelessness.

1.1.4 Present-day and prospects

Looking at landscape requires contextualising it, for it is strictly related with experience and therefore cultural attitudes or activities; moreover, changes in landscape are due to changes in social attitudes. After a more theoretical description of placelessness, in the last chapters of his book Relph proceeds to insert the notion in present-day landscape, explaining its prospects according to modern attitudes.

Landscape is the result of the combination of its physical and man-built aspects, and its meanings given by people experiencing it, involving a deep relationship with experience. The experiential essence of landscape activates both in those moments when it manages to catch momentaneous attention, fostering reflection and the creation of memories – even without profound impact – or in more rare and stronger encounters. People actually possess a 'selective vision', a culturally determined trait which unconsciously limits one's vision, cancelling whatever may be boring, unattractive, or familiar. Experiences of landscape are thus often basically biased.

Modern experiences of landscape are affected by social and economic changes, together with lack of participation and a gradual separation from nature and land itself that enhances the creation of more and more artificial forms. The outcome is Relph's present-day landscape, a rational, absurd, and confused environment.

Rationalism is a guiding feature expressed in the dependence on methods, procedures, and technical knowledge which comes to replace reliance on thought. By applying rational and scientific techniques to places and experiences it is possible to outline the ordered landscape of reflection and reason. Designers are mostly interested in providing efficient places and making profit, turning locality and history into secondary, irrelevant accessories. They create responding to human needs and desires, ready for public consumption and hence according to the principles of comfort, acceptability, and

functionality. Such landscapes lose their identities for not being able to stimulate community interaction and commitment.

The experience of the absurd landscape is a subjective one in which a person may feel isolated and a stranger, a blurred, incomprehensible, and serious place organised and directed by anonymous forces as if it was a commodity. It may come from one's own sense of absurdity, the perception of surrounding activities being inappropriate or indifferent from the self, or maybe from a perception of not experiencing the landscape in a correct way – if there is such. An instrument to experience landscapes more practically and in some way avoiding feelings of absurd, is in Relph's present-day that of moving with cars, which works like a medium to have a direct contact with the world. It helps creating an individual geography, for example by the view of the road, which involves people in the landscape, or from the road, which permits to witness absurd landscape from distance.

The use of the car, however, often becomes part of a routinized life, an everyday landscape where everything seems ordinary, and it is taken for granted. An everyday landscape is inauthentic and made of all the common, mass-produced object, places and buildings, and activities accepted as part of one's daily routine. Its repetitive character and established patterns and designs are indeed unselfconsciously accepted as they are, as mere backgrounds.

Another trend of modern world is to have blurred boundaries which do not allow stability and consistency. In the same way as landscape may change their identity for how people experience it, modern people can change their individual identity depending on varying lifestyles. Relph is here talking about R. J. Lifton's 'Protean man'. His personality has a continuity, but he is able to escape established patterns for a more dynamic and changeable identity. Protean changes in landscape and uniformity given by the spread of international styles create a deep confusion for breaking inherited established images of landscape. If on one side landscapes result confusing, on the other they appear as simple and superficial. This is the simple landscape, a problem free, surprise-less landscape that develops wherever environments are designed as purely rational. It is therefore orderly, mostly unifunctional, univalent, and without any sort of conflict or ugliness.

If traditional and vernacular societies founded their attachment to landscape in symbols, which gave meaning to landscape and places themselves, modern societies

largely rely on signs and related myths: in particular, the myths of reason, ideal past and future, progress, freedom, and comfort. Myths are connoted by simplicity and lack of history, and moreover they are able to reduce otherness to sameness and quality to quantity.

Modern landscape is thus characterised by rationality and absurdity which replace and weaken symbols and meanings, together with a combination of everydayness, habits, routines, and simplicity in conflict with a substantial confusion due to the lack of focuses or familiarity. Placelessness has clearly become not only a product of Relph's present-day landscapes, but even an essential part of them.

In the final reflections Relph sums up the main points of his research, delineating the two main resulting experienced geographies – geography of places and geography of placelessness; while the first is meaningful and rich in differences, the latter is 'a labyrinth of endless similarities'.

His hope is for place-making to be founded again on experience, on authentic and selfconscious attitudes rather than merely on planning and mapping. The aim of his study has been to find an approach suitable to design the lived environment to overcome pure mathematical procedures, a selfconscious approach to create places filled with meaning and fostering experiences and interrelations, in which some feelings of attachment, rootedness, and significance may be developed. People and groups dwelling in them may in this way create their own authentic and meaningful places. Relph's sees this step as the only possibility to not completely give up to a celebration of urban non-places, where significance and individual relations with places are totally lost. In his opinion, human beings need such relationship to be developed by transcending placelessness, in order to build places made for humans and suitable for their experiences to be wholly lived.

1.2   SPACE AND PLACE: THE PERSPECTIVE OF EXPERIENCE

Yi-Fu Tuan, one of the most influential points of reference of humanistic geography, also considered its profounder for defining it in its earlier and already analysed article, brings out a further and deeper exploration of the themes proposed as central for the discipline in his 'Space and Place', published just a year after the famous article – in 1977. The book focuses on the difference between the notions of space and place and their

experiential dimension and meanings for humans. Considering insufficient the use of culture as explanatory factor and instead important its influence on human traits and abilities, Tuan structures his book in a series of more general questions asking himself and readers –even his students who he addresses directly in the preface– to consider, comment, or criticize for further research in the discipline, and which therefore do not always have a concrete answer. What Tuan does, is to present an attempt of response, an 'exploratory work', based on human personal, social, and historical experiences, with a rather philosophical and descriptive approach. Fundamental to his theories, is the perceptive analysis, the use of the five senses, the sensorial organs, and the movements of the human body within space which allow to discover, define, understand, live, or, as he would say, *experience* the external world. He carefully analyses the steps of the development of space and place from childhood, including cognitive and locative abilities that adults may take for granted.

Therefore, the three themes he explores are:

I.   The biological aspects of human development and growth regarding space and place

II.   The relations between space and place, the first being more abstract, the latter being its 'evolution' as soon as it gains personal or social value

III.   Experience and knowledge

The biological aspects are often intertwined with experience. In the first chapter Tuan examines the five sense and the perceptive abilities they allow. He experiments each one of them alone and then their superposition to prove whether they possess the power of conveying a feeling of space or locating abilities. He regards sight and touch as the two perceptions which let human create strong feelings for space and spatial qualities, for they can provide a 'spatially organized world', whereas taste, hearing, and smell are not enough to provide sense of space on their own. Seeing and touching are thus named 'spatializing faculties' that may work with the other senses to emphasise our perceptions of the external world. Touch is fundamental to explore the physical world and it is strictly connected with the physical experience of kinaesthesia, a third additional and essential instrument to construct space. In this sense, space means to have room to move and by moving space acquires a structure which eyes and limbs can analyse in its shapes. Space can in the same way be perceived as a variable location for objects – including places –,

the distance and connection between them. Distance is an experiential dimension as well: the acts performed when moving –like the actual movement or visualizing the surrounding space– give a sense of distance. It is through the human mind that sensorial experiences are finally turned into effectively organized spaces and environments.

It is thanks to biological predisposition that humans are able to understand their environment, a capacity they develop since childhood. Tuan uses a biological approach to study this development, basing his research on natural sciences but introducing psychological and pedagogical ways of thinking.

As already explained, movement is in Tuan's opinion fundamental to the construction of space, above all in infants who still do not have the ability to distinguish between themselves and the external world nor to locate in space. Infants explores the world by moving –gaining freedom– and through hands and mouth until their eyes can focus well. As places are a special kind of object, the first environment for children is people, in particular, their parents who represent permanent presences. With them as point of reference, they start to achieve a sense of distance or directions. When crawling and walking, they then understand the horizontal and vertical spaces and eventually they manage to distinguish spatial opposites. At the beginning of elementary school, they interpret aerial photography, recognizing and understanding vertical and oblique views, probably because of the images they soon learn to read from books, television, and toys in which they try to project themselves –in other words, thanks to imagination.

Their first place is their mother because they are not just stable elements, but also source of nurture and support. Lately the attachment they feel for people gets to enlarge including both objects and localities and even their sense of place develops enough to let them associate people with places. As they grow, places become more geographical, and their horizons expand; at the same time, their feelings for and understanding of place are influenced by knowledge and sense of property.

Children then gradually develop their spatial ability and eventually they come to integrate it with spatial knowledge. This is constructed as soon as they learn to picture movements in their minds, an ability that is not essential since their birth, as habitual and daily activities do not always require it. Spatial knowledge can be therefore defined as 'a symbolic articulation in words and images', a mental instrument to strengthen spatial ability. Another ability for humans to acquire is that of orientation, the sense of direction.

Spatial skills and knowledge are so well intertwined, that they allow the body to freely move in space and, through technical advancement, conceptualize space in maps which are an abstraction and symbolization of space made by cartographers and interpreted by readers. Maps are indeed the representation of how humans conquered space by establishing spatial relations and rendering them familiar. Society and culture influence this process as well because of the structures, education, and relations they impose to children as individuals. Geographical knowledge is the result of the development process which people undergo, that is a 'conscious and theoretical grasp of spatial relations among places that one seldom visits'.

The following question Tuan proposes to deepen his analysis is: how does the body relate to space? First of all, he specifies that space is an 'abstract term for a complex set of ideas', influenced by cultural traits and attitudes. Different cultures attribute value to and measure space in different ways but it is almost always possible to find similarities thanks to one common feature: man as centre and point of reference. Spatial organization is a product of man, who establishes relations with the environment and places his body in space, so that his biological and social needs are met. As a matter of fact, body and space actually represent the abstraction of the concrete man and world. The coordinates of human body need a reflection in space so that men can feel oriented in it. Being lost then means to not recognize those established coordinates of front and back or left and right that nature suddenly erases.

The structuring of space is more or less shared by all cultures through a common vocabulary which itself derives from men and their bodies. These common coordinates are usually:

➢ Upright or standing opposed to prone: they regard one's posture: on one side lay terms which have the same roots as and refer to, for instance, 'stature' or 'status', words that always hint at some kind of assertion, achievement or order; on the other the connotation addresses a more submissive behaviour. Such terms are also proposed in the opposition of vertical and horizontal.

➢ High and low: they are opposed on the vertical axis; they are used in different contexts, even in evaluative ones (superior and inferior, height to symbolize importance, etc…).

➢ Centre: it usually represents prestige.

➢ Front and back, and left and right: front and back are perceived by sight and also with temporal meaning as future and past. Right and left are secondary notions, which may even be confused by humans; people move either back or forward, their turn to right or left is just a temporary interruption of the forward or backword movement. In particular the front is the goal, the final destination.

Tuan insists on the use of human bodies, values, and evaluations to organize and define space. The environment they live in is shaped and changes depending on their position in it, so in the same way the coordinates move following the body itself. According to this idea, Tuan does not describe the general presence of an insider in a landscape, but rather a body in space, highlighting the importance of such individual and close relationship.

Modern environments mostly consist in cities. Tuan therefore tries to apply human coordinates relating them to cities as well. Front and back for example, are not their previously planned attributes, but these notions exist to the extent to which they give the perception of having a front and a back. In other words, certain aspects of some parts of a city may remind people of something on the front or on the back, which are both heavily connotated terms. It is a perception human gets by moving in that space.

In a world constructed according to humans, languages need to adapt to such characteristics. Not only directions, locations, and spatial indications revolve around men, but even linguistically, space is rendered anthropocentric through spatial prepositions. Thus, linguistics is one of the tools he turns to in order to comprehend the values at the origin of some spatial terms and elements. The firsts examples are all the measuring systems which by tradition use the name of some parts of the body; in the same way man-built objects are used as systems of reference. All of these are usually used to calculate either length or distance. The author regards distance as primarily distance from the self, and it is the reason why often spatial demonstratives and personal pronouns are connected and, together with locative adverbs, they can implicate each other. The simplest division or humans in between I –or us – and them (Fig.3), those standing outside or area of intimacy. Therefore, linguistic notions and geographical or spatial dimensions are combined.
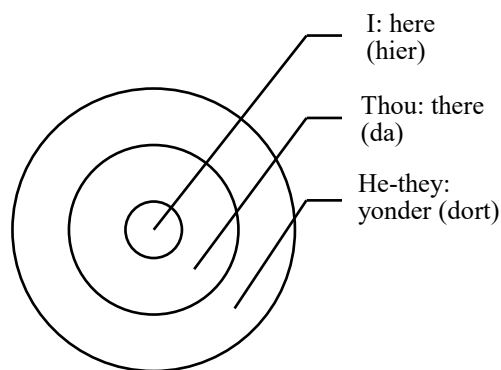
Fig. 3: Personal pronouns and spatial demonstratives (adapted from Tuan, 1977, p.48)

1.2.1 Types of spaces

Tuan distinguishes three type of spaces which humans can identify: 'mythical' space, a conceptual schema; 'pragmatic' space, when within that schema practical activities are ordered, and a limited set of economic activities is performed. Whenever people express feelings, images, and thoughts in material elements, space becomes 'architectural' or 'sculptural'. He further analyses mythical and architectural space.

The author starts from the impression of myth as something opposed to the real and which lacks precise knowledge. It is a collective belief that survives in the present even without concrete proofs. In such systems, mythical places flourish and become in a way real. Tuan presents two kinds of mythical places, which both survive in the modern world as in every culture and society always persists the 'unknown' and people still comprehend man as in some way part of nature. The first one is the conceptualization of familiar and everyday places or the frame for pragmatic activities which is fundamental for people's orientation. The second one, is inserted in a world view – cosmology – that is the result of the human willingness of understanding man's place and structuring the environment to satisfy their sense of order.

The relation between humans and the cosmos can be understood in two ways: one sees the body as an image of the cosmos, a microcosm; the body itself is perceived in as an object of the universe, and a microcosm to compare with earth, stars, and planets. The result is a sort of astrology where man is central to the cosmos. In this way, assumptions about fate and human characteristics are explained and still persist in nowadays

astrological theories – i.e., the horoscope. A reciprocal influence between humans and nature or environment is believed to exist, and astrology gives its interpretation about physical aspects of this same influence. The other theory imposes man as the centre of an oriented cosmos organized by cardinal points. It is an anthropocentric, oriented, mythical space. The common point is structure space to pose men in a place in the universe and environment. Anthropocentric structuring of space also recalls the egocentric space Relph described as characterising human beings' perception of space in insider and outsider experiences. Each country, society, or culture have their own factual or mythical geographies which are often blurred and cannot be easily distinguished as they are deeply rooted in tradition and people construct and understand their reality also thanks to the mythical ones. This has been happening since the traditional societies constructed complex systems which are not subjected to the laws of logic to connect astronomical events to their lives, conditions, events, and death.

Architectural space is instead analysed for its relation to the level of awareness of people when they build and live in places. Tuan differentiates a number of experiences of this awareness depending on the phase of the process of building. As a matter of fact, builders necessitate at least some degree of consciousness, as they have to first know where to build and how – choosing materials, tools, and planning the work to be done; then, some physical effort is needed to concretely construct the building; eventually, the finished architectural work is an environment ready to host and affect people.

Today architects have a wide range of options to choose or mix between the existing styles coming from all over the world, and also the technical abilities, knowledge, and instruments to easily reproduce them. In ancient times this was not the case, so the question comes natural of how primitive builders could plan an architectural work – if they did it. With limited options available, the fundamental choices to make regarded location and materials to use, depending on the natural resources in specific places and times. To accomplish building tasks they thus required reasoning, adaptational skills, constantly increasing levels of innovation, and above all awareness about the relations between space and built forms. Such awareness is a result of several factors, as people's active participation to projects and events, the effort they put in those situations and the number of times they perform them, the celebration of any building accomplishment which even requires ceremonial rites, and therefore the religious values buildings are

endowed that also allow their conservation. However, they lacked effective plans which are instead fundamental for modern architects in their formal and systematic design. By drawing plans architects and builders can better direct the whole process of construction and manage people working on it and even the time. Although planning architectural space is an ability redefined and implemented in modern times, with the help of technology and gradually acquired knowledge, it was actually developed in medieval times, when the prototype of the modern architect was born.

Considering the previous premises, Tuan then deduces and summarizes that the building process allows awareness concerning making pragmatic decisions, envisioning architectural spaces, and it helps committing people to the actual construction, offering their physical and mental efforts to finally realize an environment made by men for men. Architecture and built environments enrich and define the perceptions and feelings about space. He explains this with a few examples: firstly, he considers the notions of 'inside' and 'outside', comparing them to private and public space, involving that constructed forms can strengthen these distinctions by boosting emotions and awareness about space; spatial dimensions as vertical or horizontal are senses known to the body, but architecture with its massive visual component can intensify them as they represent an objective and definite image for people. Then Tuan questions whether such images could be found in nature, but even though they exist, it is difficult for humans to directly grasp their meaning as nature is too 'diffuse' for their sensibility.

Architectural space and building can even better define social relations, as they increase self-awareness either about people themselves or on how to stand between others in a man-built environment. It is the 'teaching' or 'educational' purpose of architecture, commanding, ordering, and explaining reality. Looking back to non-literate and traditional societies, buildings where the primary way to read reality: in societies where all spheres of life were well intertwined, houses could be nurturing, economic, or even ritual places and communicate precise meanings through meaningful symbols. In the same way, depending on their role in the whole community, buildings got to represent a higher or lower social or religious significance. Conversely, in modern life space is more compartmentalized, ordered to divide it by functions and with less significance. Functional convenience is actually a common factor to be considered by all societies when ordering space. In modern Western technological societies construct their designed

place with restricted meanings as other previous societies, but the feature that mostly characterize them is their minimal transcendental significance. Architectural space keeps influencing modern societies as well, in constructing their order and teaching. Architects have a direct grasp on people's senses and feelings and with technological support they can enrich human spatial awareness presenting diverse forms. However, modern societies lack popular and individual participation in building processes; consequently, rituals and celebrations regarding such activities are not attractive anymore. Houses have lost much of their communicative and traditional power and societies depends less on physical and material environments, giving more space to a more 'literate' culture which values verbal or written symbols. Symbols were in medieval times mostly codes which hid feelings and emotions and did not require linguistic mediation; they were objects which nature may be clear enough to convey a deeper meaning than their apparent one. In modern society they have mostly vanished as communicators of meanings.

1.2.2 Experience and space

In the previous section the term 'experience' has emerged multiple times. What does Tuan intend for experience? He defines it as a 'cover all term for the various modes through which a person knows and constructs a reality' and then he tries to highlight the main features of human experience. Experience is directed to the external world, an action which allows to look beyond the self; it has a connotation of passivity, because it is something a person has undergone and therefore, an occasion to learn; it is the action of overcoming some situations or 'perils' of the unfamiliar, uncertain, external world; finally, it is a mix of feeling and thought, two ways of knowing which combine as parts of a same reality.

Experiences require different level of consciousness. Space and place, for example are mostly subconscious experiences: our perception of space derives from our ability and freedom to move, while time is a sequence of phases. Awareness is though necessary –and varies between people– in differentiating the two even if they are part of the same experience, an experience of a spatio-temporal world. Space and time have gained throughout history a subjectivity because they are oriented by human beings. Space has been given a direction and a certain perspective becoming historical, like in landscape paintings where space and objects are organized to convey a specific perspective and

vision of the world; this has led, since European Renaissance, to a consequent reordering of time too, moving from the image of a swinging pendulum, a cyclical conception, to a more directional one represented by an arrow.

Time and place experiences melt into each other, and it is observable in images like landscape paintings and modern photographs. The horizon gets to symbolize the future, an open space looks to a hopeful time; images present different concepts of time conceived through space. Our mind has the ability to elaborate and imagine both spatial and temporal movements, so that, when physically moving a body in a certain space, a mental temporal movement can be evoked as well. Even mental images are therefore a path for spatio-temporal illusions: looking outward for people corresponds to present or future times, whereas introspective looks recall past events in the individual. The sense of familiar is linked to the past too, as home reminds people of images of their whole life. Oriented space and historical time are part of the same daily personal experiences: whenever people measure distance, both time and space need to be considered, relating body movements to a time calibrated to humans' and nature's rhythms; distances imply goals which in turn entails an intention, an idea of a specific future to achieve; goals are finally part of bigger plans which means that one is directing time and space in a structure that satisfies their needs and completes life experiences.

Once the existence of spatio-temporal structures and relations is proven, Tuan searches for suitable representations of them. Examining again mythical spaces, he deduces that, according to those spatio-temporal relations, mythical times should exist as well. He eventually distinguishes three different types of mythical time: cosmogonic time, which regards research of the origins, the creation of earth, man, and the universe; human time, that regards human lives; and astronomic time which is connected the sun's daily movements and the seasons. The first two kinds are linear and one-directional, while the last one works in cyclical repetitions and therefore, they are represented either in asymmetrical or symmetrical space, the first always looking forward to the future and abandoning the past, the latter registering a cyclical path.

1.2.3 Space and Place

Having space means having room, a measurable quantity which holds the feature of spaciousness, of allowing to freely move. The freedom it conveys may be however perceived as unsafe, too exposed; on the opposite side, the close environment of place is a calm centre of values. This contrast results from cultural and experiential influence on the environment, and the consequent human feeling of needing or fearing space. Space is a resource, it satisfies human social and psychological needs, whereas spaciousness is a set of meanings to be read according to cultural traits. The different perception of spaciousness implies recognizing at different points the limits of it, the moment in which spaciousness becomes its opposite, crowding.

Space turns into place whenever it is imbued with definition and meanings, and it is a key part of intimate experiences. Intimate places are those related to the human sense of home, a place of nurture and rest – reproposing Relph's vision of home as an irreplaceable centre of significance. Places are then intended as pauses in movement to satisfy needs and find centres of value. It is clearer now the reason why, as already commented previously in the chapter, children's first places are parents: parents are there to cure and support them and they are a permanent centre of value.

Any event could create a feeling for a place, even simply experiencing one's own home, intimate places which objects all remind of the past. One's hometown is a familiar place which memory depends mostly on a child's vision of it, deprived of criticisms for its high imageability just as home. Although this kind of experience is individual and unique, it can in a way be shared through elements and symbols that are part of a culture and recognized as meaningful and intimate.

Thus, places exist at different scales: one's room, home, hometown, homeland and so on, becoming a more and more enlarged vision and perception as one grows and experiences space. The sense of centrality these places convey is almost transcendental, as it represents a focal point in a cosmic structure. However, that centrality is more of a concept than an actual specific point. It is inserted in a mythic space in which different centres may coexist. For traditional societies meaningful places –including homes– were almost always attributed religious values, in particular regarding the presence of guarding spirits and gods. Religion could interfere with people's life to the extent of strongly tying or freeing them from a place depending on which god –or group of deities– they worship

and therefore which places are to be considered sacred. Usually, the religions which endow family homes with significance are those local ones that honour the past and the ancestors, those with a strong historical sense and preaching the importance of rootedness. Ancient Greeks and Romans largely believed in such divinities that protected their homes and bounded them to their homelands. Attachment to homeland is anyways a phenomenon characteristic of almost every culture, economy, society, or religion, a feeling proved by linguistic expressions that regard their homeland as a mother, again a nourishing, permanent, and reassuring place. It is a human emotion more or less binding depending on cultural and social traits of peoples and the related myths and traditions. In modern societies, where people's relation with land is not as visceral as in the past, attachment may result from familiarity, memories, or objects and places of high visibility people recognize as representing part of their identity.

Tuan focuses on the creational power of visibility, its relevance in creating place. If place has already been defined as a pause, such interruption of time may be caused by an object or scene, a particular focus point in the whole landscape that catches our attention and results then in an image photographed by our mind. However, even when lacking visual prominence, other instruments like painting or literature could give visibility to intimate experiences that would fall unnoticed. When places and objects are filtered through culture, the risk is not only that culture could filter its meaning and perception, but also that its life would come to depend on the survival of the culture. Places should transcend culture and outlive them without losing their identity by embodying and transmitting two different sets of features and values: one general and one specific to a culture. Art and architecture provide visibility to places for both insiders and outsiders who have different need and therefore have different degrees of awareness about space; public rites boost visibility exposing the identity of such places or monuments; propaganda and reputation have an influence as well, with a strong impact on outsiders – or even starting from them – and a gradual increase of awareness for insiders.

Highly visible symbols are a characteristic feature of cities, which themselves traditionally symbolize order and community. In the past, they were a sacred space where people were protected from other peoples – but also from demons in its religious functions. However, as economic activities gained relevance, religious aspects

progressively lost power and converged in secular rituals. In modern and contemporary times people have instead largely lost interest in communal rituals.

In the same way as art and architecture can boost visibility for places, traditional books, monuments, or festivals can enhance the historical character of a city or even serve as political tools for bigger territorial entities that were flourishing. City-states were growing to become nation-states which felt to people more distant as it was not possible for them to know and experience the whole territory individually. Through symbolic elements, religious cults, history books with patriotic literature, and cartography people were presented the opportunity to feel attachment to their country as a sacred place which demands loyalty.

1.2.4 Place and Time

The relation between time and place is a wide topic which can be studied through several approaches. Tuan specifically relies on three of them.

The first one defines 'time as motion or flow and place as a pause in the temporal current'. The already cited image of the arrow is suitable to graphically represent directional time and spatial goals. A goal could serve as a term of a spatial or temporal target or achievement but at the same time it is a place, particularly one of three categories of places characterized by a one-direction movement (Fig.4):

➢ Home: it is the stable world to be transcended, a starting stable point

➢ Goal: it is the stable world to be attained, the aim of the movement

➢ Camps or stations: the stops throughout the journey

Stability and meaningfulness are features of places, and especially of familiar ones or habitual journeys which, together with their stops, constitute themselves places. An
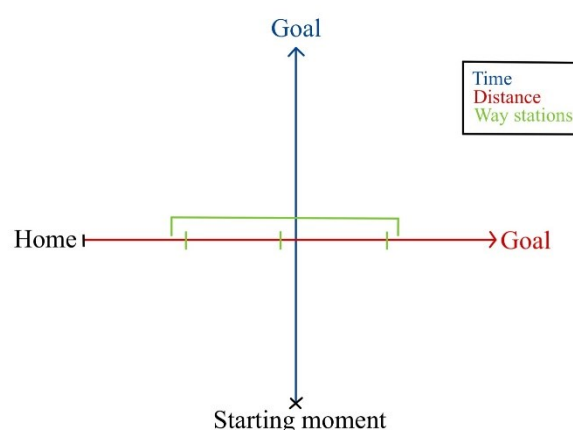

Fig. 4: Relation place-time in one-direction movements (adapted by Tuan, 1977, p.181)

example is one's home: moving inside of it, creating paths, makes the house itself a large place with smaller places within, like a room or an object (i.e., a chair).

The second approach supports the idea that 'it takes time to know a place'. Building a sense of place requires a time that in modern society people hardly find. Mobility makes it difficult for men to establish roots, deeply appreciate a place and develop awareness about the feelings for it. Knowledge about place needs to be absorbed to the point that it becomes subconscious and familiar. Experiences of place may be perceived differently in every human in terms of time because the perception of time itself depends on the person's stage of life. Since life goes on and the past lengthens, a certain span of time of the past has a different significance for a child or an old person.

The mental action of looking backward is often triggered by a simple object or by visiting a place. The third approach regards the power of place to make time visible, in other words, the memorial function of place. Places –and therefore objects– anchor time. The past serves a reassuring function for human beings, as it is something stable to recall in overwhelming present moments.

Time and place are contemplated differently according to each society, and culture sets different standards and traditions. Historical thinking, passion for the past, and antiquity are all modern concepts. Museums are indeed a product of quite recent times when personal collections – of material objects – have started to raise interest for their classification and evaluation. Scientific advancement and research have a role in developing this curiosity due to the spreading of new sciences like natural history and geology, as well as philosophical thinking which have remarked an interest for the theme of memory. The discourses coming from such reasoning, include the dilemma about the preservation of historical buildings and monuments, a still actual debate which is, in turn, part of a wider philosophical discourse on memory. City planners – as individuals would do with their possessions – usually tend to keep more of those objects which hold some kind and degree of value according to three main principles: features of aesthetic or moral value, or morale-boosting purpose.

Tuan has in his book tried to systematize human experiences and perceptions of time and place, their relations, and the feelings they convey to human beings. The questions he tries to respond to are provocative, as the final aim is that of increasing awareness about such relations that affect men's daily lives – both as individuals and part of a

community – and the different ways in which it happens. Movements and mental structures that people often take for granted as part of daily life, are actually the result of a lack of awareness or even a subconscious knowledge which needs to be understood, exteriorized and deepened.

2 NEW CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The new cultural geography is the British branch of the sub-discipline of cultural geography that developed during the last decades of the XX century. Its rise begins with the so-called 'cultural turn', a change in the path of the discipline in response to the need of relating with the social and historical context in which geography has to work, in order to gain relevance. It is an input to move on from the emphasis on mapping to a discovery and study of cultural representations. Such research aims at developing an interdisciplinary approach to acquire relevance in academic and research fields, and to be part of the processes of decision and policymaking. To introduce the following chapter, a brief explanation of what the new cultural geography is, and its historical context is necessary.

Influenced by feminist, Marxist, and post-structuralist ideas, new cultural geography takes a further step towards the integration of human agency in space in respect to humanistic geography. Humanistic geographies for sure proposes some fundamental starting concepts which will be developed or sometimes criticized in the attempt to pave the way to a broader, modern and useful human geography.

As traced by Anderson (2008) in his reconstruction of the development of geography and cultural geography, the discipline was in the mid XX century mainly American, following the steps of the Berkeley School led by Carl Sauer. The ideas of the Berkeley School grew in opposition to the environmental determinism that dominated the geography between the end of the XIX and the first decades of the XX century. Environmental determinism found the reasons of human conditions and culture in the environment they inhabited: cultures were 'environmentally determined'. This way of thinking and studying cultures, in an era of exploration and discovery for Europeans, involved judging the level of advancement of peoples they encountered. The result was a western biased evaluation of the cultures they found in newly discovered or conquered territories: those population were subjected to a degrading consideration –defined inferior for their origin and differences–, and a generalized cultural and geographical prejudice spread all over Europe with political support. Such reasoning indeed fostered the idea of

a necessary colonization of new-found territories to 'help' their development and advancement either on cultural, technological, economic, or political level. Politics of imperialism were therefore justified by modern cultural and geographical research, supported even by scientific approaches like Darwinism. The reaction of some scholars to the exploitation of geographical ideas as a justification for political strategies, led to the rise of a new current, that of environmental possibilism. The main feature of environmental possibilism was to consider the environment as just one factor of influence in the creation of cultures, one that could not alone determine the development of such cultures. Possibilism asserted that the different environments proposed possibilities through which societies could choose if and how they wanted to activate cultural processes in autonomy. Human groups were not subjected to the pressures of the environment in which they were living, but they actively operated to build their cultural products. Moreover, it stated that cultures were not to be considered inferior or superior just based on their different geographical positioning, and cultures themselves should have been studied locally rather than on national scale. The initially European possibilist project, involved then scholars from the American branch of cultural geography studies, especially those belonging to the Berkeley School at the University of California.

They reapproached the empiricist documentation of cultures based on fieldwork to locally record cultural activities and productions, with the guidance of Carl Sauer who wrote 'Underlying what I am trying to say is the conviction that geography is first of all knowledge gained by observation'. By doing so, they also directed their attention to anthropology, pushing for a cultural geography that would research cultural groups and their distribution, and mixing the approaches of the chronological tradition of Europeans and the anthropological interests developed in North America by scholars like Kroeber.

Although focusing on cultural artefacts, pointing at 'culture' as agent of change, they failed to propose an explanation of what 'cultural' means and what it is. The inability to engage with struggle and social actors of Sauer's discipline, started to sound insufficient, even 'antiquarian' (Cosgrove and Jackson, 1987), for their contemporary times and society. To react and give renewed relevance to the subject, a group of academics re-orientated cultural geography towards a 'representational' theory. They did so by redirecting the scope of their contemporary cultural geography in what has been called the 'cultural turn', approaching the new social sciences as well as the new methods and

theories that had been emerging in the last decades, like humanism – as just examined in the previous chapter –, feminism, post-culturalism, and sociology.

This 'new' cultural geography therefore aims at understanding the meanings and associations of meanings in different societies, cultures, and groups, paying particular attention to their spatial ramifications. To accomplish such task, an analysis of social struggle and landscape in their social contexts is necessary, understanding how cultural products are proactively influencing meanings, instead of passively receiving them. The evidence lays in how groups support, reject, or resist to cultural products or practices. The issues the new cultural geography addresses find their main stage in an urban setting, making the Berkeley School's focus on rural landscapes insufficient to engage with their contemporary conditions, considering moreover the changes that both urban and rural areas have undergone that constantly influence each other.

The cultural, again, gains a political side, as in societies meanings acquire different relevance, establishing a hierarchy of dominant and subjected ones, and it is up to geography to study this structuring and its territorial dimension. The study of power structures allows to examine the role of culture in constituting the forms of social oppression, not blaming only economic causes, making power issues fundamental for cultural geography. With this approach themes like racism, patriarchy, and social segregation are treated for their cultural roots and considered in a context of specific social groups with specific meanings.

Duncan et al. (2008) reports an interesting summary proposed by Sardar and Van Loon which lists the main features and aims of cultural studies suitable to be applied in the field of cultural geography:

1. Cultural studies aims to examine its subject-matter in terms of cultural practices and their relation to power. Its constant goal is to expose power relationships and examine how these relationships influence and shape cultural practices.
2. Cultural studies is not simply the study of culture as though it were a discrete entity divorced from its social or political context. Its objective is to understand culture in all its complex forms and to analyse the social and political context within which it manifests itself.
3. Culture in cultural studies always performs two functions: it is both the object of study and the location of political criticism and action. Cultural studies aims to be both an intellectual and a pragmatic enterprise.
4. Cultural studies attempts to expose and reconcile the division of knowledge, to overcome the split between tacit (that is, intuitive knowledge based on local cultures) and objective (so-called universal) forms of knowledge. It assumes a common identity and common interest between the knower and the known, between the observer and what is being observed.
5. Cultural studies is committed to a moral evaluation of modern society and a radical line of political action. The tradition of cultural studies is not one of value-free scholarship, but one

committed to social reconstruction by critical political involvement. Thus, cultural studies aims to understand and change the structures of dominance everywhere but in industrialist capitalist societies in particular.

Within the group of geographers who started to conceive the idea of a necessary new cultural geography, two main personalities that have emerged for the strong impact of their work on culture and landscape are Professor Denis Cosgrove and Professor Peter Jackson.

Cosgrove and Jackson seem to come to a similar conclusion as they both consider landscape as 'a construction, a composition, a way of seeing'. Their path to this conclusion is different in the approach chosen to guide the lector through the reconstruction of the concept.

Cosgrove does not look for clues for new developments in his contemporary world, but rather bases his ideas on a historical and artistic excursus which focuses on the main moments that have changed the way of looking and thinking about land and consequently, landscape. It is only in the conclusion of his book that he explains some of his hopes about future research on cultural relations between society and land. His new way of looking at landscape is associated in particular with an analysis of classes, capitalist structures, and transformations that marked the evolution of society and the view of land during the last centuries.

Jackson decides to analyse the issues that he can see affecting his own contemporary – mostly urban – society, aspects that if considered may bring a helpful upgrade to cultural geography studies. His proposal is both about subjects and methods of study, considering it necessary for geography to advance by introducing in its discourse those social aspects that cannot be ignored anymore, as they have become crucial elements of influence of the urban life. Geography could indeed gain more relevance and visibility by adapting to more modern approaches, effectively contributing to social studies and development as well.

Although their final objective is not to give exact definitions of their objects of study, but rather push for an updated cultural geography that keeps up with the social changes that more and more rapidly occur in our times, they both pay particular attention to terminology, denoting an attempt to maintain the precision characteristic of a scientific method.

Cosgrove and Jackson jointly work on an article titled 'New Directions in Cultural Geography' (1987) which gives a hint of their positioning in the academic geographical field. In this article published between the release of their two probably most famous books, they try to anticipate the meaning and the aims of their conception of new cultural geography:

> 'If we were to define this 'new' cultural geography it would be contemporary as well as historical (but always contextual and theoretically informed); social as well as spatial (but not confined exclusively to narrowly defined landscape issues); urban as well as rural; and interested in the contingent nature of culture, in dominant ideologies and in forms of resistance to them. It would, moreover, assert the centrality of culture in human affairs. Culture is not a residual category, the surface variation left unaccounted for by more powerful economic analyses; it is the very medium through which social change is experienced, contested and constituted'. (Cosgrove and Jackson, 1987)

They look at the current situation of cultural geography, thanking scholars such as Raymond Williams, Antonio Gramsci, and those belonging to the Birmingham University's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies for their previous work in rejecting the elitist conception of cultural studies., bringing up popular cultures, interpreting social material and symbolic manifestations, and sharing their theories on social resistance of oppressed groups, and paving the way for following new cultural geography studies. They propose a definition of culture as 'the medium through which people transform the mundane phenomena of the material world into a world of significant symbols to which they give meaning and attach value', which means that it is cultures that work as a medium to transform raw experiences into meaningful symbols (Jackson, 1989).

The publication of their works has deeply affected American cultural geography with such energy that Owlig (2010) calls it a 'British Invasion', making a parallelism between the success of cultural geography and the Beatles in the music world. The American cultural geography indeed used a more anthropological approach to understand communities and landscapes, whereas the new cultural geography requires sociological theories and is more related to Culture in society, class and modernity terms.

Their contemporary cultural studies and their works target the politically contested character of culture due to an existing plurality of cultures in constant conflict for dominance, in which many forms of resistance are possible and will be explored.

The following chapter will therefore be divided in two parts, one for each of the two authors briefly presented in this introduction. In particular, they each present one of their books which have become a milestone and a classic of cultural geography studies, namely 'Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape' (Cosgrove, 1984) and 'Maps of Meaning' (Jackson, 1989).

2.2   SOCIAL FORMATION AND SYMBOLIC LANDSCAPE

Professor D. E. Cosgrove interprets and conducts his research in the field of the new cultural geography in one of his most famous publications 'Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape', choosing an approach that involves analysing the historical and social processes that changes the meaning of landscape. He reckons geographic concept of landscape is a result and formalised version of the world view painters represented in their art, inserting it into geographical knowledge to prove its scientific grounds. In particular, he positions landscape painting in a wider theoretical context, constructing a link between art and – the 'idea of landscape' – and the trends in culture and society (Duncan, Johnson, Shein, 2004).

Moreover, geography is thought to have a visual bias, a heavy reliance on visual elements, like maps. For this reason, a deep search into the development of painting representation of landscape is conducted, considering its origins in Renaissance, contributing to, and receiving the influence of the social, political, and economic transformations of the following centuries.

Investigating the landscape idea, he criticizes Sauer's genetic morphology view, which analysis was too static and dependent on a specific historical moment without considering its active and dynamic cultural development. Landscape was turned into a mere object of scientific study to measure on a superficial level, avoiding symbolic meanings and products. Neither in more recent humanistic geography the historical processes are acknowledged since it investigates the experiences of the insider. Cosgrove however recognizes that at least humanistic geographers have tried to demonstrate that the landscape idea is cored in social theories. As a cultural product, landscape has three main aspects to be consider:

I. Any field of cultural production is characterised by tradition that make it impossible to ignore history and internal struggles

II. Social formations structurally suppose social, political, economic, or religious tensions, in which landscape can work as a medium for communication

III. Human experiences and the cyclical patterns of nature influence each other

Cosgrove does consider the idea of deriving a scientific concept from the landscape idea, and he conducts his enquiry by trying to resolve the ambiguities and questions that surround the theme throughout the nine chapters of his book.

2.2.1 Landscape and relationship with land

The author proposes an idea of landscape as an *ideological process*: as he suggests 'landscape denotes the external world mediated through subjective human experience'; landscape shall then be considered as a way to see the world, a social product. It is through the representation of their specific historical experience and the imposition of their ideologies that classes built their social structure, statuses, and meanings. What is meant for ideology then? The Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines the term ideology as "a set of ideas that an economic or political system is based on", giving as an example "a Marxist/capitalist ideology". Working on the idea that the landscape concept gained new attention during the transition from feudalism to capitalism, it is inevitable for Cosgrove to refer to Marxist ideas and interpretations. In Marxists terms, historical change occurs at the base of social life and then in the superstructure – politics, law, religion, culture art.

The transition between feudalism and capitalism is gradual and it entails not just economical changes, but also superstructural ones.

These *modes of production* are a compound of economic and social relations, ideal types of the structuring of society dependent on geographical location. A deep explanation of feudalism and capitalism is presented. The former is defined in Marxist terms a 'natural economy', where everything is destined to use rather than marketplace; social hierarchy are based on production and promise of military defence: commonly held land is cultivated and part of the products are given to the higher levels of the social structure, the lords and the sovereign who offer in different ways military protection. That small slice of surplus products destined to exchange enters in a really strict and constrained market, without much freedom for merchants. Conversely, capitalism is based on a self-

regulating market, subjected only to the rule of supply-demand, where a major part of the product is destined. Land is a commodity, also subjected to the right to property, and all the profit is reinvested for further production. The structure of society is divided into two classes, the bourgeoise, owners of the means of production, and the proletariat. Having become a commodity dependent on urban markets, countryside loses its significance in favour of the new key location of social and economic life, the city. At the base of the difference between the two modes of production is then the value of land, first dependent on its potential, and then on its exchange value. Moreover, Cosgrove recognises the social implications and meanings of land: landowning becomes an element for status identification, embodying traditional values.

Italy is given by historians an important role in the emergence of capitalism, thanks to its unique combination of feudal relations and urban commercial capitalism that is possible because of the coexistence of its numerous autonomous and independent entities. But there is not a shared, definitive theory about the reasons which led to this transition, to all those processes of change; three possible ones are recollected:

I. Ecological/Demographic Model: it highlights the dynamics of the population and its social relations, focusing particularly on the period right after the big collapse due to the plague, when population started to grow at an unsustainable rate. The consequences on the market, work, and housing required different forms of economic and social organisation, in this case, towards a more capitalistic structuring.

II. Commercial/Mercantile Model: it insists on urban and commercial reasons: the circulation of money for trade – both short and long distance – allows a cyclical flow of investments between city and countryside, which fosters innovation and wealth.

III. Structural/Class Conflict Model: the last model is based on the arguments Max poses about modes of production: they "contain the dynamics of their own transformation", that are to be found in human agency and social/class struggle. In feudalism, it is the intrinsic conflict between peasantry and landlords in post-plague period, when peasantry develops entrepreneurial skills and begins to accumulate their own capital.

Cosgrove main thesis argues that the different meanings and importance land acquires in the processes of change do not just represent the base of the capitalist transition, but also the key to the development of the modern landscape idea, which balances the features of both modes of production within society.

Another set of changes in the relationship with land comes with the availability of the newly discovered territories in America. A distant and unknown territory, American land appears to Europeans as the place where to project fantasies for a new society which could develop with different structures and values from their traditional ones: a classless, propertyless, both anti-capitalist and anti-feudalist, self-sufficient utopia. Residual elements of link to the European culture are revealed in the image of America as the modern recreation of the old myth of the Golden Age. It was a stage of social and human development which represented a primeval perfection, a society in which there were not any sort conflicts or struggles; it was used also as a metaphor for the richness of gold of the American land. The 'arcadian' painted illustrations that accompanied such imaginary, were opposed to those presented by the Puritans, who claim the presence of the evil and temptation in a wild environment. The theme of the Arcadian persists in the XVIII-XIX century American landscape painters, such as Thomas Cole, who makes the Arcadia one of the main themes of his landscape art:

Fig. 5: *Dream of Arcadia,* Thomas Cole, 1830s, oil on canvas, Denver Art Museum (source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thomas_Cole_-_Dream_of_Arcadia_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

Land eventually becomes a main feature in the creation of the USA: in early US social formations, landowning and right to private property represent the way to achieve status. In a flourishing society a particular type of capitalism is emerging: the Yeoman capitalism, that of the people who come to the New World where land is easily accessible for Europeans. But the superficial idea of freedom and right to property hides from the beginning a strict rejection of certain groups, like the native Americans or Black people. Through such prejudice and the tendency to impose power over land, still strong bond with European values and tradition is revealed.

Today much research enquires the role of these population excluded from the possibility of obtaining land, considering that most of them lived in the area before the arrival of the Europeans and the others were mostly traded as slaves who were denied almost any right – exactly as it would happen in Europe in accordance with their racist traditions towards Africans.

Cosgrove also agrees with de Crèvecoeur's view of 'America as a prospect'. The concept refers to two connotations that the world can assume: the first one America as a land with both productive potential and possibility of leisure; the second one is the sense of future, of perspective that the new territory may present in the mind of Europeans. This notion will also be commented by Jackson in 'Maps of Meaning' (1989) when, analysing the relationships with land, he states: 'the ideas of prospect and perspective can therefore be interpreted as a visual appropriation of space that corresponds to the material appropriation of land".

Several changes come again in Europe, particularly in England, in the XIX century, when the Industrial Revolution –a largely economic revolution that involves a large-scale decrease in the influence of agriculture in national wealth in favour of industrial production – and the consequent progress from moral to political economy, lead to a predictable cultural revolution, the so called 'romantic revolution'. One of the romantic struggles is that of the artists themselves, whose role is changing to be assimilated to that of artisans or merchants devoted to the simple production of products with the only purpose of marketization.

An essential element of his research, as shown by the title of the book itself and already cited above, is the concept of social formation, which is "the unity among the aspects of social existence, and one specific to a geographical area", considering the

social, historical, and geographical context, and the possibility and rapidity of diffusion of ideas. As a matter of fact, there never existed a society denoted completely and exclusively by one mode of production: there is always a form of subordination, a dominant and a subsidiary one that intervenes in some choices. It is in part due to the fact that the diffusion of ideas cannot be controlled, and it is here where geographical location and context matter: some kind of external cultural influence manages to penetrate into the local one. It is another reason why local and regional cultures are given so much importance: they reveal a wider sense of those meanings and values societies honour, helping to find the origins, roots, similarities, and differences between them.

One problem arises when talking about society and ideologies, that of hegemony. In a social structure where there is a dominant class, culture is deeply influenced by the meanings given by those in power. In past societies this effect may have been more evident because the possibility to impose certain meanings was higher when the population had no way to express their forms of culture, when the level of education was lower and when the power of those in charge was more oppressive. Cosgrove finds those spaces where people could express their culture, out of the "social accepted" ones. The Victorian Age is known as a period in which strict moral values were imposed and made relevant for the whole society, though resulting in a society where self-expression and fun were banished from the public scene and hidden in sort of safe places and in specific times. These were forms of social resistance, moments of rebellions against the rules of decency of the conservative monarchy and hypocritical, new-rich middle-class. Resistance would take different forms: event, costumes, shows, concerts and really any expression not compliant with standardized cultures. It is possible to notice examples of this kind today as well, a concept better explained later in Jackson's thesis.

For historical processes, transitions, and changes to happen, a set of different innovations is needed; it does not just involve technological modernization, architectural and artistic advancement, or the introduction of material inventions, but rather a work on culture on a deeper sense, that is what Cosgrove looks for. The values that characterize societies are those that build the foundation of a social structure. The transition from feudalism to capitalism he analyses is due to a gradual shift of values of the members of each society. Whether consciously or not, classes are subjected to the imposition of values

or ideologies that control and guide the development of society toward a specific direction – in this case, the marketization of production to boost capitalism.

2.2.2. Control and painting

The theme of control is a recurring one. Control over space is on one hand strictly related to control over society, above all in a past society where land was both the source for human sustain and a commodity with market value. Richness was often related to ownership of vast portions of land and that involves offering jobs to maintain families, which means having power of being decisive for their survival.

On the other hand, individuals exert power over it by creating a relationship with it, living, and experiencing it. In other words, giving personal meanings to places. Cosgrove finds this kind of relationships in art and literature: artistic expression in all of its forms, but particularly in painting and poetry, succeeds in denoting the relations of power of society and landscape. Poetry and painting, especially starting from Renaissance, often try to represent a sort of an ideal society in which the values of higher classes are praised as almost universal. Moreover, painting techniques allow both the painter and the observer to filter reality through their eyes. Sensorial experiences again become in a way the centre of our perception and construction of space. The visual control of space obtained in painting is due to the invention in Italy of new pictorial techniques. Renaissance Italy and Flanders see the emerging of landscape painting and descriptive geography at the same time, which allowed to exploit those techniques for cartographic uses. For example, the detailed city maps – firstly designed in Venice – also included elements of fantasy, symbolic meaning, and elements of human life (Fig.6).

An essential technique is that of perspective, which allowed both a representation of reality and a controlling power of the artist, whose realism is considerable ideological, as it actually is a product of an individual in a specific moment, in a determined psychological state and living a specific experience with nature. The term *paesaggio* (beauty of the world captured in art) first appears in the 16th century –phase in which art has become a commodity – when Italians used to buy pieces for their representation of unusual and unfamiliar places that would create a new experience and different psychological responses. The painting in Fig. 7 is an example of this kind of exchanges, a Flemish painting of 1540 brought to the court of Lucrezia d'Este in 1592.

Fig. 6: *Map of Venice,* from Civitates Orbis Terrarum by Georg Braun, 1541-1622 and Franz Hogenberg, 1540-1590, engraving (source: https://www.odysseytraveller.com/articles/maps-and-venice/)

Fig. 7: *Paesaggio con la fuga in Egitto,* Bles Hendrick Met De, 1540 ca, oil on canvas, Galleria Borghese (source: https://www.collezionegalleriaborghese.it/opere/paesaggio-con-la-fuga-in-egitto)

In painters' perspective, landscape is something to observe and to paint, which recreation would eventually provoke a psychological response in the outsider. It means that landscape is invested with human meaning from the outside, recognising a possible subjective reaction and relation with it, or, as the author writes "the artistic use of

landscape stresses a personal, private and essentially visual experience". Having a relationship and a perception of landscape means to have a sort of control over the external world, that does not just depend on external policies and ruling, but by a personal and individual connection with it. Moreover, it is not just an individual investment of meaning in places, but rather a collective one, dependent on social, communal insider life. Here comes one of the ambiguities Cosgrove tries to overcome that still limit human geography: the perception of the insider. Citing Relph's existential insiders, for whom landscape is 'a dimension of existence, collectively produced, lived and maintained', he first considers their role and the perception of the insiders themselves as part of the landscape an then he questions the importance of individual experiences over collective investment.

Critics and writers of Renaissance Italy recognise a hierarchy in the subject, matter, and locations in art, for example, Alberti sets the countryside and peasantry at the base, creating a parallelism between their social status and their level of importance in artistic representation. On the other hand, landowner and their estates are on the top, having also power of decision and establishment of the standards of elite art. As reported in the book, landowners were often also patrons for artists, commissioning works to represent and celebrate their life and status, as art and architecture gain the role of social values indicators. It is a sort of a double filter that is applied to paintings: that of the painter, and that of the patron who establishes the rules of the painting just as he does with the administration of his land. One advantage of this condition of the artists is that, even if they are obliged to follow the patron's indications, they have some margin of freedom in showing off their skills in the representation of background, manipulating natural and illusory spaces and being also praised when showing their virtuosity.

A major exemplification of social and spatial control proposed by Cosgrove is the prototype of the symbolic landscape of the ideal city. Presented in several painting, this example of rational structuring of life and landscape might find correspondence nowadays in the so-called smart city. The concept of smart city responded to a necessity to solve some urban problems, thinking rational and technological projects would resolve them unproblematically. Such solutions would include forms of control that ignore the social aspects of the urban landscape, raising issues about the over-simplification of social

and urban problematics, and about the higher access to private aspects of the individuals, touching those spheres of life felt as vital and too personal by individuals and groups.

The ideal city is the result of the values and ideas developed by the ideology of humanism in Renaissance Italy. Appropriated as the set of values for nobility ('signorie') and rulers, humanism is described as universal and objective in its vision of authoritarian ruling and education. Intellectual reasoning is essential to achieve harmony, applying the principles of proportion and balance. An example of ideal city, is the homonymous painting produced at the court of Urbino, land of the Montefeltro family:

Fig. 8: The Ideal City, Luciano Laurana, 1480 ca, oil on canvas, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche (source: http://www.gallerianazionalemarche.it/collezioni-gnm/citta-ideale/)

Even beauty is subjected to these rules of harmony, becoming an objective rather than subjective category. Through the application of such principles the individual may then achieve human dignity in creative activity.

The ideal city reflects the idea of a perfectly proportioned and regulated, social, and architectural utopia, led by reason, virtue, and harmony, where the latter is also at the base of the relationship between humans and nature – realised in the new concrete form of meticulous garden planning. In this conception of urban lifestyle, countryside is just regarded as the place for villeggiatura and luxury villas, built following the same harmonic rules of town buildings and villas.

After comparing painting representations of the ideal city, Cosgrove presents as the exemplary living ideal city XVI century Venice, the Palladian era. Central node for trade, Venice managed to maintain a great stability thanks to its institutional structure which aims to find a balance between a monarchic and a popular republican form of ruling, respectively in the person of the Doge and in the Senate.

Before the advent of Flemish accurate cartography, Venice was the most popular producer in Europe, thanks to its tradition of *mappae mundi*. The symbolic places of the city are exaggerated in distorted maps that tend to render the importance of those urban nodes rather than geographical accuracy. By doing this, they united the characteristics of a moralised geography that praised the political and symbolical locations and a practical representation of the topographic reality. Public and private interventions on the townscape, led by architects such as the great Palladio, where thought to assert their idea of social and political perfection to furthermore accentuate the idea of being *the* ideal city, reminding of an ancient, flourishing Rome. The idea of perfection conveyed by the city is also given by the work of Palladio, whose use of Roman style brings back to Rome's praised moral and political order.

Palladio influenced both the architectonic and symbolic features of his century: his work is associated with the idea of harmony, *poesia* and the perfect ideal city. His harmony is indeed achieved through the use of the theories of rational humanism, and those visions of the world expressed through pastoral poesia, which together result in a Palladian landscape idea described as "an appropriation of the visual scene by intellect", instead of a relationship between human life and nature or landscape.

He first becomes official architect in Venice, and then moves to Vicenza where he is required to intervene on their main buildings and both urban and rural villas. It is in the Vicenza area that he realized his most famous works, the *ville venete* (examples in Fig.9 and Fig.10).

Fig. 9: Villa Valmarana, Palladio, 1536 ca, Lisiera di Bolzano (VI) (source: https://www.histouring.com/strutture/villa-valmarana/)

Fig. 10: Villa Valmarana, Palladio, 1536 ca, Lisiera di Bolzano (VI) (https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villa_Valmarana_(Lisiera))

Vicenza exploited its *terraferma* – the inner territories of Veneto – way more than Venice, so that its wealth and money to invest come from the *contado* – the surrounding farmed land of the city walls, a well-regulated and highly-productive pattern of fields and farm buildings. Venice establishes a relationship with its terraferma only starting from the XV century, when rural landownership begins to acquire importance. The new tendency and investments in the countryside were led by aristocratic attitudes, in their desire for villeggiatura. Rural villas were functional estates for production and exploitation of peasantry, but most important, they were centres for leisure and courtly culture. These places where indeed painted by artist such as Bellini or Giorgione as expressing the beauty, serenity, and relationship between humans and natural world. What was left out was the representation of all the struggles of life of the *contadini*, whose lives, traditions, work, economic and health conditions were negatively affected by the lifestyle of aristocratic villeggiatura.

The necessity for more accurate paintings and cartography, which would follow more empirical rules for representing urban and rural life, fostered Flemish production based on observation and realism and made it possible for them to even overtake Venice in cartography. They still inserted some elements of fantasy or symbolic ones – with tricks like the use of a little window in paintings which opens to rural landscapes over town – but they tried to recreate realistic cities that people could easily recognize.

Fig. 11: *Map of Antwerp*, Joris Hoefnagel, 1657 (source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Joris_Hoefnagel_-_Map_of_Antwerp.jpg)

Fig. 12: *World Map*, Gerardus Mercator, 1569 (source: https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/gerardus-mercator)

Flanders was indeed a place where the emergence of new ideas, innovations and inventions was encouraged and well-tolerated, where scientific rationalism dominated the scene, and wealth was displayed in civil patronage, not in aristocratic values and attitudes as rich people in Venice would do. They would rather ensure the solidity and prosperity of their city than its moral and aesthetic value.

American townscapes are something between the exemplary Renaissance townscapes of Holland and Italy – or Venice. The townscape in Washington D.C. follows the structures of classical architecture, with the use of enlightenment rationalism to express freedom and order, two of the main values the Country is founded on. To furthermore enhance the sense of freedom, Jefferson develops his project of township based on self-governing communities, to avoid and criticise the forms of centralised power in Europe and give more relevance to smaller entities and citizens as well.

All the Italian peninsula begins during the XVII century a rather dark period, with a generalized economic recession even in the prosperous Venice, which was resisting to several attacks and attempts of invasion. In the South, the strict Spanish inquisition had hard repercussions on social and cultural level. In all this situation of general impoverishment and decay in both the North and the South, Rome re-emerged thanks to the counter-reformation and baroque atmosphere of the time. The maintained political authority of the city was turned into a visual control of space: the re-flourished townscapes and the work of extraordinary architects and artists in the city made it possible for Rome to acquire new artistic and politic preeminence.

In XVI century-England Inigo Jones was the first official architect of the court as it was meant in Renaissance Italy. His many projects in the capital aimed at celebrating the authority of the rulers, but the incompleteness of the projects themselves only highlighted the weakness of the kingdom. Also, XVII century English iconography – estate painting focused on country houses – exploited landscapes to make parallelisms with the power of the king and the kingdom: country houses are painted as harmonious, stable, self-sufficient microcosms which order is maintained by the authority of the owner or ruler. As in Venetian landscapes, XVIII century English landscapes were built on harmony and serenity. Even though gardens workers were placed in the scene, they were painted as struggle-free, joyful, and enthusiastic to render the idea of a 'merry England' which excludes those 'non-deserving poor' who complained about their difficult conditions.

Palladianism spread in England in the reproduction of classical forms, also thanks to the distribution to cheap builder's handbooks which made it easier for a bigger part of the population to have access to such style and reproduce it. As a matter of fact, there are more common elements between XVI century Venice and XVIII century England that allow Cosgrove to make a parallelism between the two: both the entities underwent a transformation in the participation of aristocrats from mercantile to landowning activities; the new –or renewed– interest in the countryside where "*commodità* is related to *utilità*" (commodity related to utility): innovation in agricultural techniques goes hand in hand with the building of patrons' villas who hosted painters for leisure and to gain relevance in the cultural scene. The differences consist instead in an opposed concept of urban and rural conception of landscape: Venice and Veneto's primary model for buildings and villas was that of urban landscape then translated to countryside estates, while in England the process is completely reversed.

XVIII century also witnesses the spread of romanticism and the idea of sublime, a concept that declares the subjection of natural forces to human control in the process of production. The sublime is "a state of mind, the highest and most serious that human can achieve in front of Divine majesty"; it denotes a sense of holy fear and infinity firstly limited to the highest and most enlightened minds, an elite dedicated to the highest genres like poetry. Then in this century, it has spread to a larger proportion of artists and population, since it is perceived as based on experiences lived through the five senses, above all sight, a similar consideration of the use of the sense that humanist geographers have proposed. Romantic painting chooses landscape and nature as the protagonists of their culture and that of the following century, to render that idea of infinity, mystery, and exaltation. For this reason, the request for production of agricultural landscapes has grown significantly, not just in the form of paintings, but also in the new interest for the 'gardenesque', botanic, and horticulture – already developed by Dutch patrons and merchants in XVI-XVII century, though mostly for commercial reasons.

English urban architecture is affected, during the Georgian era, by demographic changes, a heavy increase of population in a period in which leisure and recreation are accessible to a larger proportion of society. It is in this period that tourist traffic increases and cities are adapted to welcome and exploit these new fluxes of incoming visitors, like those that Cosgrove defines 'spa towns' (e.g., Bath).

What happens with the Industrial Revolution and the romantic one is that the transition to capitalism, technologies, innovations, changes of perspective – even religious ones –, and the use of causal reasoning make a substantial change in the landscape idea: in most cases landscape is turned into 'forms of the land'. It is what the author predicts in the first chapters of the book when he summarizes the history of landscape as an artistic and literary exploration which gradually loses its artistic and moral sense to become a remaining cultural production, an object of academic study. The landscape idea is not based on control over land anymore, but rather on "a broader control over the processes and forms of nature".

2.2.3 Modern days

Cosgrove's historical excursus ends in his contemporary world, discussing how progress and technology are changing the relationship of the XX century society with landscape and art. Even though a more traditional landscape idea remains a popular genre for some artists, a nostalgic subject to reproduce, and a topic for academic researchers and policy makers, the whole concept has transformed throughout the century. First the expansion of French impressionism, which reflects more on the way to capture nature, on the necessary painting techniques to achieve their result; then the introduction of camera, that changed the rules of visuality more and more as it made its way into social and everyday life – and still does today. Its diffusion implies a decline in representational painting, by giving wider possibilities of controlling the vision of the external reality through more objective lenses and popular representations in movies, television, postcards, and magazines. As soon as a tool as simple as modern cameras becomes available to people, the representation of landscape loses its sense of elitist art, accessible only to those with special talents, skills, or money. Today, the process of digitalization has made it possible to store and access to art at any moment on countless devices, allowing art to be really popular and gain new meanings. Moreover, taking pictures or making art is now a kind of innate competence for all those new generations that are raised in a society that relies almost completely on technology. This sort of advancement has today boosted the creation of numbers of sharing apps that influence the perspective of landscape, like Instagram. It derives from a wider change in society, a society in which

showing off even becomes a real job, and in which showing off is almost essential to build one's social life.

In the meanwhile, geography gains its status and dignity of distinct intellectual discipline, based on the differentiation and distinction of territories through the analysis of human intervention on the specific parts of the world. Therefore, it is not only physical and natural processes that interest the subject, but also the study of human actions, influence, and patterns. The result is a field of scientific research that includes both physical and social aspects of the Earth's surface. Landscape becomes a topic of minor interest even for planning purposes because land is appropriated for its exchange value. Landscape art only remains relevant in a painting field, especially in British (Cornish) artist's search for a lost arcadia to fight the advent of modernism.

Cosgrove concludes by expressing his hope for a future, renewed cultural relations with land which sees landscape, as he argues, as a "a social and cultural product, a way of seeing projected onto land and having its own techniques and compositional forms".

2.3 MAPS OF MEANING: AN INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY

Professor Peter Jackson can be regarded as one of the founders of the British branch of the so-called new cultural geography that spread after the cultural turn. His work 'Maps of Meaning' (1989) represents the perfect example of rejection of the old cultural geography, as it demands for an updating of the subject to adapt it to their contemporary world. In each chapter, the author analyses some social issues that, in his opinion, are not considered enough in cultural geography studies. Moreover, he suggests a renewal of the approaches to be applied, and by doing so he proposes an agenda for the future, defining his work as a 'preliminary survey on major themes'.

In respect to Cosgrove, he takes a further step by considering a plurality of cultures and a consequent multiplicity of associated landscapes, refusing a unitary view of culture. His "maps" are not physical, as he argues that geographers need to interpret the meanings of space, which is the mirror of the society it hosts, its narratives and complexity. As a matter of fact, he begins by distancing himself from the approach of the Berkeley School in the same way as Cosgrove, and particularly from that proposed by Sauer, twice president of the Association of American Geographers and head of the Berkeley School

itself. Jackson sees his geography as too exclusively concerned with the physical environment and its biological processes, and natural science methods. Whenever culture and human agency are considered, they are just treated as elements to locate in space, passive elements without proper agency to activate processes of social change.

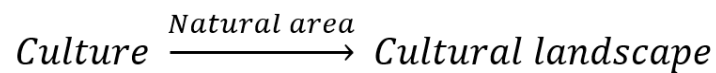$$Culture \xrightarrow{Natural\ area} Cultural\ landscape$$

Fig. 13: Sauer's concept of cultural agency

Sauer's tendency to focus on the material elements of culture and the way they are represented in landscapes is due to the influence he received by German cultural and historical sciences. His geological approach has melted with the ideas of German Romanticism, in particular those of Goethe, who rejected the specialization of modern sciences. In 'Morphology of Landscape' Sauer denotes a rigorous geographical way to look at culture which regards the results of human actions in a space. Culture is considered as the agent, and the natural areas as the medium, where different cultural process arose to produces different cultural landscapes for each area. Therefore, causality is denied to individuals or groups, highlighting the physical environment and natural aspects.
His scientific approach looks at geology and earth sciences as groundwork to research the origins of cultural elements instead of analysing the changes of the social spheres in the area considered.

American Anthropology is praised by Sauer as the most methodologically advanced social science because of engagement with physical traits. In particular, he looks at the works of Kroeber, an American anthropologist who conceived anthropology as 'the natural history of culture', and whose research focused on classification and description. Sauer partially agrees with Kroeber's accurately constructed definition of culture, derived from the review of over 160 already existing ones:

> 'Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviours acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.'

Sauer shares the concept of patterns of culture and its belonging to human groups instead of individuals, although addressing more the artefactual quality instead of the symbolic representations. His work basically relied on the ethnological notion of identifying and describing landscapes by mapping the physical, material cultural products – or artefacts– produced and left by unitary cultural groups.

The downgrading of individuals in cultural processes is part of Kroeber's reading of culture as an entity at a higher level that the individual which responds to its own logic without considering the broader context in which culture is expressed, a view taken for too long unproblematically, known as super-organic level of social organization. Culture in this sense doesn't just exists independently from human beings, but also governs human behaviour.

A partial view of a potentially wider subject led to a disciplinary myopia, a geography just interested in spatial and temporal distribution of culture and its elements. In 'Understanding Cultural Geography: Places and Traces'' (Anderson, 2008), the main features of Sauer's and Jackson's disciplines are well-summarized to better highlight their theoretical differences:

	Berkeley School	New cultural geography
Source of key ideas	Anthropology, natural sciences (geology)	Humanism, feminism, critical theories, cultural studies
Methodology	Empiricist fieldwork	Theory and practice
Cultural agent	Culture	Cultural groups
Geographical scale	Landscape	Place
Social values	Romanticism; environmentalism	Importance of difference

Table 1: The differences between Berkeley School and the new cultural geography (Adapted from Anderson, J. 'Understanding Cultural Geography: Places and Traces', 2008 p.23;30)

In 'Maps of Meaning' Jackson recalls the critiques to American cultural geography that he already expressed in 'A Plea for Cultural Geography' in 1980, when he defined American cultural geography as too dependent on personalities and geographical circumstances, even though he admits it is in some way more ahead of time in the development of the subject compared to Britain. With that, he was asking British colleagues to rely more on social sciences, approaching a social geography to finally

obtain a successful cultural geography. British anthropologists influenced the work of cultural geographers; in particular Tylor, an English anthropologist, proposed a definition of culture as 'the most complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society', attempting a critical view of culture through the adoption of a comparative method between the different stages of development of a society. Nevertheless, it lacks ways of distinguishing the cultural from political or economic elements of society, resulting in a holistic view which do not serve analytical aims. While Tylor reconstructed and analysed the development of culture, those adherent to culturalism regard culture with a more unreflective approach, as an unproblematic category with causal powers. Culture is used to explain behaviours: the social conditions of an individual or a group do not depend on the social, political, or economic context they're inserted in –the material conditions they are enduring –, but rather a 'psychological condition' where culture is passively received instead of being created. Jackson offers the example of Oscar Lewis's 'culture of poverty', a way of life peculiar of those poor people living in the same historical conditions. Lewis proposed a list of characteristics of this category of people which includes psychological and behavioural aspects taken unproblematically and as if they were not caused by the material conditions of the society they live in, like 'the strong individual feelings of marginality, helplessness, dependence, and inferiority'. William J. Wilson, an American sociologist, attempted to contrast the uncritical use of 'culture of poverty' by introducing the concept of 'social isolation' through his work 'The truly disadvantaged' in which he analysed the problems of urban social life and dislocation and its links with racism. The results were not effective as his work implies the risk of ignoring again the inequalities and structures of power within society by addressing too generalized causes, without deeper research on them.

Moving on to new approaches, Jackson then deals with humanistic geography which addresses humanities rather than social sciences, focusing on landscape, ideas of Nature, and human consciousness. Its weakness lays in the limited treatment of the wider social context and its still elitist view of culture, similar to that of the Berkely School, and an obsessive interest in landscape.

Another method of analysis is that of cultural materialism, the introduction of Marxist historical materialism in cultural studies in which culture reflects the material

conditions of existence in an economically based society. In Raymond William's terms, the cultural forms are the result of the processes of production, 'a realised signifying system' that has to be read in a set of relations with other elements of society, institutions, or activities – including morals, economics, politics, and aesthetics. He criticizes culturalism for ignoring those social relations which support the construction of culture, refusing superficial, mechanic readings. The model Williams offers derives from 'The Country and the City', a collection of literary interpretations in which he analyses the positive and negative feelings that rural and urban settings have evoked throughout the century and social changes. Focusing on the contradictions and ambiguities he spots, he reveals the ideas rooted the material connections between country and city, and at the same time how contemporary attitudes reflected socio-economic changes. He introduces the concept of 'structure of feeling', relevant for cultural geographers as it somehow resembles the notion of 'sense of place', but searching for deeper aspects, looking for 'the particular qualities which give the sense of a generation or a period'. This structure – a set of internal relations– is appliable also to literary and artistic research.

In Jackson's opinion Williams' work opens to a potential materialist cultural geography denoting a more critical conception of culture. Between the geographers who attempted a similar method is Cosgrove, who changes the approach to landscape by inserting it in a broader social debate concerning politics and ideologies.

Jackson's aim in exploring and criticizing the different trends and ideas that have until then characterized cultural geography studies, is to spread awareness about the need for 'a more active conception of culture, acknowledging the extent to which cultures are humanly construed through specific social practices, it is in the specification of context in its fullest sense that geography can make its most immediate contribution to cultural studies.

2.3.1 Language and Resistance

Jackson's subject keeps a more traditional and theoretical scientific approach by paying particular attention to certain definitions: there are often in the texts attempts to conduct linguistic and terminological analysis of the concepts and objects of study. The author regards linguistics as the social science that 'has often appeared to have made most progress in attaining the status of a true science'. Cultural geography should notice, in

this sense, that language is not only a phenomenon to be mapped, but rather a vital part of social and historical processes, because it is both the representation and the instrument for the processes themselves. Words and concepts belong to the social context in which they are created and exist, not just passively and historically, but as an active process in continuous development within language. Tuan (1977) too analysed language as a helpful tool in his field research and he described it as revealing the intimate connections between people, space, and time. For example, kids, as soon as they can talk, try to learn the name of things and places in order to acquire sense of place and orientate in their world.

The structure of language holds relationships of power, rules that are sometimes reproduced in social practices by legitimizing, reinforcing practices through linguistic conventions. It is a politics of language which will be made more explicit and clearer at the end of the chapter with some examples. Language is the main medium of communication with an essential role in shaping peoples' identities in social and cultural aspects. Changes in language are a product of the context in which the language flourishes, including spatial and regional dimensions. It is the reason why linguistics should be involved in cultural geography studies, in particular the theme of linguistic communities, where communication takes place in a system of shared beliefs, myths, ideologies, and finally language.

The concept of ideology has been historically debated in several subjects and contexts. A concept that raised in the XVIII century but then developed in Marxist works, the notion of ideologies undergoes in Jackson's book a terminological analysis, which evaluates its connotations. For Marx, ideology has a negative connotation as it denotes false consciousness and the imposition of the interest of some ruling groups over others, so that ideology itself comes to disguise class conflict.

Williams proposes several meanings of ideology, like an illusory system of beliefs and ideas contrasted by Marxist science, or, in general, the production of ideas and meanings. He does not just work on the definition, but he attempts to explain how ideologies work through 'characteristic selectivities', that is to endorse the interests of dominant social groups by accordingly promoting certain meanings. Ideology is therefore 'the way in which ideas come to represent certain interest or to conceal them in a more or less consistent way', mediating the unequal power relations between social groups.

A further view on ideology connected with the relationship between social groups comes from the English sociologist John Urry, who concentrates his definition in 'concealment of interests' and listing the ways in which the interests of the dominant groups can be hidden: the social practices are externalised, isolated, conflated, and at the same time the existing interrelations and conflicts of interests are obscured.

Jackson stresses the relationship between ideology and power and the need to reveal and critically analyse the structures of dominant-subordinate ideologies and their ability to be persuasive. To better explain such relations the concept of hegemony and its role in class struggle is explored. Hegemony is not just "a situation of uncontested political supremacy", but agreeing with Gramsci, he argues that it is 'the power of persuasion', the power to persuade subjected classes to subtly impose values – even moral ones– and rules without the use of coercion, depicting them as the 'natural order'. The question is whether hegemony can really be fully achieved, considering all those existing forms of cultural resistance that will be later explored that challenge dominant classes in social life – those that Crang (1998) calls *sub-cultures*. It is more plausible instead, to recreate a hierarchy of these cultures, which will probably represent a sample of the class hierarchy of that society. The existence of a multiplicity of cultures even within a single society is then again found and sustained in Gramsci's previous work, evidenced by the constant contestation of power characteristic of capitalist societies. What Jackson is aiming to, is not to agree on a conclusive definition of the constitution of dominant groups, but rather finding the underlying structures of power, the capacity of imposition on a subordinate group and the ways of resisting of the latter, including the cultural strategies used by both parts together with the political and economic ones.

A whole chapter of his book is dedicated to the relevance of language in the definition of power structures and cultural traits. A few examples are examined throughout the book in this sense, and ideology has been one of the most emblematic and fundamental ones. Language itself becomes an object of study: it is both a form of resistance as it is used as a mean to mark the distinction between different groups through patterns, syntaxis, or most commonly vocabulary and an immaterial symbol of division, which sets up boundaries between groups and areas by developing varieties of features characteristic of the specific societies. On the other hand, it can represent an element of reinforcement of the bound of the society established in a territory.

As briefly mentioned above, language can even get to determine power relations and structures, like in naming geographical elements. A theme already explored by Cosgrove, it is expanded by Jackson in his search for human-nature relationships in which people impose their presence and power on land by deciding how to define it. The idea of discovery is opposed to that of exploration: the first one is related with knowledge acquired by travelling, while the latter gives the impression of knowing under disguise of naming. Even Tuan previously wrote in Space and Place about the common practice of choosing a name to claim space in terms of power and ownership, in an attempt to 'humanise the wilderness' and therefore implying the existence of a hierarchical consideration of culture – probably with a Eurocentric view.

Moreover, naming shows inner relations and establishes dynamics of power even between societies, like those related with gender later discussed in the chapter. Even in racial ideologies language serves as a medium of discrimination, as some terms come to generalize stereotypes of peoples typically living outside of Europe. 'Black people' was used to point at all people of colour without distinction, even the Asians, because 'black' acquired a political connotation. The words 'race' and 'culture' are investigated as well, wondering whether 'ethnicity' might be a more suitable term to include the whole set of beliefs, traditions, and values characteristic of a group.

The same happens in the development and use of dialects, which comes to characterize a specific population or group in contrast with another. To use different languages within a single society creates a division felt on cultural and class level. It can denote a higher or lower degree of education or status, or even an explicit attempt to separate from others as a symbol of rebellion, opposition, resistance. Moreover, it is a political statement to judge a language as a dialect, because it involves a hierarchy and consequently a major or minor dignity, prestige, and merits.

Language is just one of the countless symbols of social resistance. Retaking an issue introduced by Cosgrove as well as the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Jackson inspects the ways in which subordinate groups apply forms of counter-hegemonic resistance through cultural or symbolic strategies. Resistance can take different forms, also defined as rituals, 'a coherent set of actions, the meaning and purpose of which are symbolic rather than purely practical, and which are routinized in the sense that they can be practiced almost unconsciously'. Strategies need at least a minimum of conscious in

defining the actions to perpetrate, so the term 'style' is suggested instead, which serves as a kind of a secret language expressing cultural insubordination in contrast with the dominant powers and groups. Rituals, once given symbolic meanings, are to be read together and in their context to be understood. They are symbols that have been appropriated and transformed to express (as the communicating purpose of a real language) disapproval, distance from what is considered 'ordinary', or just new readings and meanings of the group's role in society.

Jackson quotes Phil Cohen's analysis of the symbolic ways in which subcultures have reacted to structural changes:

> 'A succession of sub-cultures which all correspond to the same parent culture and which attempt to work out through a series of transformations, the basic problematic or contradiction which is inserted in the sub-culture by the parent culture. So you can distinguish three levels in the analysis of sub-cultures: one is the historical [. . .] which isolates the specific problematic of a particular class fraction [. . .] secondly [...] the sub-systems [. . .] and the actual transformations they undergo from one sub-cultural moment to another [...] thirdly [...] the way the sub-culture is actually lived out by those who are its bearers and supporters.'

Resistance often takes a specifically territorial form, like ghettos or ethnically connoted neighbourhoods, often intended as restricted, segregated social spaces. The segregation process is explained by Jackson through the example of black ghettos, which isolation is due to wider social conditions but also by a sort of self-isolation aimed at challenging the hegemonic, mainstream attitudes and economic or politic structures. This self-isolation results however in a further level of social exclusion.

The effectiveness of resistance is evaluated by the threat it represents for authorities. Symbolic rituals are chosen to find –or fight for– new solutions to problems that cannot be resolved in political or economic fields. To decode symbolic and cultural rituals it is necessary to have: a fundamental ethnographical knowledge and a detailed ethnography; an understanding of the social, political, and geographical context where the codes develop; and finally, an understanding of the structures and broader relations between classes and state.

2.3.2 The issue of visuality

Jackson proposes examples of how self-expression, even in the form of a clothing choice, could represent a form of resistance. Resistance is meant in this sense as an unconventional way of thinking and behaving to show distance from social constrictions.

In particular, he faces the issue of visuality: problems with social control raise when forms of resistance are publicly explicit. Their desire to be visible is a way to challenge society as a whole construction of either official or non-written rules, that limits one's freedom. Public policies are often unable to restrict all forms of resistance or rebellion, rather they usually tend to constitute appropriate spaces where to "segregate" some behaviours. Jackson exemplifies this concept in his description of 'popular culture', which has always found its complete expression in determined places and times, as to maintain at least a sense of order in the city and to guarantee the presence of employees during working shifts. In the past centuries, the only occasions in which social order was revolted was in Carnival or festivals celebrations, when in restricted times and places authorities accepted and even encouraged people to let go of their social frustrations to better maintain social order in ordinary life.

In a historical review of the development of popular culture in Britain, Jackson locates the construction of many aspects of popular culture before the advent of the industrial society, when leisure was not a separate sphere of life and activities and therefore it was denoted by class and gender, like the mainly manly context of the 'pub life'. Becoming an actually separate set of activities even for working classes and popular recreation, leisure implied a distinct social geography in uncontrolled and unfixed times and places. The response of the bourgeois was to use apply governance strategies to re-establish their acceptable Victorian values and lifestyle, by attempting to use town planning and housing to impose a 'moral order'. Popular recreation became a contact point between classes, like in music halls (Fig.14), where the working class was gradually subjected to restrictions and censorship by the claims of the upper-classes. Inside the same halls, a form of social geography and spatial as well as temporal segregation existed: prices and seats reflected the difference in wealth of the classes in the audience, while the performances themselves were divided in two halves, a first, more refined one and a second, more profane one.
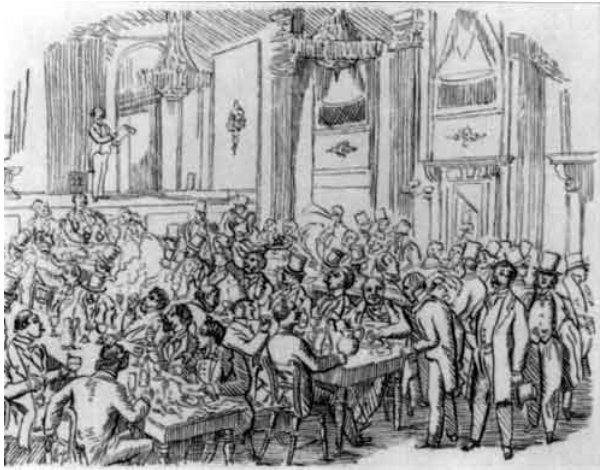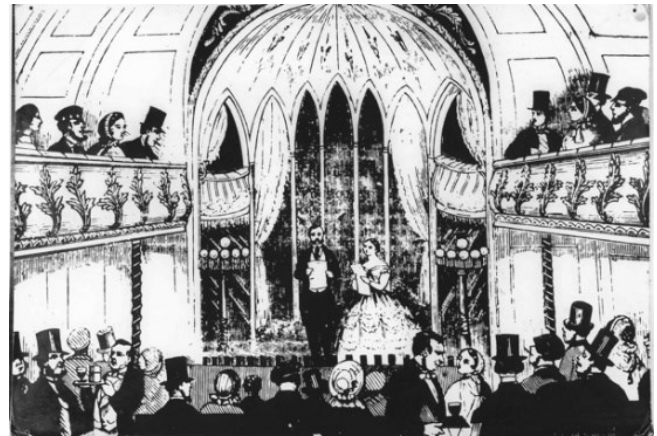
Fig. 15: Early Music Halls performances (source: https://www.musicals101.com/musichall.htm)

Fig. 14: Wilton Music Hall, 1859 (source: https://wiltons.org.uk/heritage/history)

The image of moral degeneracy that upper-classes associated with music halls led to new regulations for the halls, rules that caused a decrease in the possibility of expression in the form of political satire, also because of forms of self-regulation that halls themselves would impose to avoid losing licenses to serve their products –usually alcohol. Outside music halls though, the imposition of the same sort of control was way more difficult. The street became a symbolic representation of danger, opposed to the safe homes in which values and virtues were respected. The presence of the poor on the streets, their visibility became a threat to social order and civilization as conceived by bourgeois. In the same way, prostitution became also a question of private morality opposed to public behaviour. The problem was not completely prostitution itself, which both upper and lower classes usually accessed to: prostitution was too public. According to Victorian values –respectability, family, decorum, and virtue– women should have guarded their homes and children. Prostitutes were the example of lack of Victorian decency and even challenged the image of the man-dependent woman, not concerned with trade and work. Prostitutes have an existence outside the family and bring the erotic in public spaces, fostering the idea of street as symbolically opposed to the home. More recently, in the past century prostitution has been seen as a criminal activity to the extent to which it was a 'visible affront to public morality'. The so-called 'street-walkers' were subjected to police persecution because of their physical presence and further evidence lays in the rare arrest of the men who often run the business of prostitution itself. Jackson reports

contemporary research which demonstrates that as soon as prostitution moves the suburbs, the problem becomes less urgent, highlighting the existence of a sort a geography of prostitution that could represent an interesting field for his ideal renewed cultural geography.

Victorian values were imposed not just through laws and restrictions. Led by an obsessive fixation for moral standards and an almost perverse interest for the morbid aspects of the lives of the poor, they activated philanthropic projects with little actual concern for the real issues and struggles of the population such as hygiene or inequality.

The problem of visibility is that it causes a perception of lack of security and control in the wealthier part of the society which leads to the idea of a social segregation to separate socially acceptable values and daily forms of transgression. The point then is not to eradicate such transgressive behaviours, but to hide them from public eyes. In Jackson's days this has mostly turned into a broader social discourse not centred on class division, but involving patterns of racism, discrimination of minorities, and isolation of the weaker. Visibility becomes a pretext to reinforce stereotypes and fears in the outsiders, as territorial struggles are encoded in racial, class, gender, or discriminatory terms.

In Jackson's opinion the emerging analysis of the places suffering for such struggles shows the emergence of a geography of resistance.

2.3.3 Culture of discrimination

The author first focuses on the relations between hegemonic structures and popular ones through the examination of 'popular culture' and the change of its meaning from its etymological sense of 'belonging to the people' to its more modern usage to set against the 'élite culture'. Culture is per se undemocratic, part of a class discourse, and predominantly urban, instead of being associated with folklore and tradition as popular culture originally supposed. Culture, and particularly popular culture, gains a political connotation, conveying a sense of resistance to the mainstream.

He goes on then to analyse those discriminated groups to push for new academic attention on finding the reasons of their discrimination in cultural, social, political, and economic contexts.

He starts with feminist approaches by examining gender and sexuality, which, according to the feminist views Jackson agrees with, need to be inserted in social contexts

rather than studied in theoretical isolation because, as socially constructed elements they reflect the wider social relations. The genetic base of gender division already appears in the '80s as insufficient and uncomplete, giving relevance to feminist theories of socially constructed gender ideas. Sexuality and gender enter in a political dimension, where sexual attitudes grow out of political decision which sometimes are even influenced by religious dogmas. Jackson stresses the undefined distinction of gender and sexuality and the role of patriarchy in the oppression of women's sexual sphere by citing the work of some female academics like the feminist literary critic Annette Kolodny, who previously interpreted the use of feminine metaphors to define Nature and in particular land ('mother', 'mistress', etc.), exposing a patriarchal vision of the world encoded in landscape, in the same way as Tuan had already highlighted the variety of personifications existing in patriotic literature. The location of her study was America, her native country, a land which represented a New World, a 'virgin' land to be 'taken' or violated. While analysing the vocabulary of such feminine connotated landscape she searched the role of women in constructing the gender ideologies they themselves have to put up with and their way to eventually resist to patriarchal oppression.

Patriarchy interacts with capitalism in discriminating and excluding women in the field of work. The assumption of manly physical strength necessary for work, of highly skilled men, or of men who must be the 'bread-winners', is the result of a biased ideological domination and of patterns of gender relations traditionally established in the home – absence of family burdens or technological competence belonging to the family man. Women then suffer a double oppression, being subjected both to class subordination and gender discrimination.

Studies of sexuality also include the attitudes toward sexual orientations. Gay communities were considered in sociological studies as minorities at the same level of an ethnic group. Initially the field of study involved an exploration of the 'gay spaces' within gay communities, but then evolved to acquire a wider knowledge of the community in the broad society.

Again, the problem is that it is the public expression to often be repressed for its visibility with homophobic attitudes, leading to the creation of gay neighbourhoods and social segregation. San Francisco has been an exemplary study case for its tolerance toward the gay community in America. The sociologist Manuel Castells argues that

sexuality must be inserted in the wider matrix of ethnicity, class, and politics of the city as a whole. He then states that Gay San Francisco has become a complex, powerful, and mostly independent community on all levels thanks to cultural as well as political and legal and economic factors in their favour. In politics and law context, California legalized homosexuality already back in the '60 – not completely cancelling the discrimination in many fields, but al least taking a big step for their rights – and then the city elected the first openly gay supervisor together with a liberal mayor in 1977, giving way to a high tolerance governance of the city. On the economic side, San Francisco was the headquarter of finance, insurance, and real estate industry, a context in which a 'pink economy' found its place to flourish with the creation of a market patronized by the gay community – or at least a part of it. Some problems came with this development too: the patronizing of businesses by members of the gay community and the attractivity for more and more people in the city resulted in a shortage of jobs and a heavy pressure on the housing market, since many singles moved there and many married couples divorced. Moreover, conflicts with other minorities in the area arose because the community contributed to the problem of housing by renovating houses and increasing rents. For the Black and Latino communities, it represented a huge problem that even led to the loss of their homes. It is what today would be defined as a process of gentrification.

The following treated issue is that of racism. Racism is based on the assumption that people can be differentiated in 'races' depending on physical or biological criteria, and additionally social and cultural differences are considered. According to this view, social differences depend on people's nature instead of their history. Historically, British have long been hostile to people coming from outside, above all from outside Europe; there are reports of black people in Britain already in Shakespeare's times (i.e., Othello) and XVIII-XIX century reports from the British Empire would write about 'alien' peoples. It is during the XIX century that racism hardened with discriminatory images of black people and a strong influence of imperialism, Darwinism, and a biased geography, a tendency, as previously noted, which had already been criticized by the Berkeley School for the improper use of academic studies in favour of dominant groups' political issues. De Gobineau introduced the 'three-fold racial classification' (black-white-yellow) that was accepted by geographical academics like Bartholomew in his 'School Economic Atlas' in 1921, denoting even an economic relevance of race. Black people in Britain

were subjected to ideologies of class and race, suffering a frustrating discrimination in employment and resulting in social tensions. The double layer of discrimination is denoted in the term 'Darkest England' which spread also because of the 'race riots' that exploded in Nottingham and Notting Hill in the '50s. Language again helps studying the way racist ideologies are routinely expressed, even in Jackson's day and nowadays with an almost unchanged vocabulary.

Racism enters in the political discourse, becoming more respectable and applicable in national programs like the call for limited immigration due to a concern for 'coloured immigrants' geographically concentrated in British cities. Any pretext was exploited to increase the racial tension, as the urban riots of the '80s which were described as racial even though only a minority of those arrested was actually black. Moreover, medias reported these riots to happen in a 'mythical inner city', a linguistic expedient to create an illusory place so that they would be felt as more distant from people's lives. Not just black people, but also those coming from Asia experience discrimination and stereotypes as belonging to places ideally opposed to the West –Europe. 'Orientalism' represented a way to highlight and legitimize the dominance of Europe over Asia, supported by geography in the division of colonial power in spaces. The institutionalization of racism culminates in a sort of normalization of it, transforming it from an individual thought to a dominant belief.

2.3.4 The Agenda

The last chapter of 'Maps of Meaning' is a proposal of an agenda for future developments of cultural geography and its approaches. Jackson highlights two topics to debate for a reconstituted human geography, that are the emergence of a set of approaches to interpret culture and society, and the ideas of post-modernism.

For the first one, Jackson mentions Tylor's alternative to an inclusive view of culture, one which implies culture as interpretation. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz defined anthropology as 'an interpretative science in search of meaning, not an experimental one in search of laws', targeting the tendency of social relations to constantly undergo processes of interpretation and reinterpretation and therefore their dynamic feature. Individual actions and practices flow endlessly responding to structural social rules: anthropological fieldwork should be aimed at entering in such fluidity of events to

reconstruct, interpret, and report them to another society. Ethnography is on of the results, to be considered as both the process of anthropological data gathering and the 'inscription of social actions' – the end product. Geertz also made a parallelism between society and a text because of its inherent possibility to be read and interpreted in multiple ways, an image that has become quite popular even in other subjects like geography, in which landscape can be read and referred to as a text or a 'biography'. The criticisms about such approaches are however related to their lack of concern for the structural constraints on individual action. Moreover, Geertz seemed reluctant to recognize how some versions of knowledge gain more power than others, the imposition of hegemonic meanings or ideologies, rejecting an interest-based view of ideologies because in his opinion, it would have invalidated the reasons for people to adhere to those ideologies. Ideology is then a cultural system of interacting meanings, in which symbolic forms grant the coexistence of multiple meanings on different levels.

Post-modernization has an anti-elitist language used by social scientists to highlight the constructed and contested nature of knowledge. The attempt is to link aesthetic and intellectual trends to the changes of the material world without reducing post-modernism to 'the cultural logic of late capitalism'. Within the undefined post-modernization process, one of the few agreed discourses is the conception of a plurality of cultures and consequently a plurality of landscapes. A reconstituted cultural geography should read the multiple layers of culture, considering the external surfaces and the meanings and experiences within it, a modern prominent idea gathered in the term 'the iconography of landscape'.

The book presents culture as the medium to express meanings and at the same time the domain where these meanings are discussed. Cultural theory still has a lot to be argued about, including spatial analysis. Landscape is again defined as a 'way of seeing' instead of a set of physical traits.

To approach the end of his thesis, Jackson refers to three main possible approaches that he considers valid to develop a renewed cultural geography:

I. Theory of uneven development: 'the systematic geographical expression of the contradictions inherent in the very constitution and structure of capital' (Neil Smith); it is a consequence of the tension between spatial fixity of capital and the need for capital mobility, two features of capitalism which by colliding

periodically result in crisis and restructuring of geographical spaces. This theory deals at the same time with social human existence, the relations with Nature, and the relations between capitalism ang geography – a geography of industry.

II. 'Spatial Division of Labour' (Doreen Massey): class, gender, and race related divisions of labour, geographically and historically constructed; attempt to expand cultural studies towards society and space relationships, to emphasize that 'the social is spatially constituted'.

III. Reciprocal links between social relation and spatial structures: there are some underlying social structures which establish relationships of reciprocal influence between geographical and social changes: places are not just subjected to structural changes, but actively influence, resist, or redefine them. The study of such relationships includes locality studies and local cultures opposed to national ones, urban and rural environments, concepts of work and leisure, ideas about the past, and prospects for the future.

The challenge Jackson opens up to cultural geography is to study the spatial constitution of society mediated by culture exploring moreover the social and political construction of culture itself. The theoretical perspective should consider methodological approaches of other disciplines like anthropology (comparative method) or history (collection of data and verifiable evidence) because meanings should be associated with the material world they belong to. The existence of a multiplicity of culture allows to distinguish and analyse dominant and subordinate cultures, popular and elitist ones, without reducing culture to a mere political struggle over language. A revitalized cultural geography would be interest in all of them and the structures of power they suppose in each context.

3. CONTEMPORARY READINGS

The next step for the present paper is to look for academic research relying on or criticizing each of the books and concepts previously analysed, in order to understand their contemporary readings and whether – or possibly at which scale – their research have managed to influence, affect, and penetrate contemporary research, both in geographical studies and other fields of knowledge. To do so, documents regarding the two branches, containing criticisms and references to both the disciplines and the specific four books will be examined and some examples of interdisciplinary work will eventually be presented for each sub-discipline.

Having received much attention in the past and present times, the available material is wide, and it needs to be selected so to focus on some main prominent or innovative aspects.

Considering the concepts developed in the four classics as fundamental for their respective sub-disciplines, an introductory section about wider critiques to the sub-disciplines themselves will be presented to better set the contexts for a more specific addressing to the publications.

3.1 HUMANISTIC GEOGRAPHY: RELPH AND TUAN

Humanistic geography as previously read, approaches geographical studies by studying the existing relationships between people and nature – or more generally, space – and the experiences set within it. Sapkota (2017) describes it as being 'methodologically obscure', meaning that any method could be used to understand human experiences of place. One of the major critiques moved against humanistic geography is actually the lack of an established and defined research method which can be accurate, measurable and accordingly prove their theories. Seamon and Lundberg (2017) accurately report the doubts humanistic geography has raised to different schools of thought. Among these, they include quantitative geographers who could not accept as valid humanist notions without proper methods of inquiry involved. Humanist geographers' response highlights their intent to provide generalized theories which rely on human experiences, perceptions, and actions, an inductive approach which results are some wide-raging 'interpretative possibilities' to be openly consulted and approached in various and unfixed ways.

Moreover, more recent studies have proved that whereas quantitative techniques usually compare people on some dimensions, the qualitative ones define some kind of typologies, which is a more 'natural' way of structuring the results from the interviews and observations conducted (Lewicka, 2011).

Among the criticisms humanistic geography has faced regarding either conceptual, ideological, or ethic issues, is that of the feminist geographers. They accuse its research to be not just 'essentialist' – as it allegedly unproblematically considers human condition as universal and lacking subjectivity or diversity – but also 'authoritative' in its privileged position of academically recognised group of experts. Humanist geographers would in this sense possess the power to interpret the condition of the broader society, that of the ordinary people, a status which is also related to feminists' 'masculinist' charge. The feminist accusations pair with those coming from Marxist scholars addressing a 'voluntarist' behaviour, which consists in conferring individual human agency and actions a relevance which overshadows the influence of social and power relations – including economic and political dynamics. Cresswell (2009) too notes the weakness in studies regarding power structures and their participation in the process of construction or contestation of place and its meaning.

To all these critiques humanist geographers respond renewing their interest in engaging with human individual, cultural, or group differences. Although admitting the poor quantity of work in this fields, they support a method which would allow to observe, study, and understand their uniqueness and possible geographical correlations. Moreover, such approach would include as a focus social attitudes, behaviours, and power structures.

The last group of critics is that of poststructuralists, who contest a biased humanistic view favouring place, insideness, and rootedness over placelessness, outsideness, and mobility. They propose instead the notion of 'progressive sense of place' to examine the relation between place and society and environment. Moreover, they even question the actual existence of place in a world subjected to an increasing level of globalization with constant insurgence of non-places. Humanist geographers recognize the eroding action of globalization – Relph himself introduces the theme of placelessness related to globalization – but they also consider it possible to still assist to a strengthening of existing places and the creation of new ones, as people are 'bodily beings who always unavoidably live a life in some physical place' (Seamon and Lundberg, 2017).

Sapkota (2017) conducts an analysis on strengths and weaknesses of humanistic geography methods, agreeing with the criticism above explained. She contrasts the criticisms claiming the possibility to find in humanistic philosophical approach a methodological framework for geographical research. Such methods are strictly related to their philosophy: methos and means of research are connected to the significance of research itself. Since the understanding of human awareness towards geographical activities is one of the main targets of humanistic geography – a central topic in Tuan and Relph's books –, the methodology introduced for such work involves the interconnections with humanities studies and an interest in landscape studies, in particular their symbolic meaning in iconographical, aesthetical, and social studies. Furthermore, she defends the criticized lack of quantitative techniques in favour of participant observation as a more suitable way to understand people-place relationships.

Having hinted at the major comments and critiques that in general have affected the discipline, the review will now continue with a specific focus on the two humanist classics analysed in this dissertation.

3.1.1 Place and Placelessness Revisited

Many contemporary academics agree in claiming Place and Placelessness a classic of humanistic geography with a great resonance and impact on following theoretical and practical research since its release in 1976. The dissatisfaction for what he considered the 'anaemic' and superficial definitions of place that dominated the discipline until the 1970s, stimulated his willingness to shift from positivistic approaches to uncover and demonstrate the differentiation between space and place, their contended meanings, and their importance in human life (Seamon, 2008; Seamon and Lundberg, 2017).

Recognized as one of the 26 'key texts in human geography' and a classic with historical value, Place and Placelessness has been referenced more and more in further academic works, as reported by Freestone and Liu (2016), who have recently undergone a careful work of revisitation of the text with modern conceptualizations and evaluations in 'Place and Placelessness Revisited'. According to citation indices in sciences, social sciences, and the arts and humanities, it reached 357 quotes in scholarly journals between 1977 and 2005, and many more in other fields such as psychology, sociology, urban studies, health, and anthropology (Seamon, 2008).

In the following years its relevance has not decreased according to the following graph which even represents a sharp increase in academic citations (Fig.1).
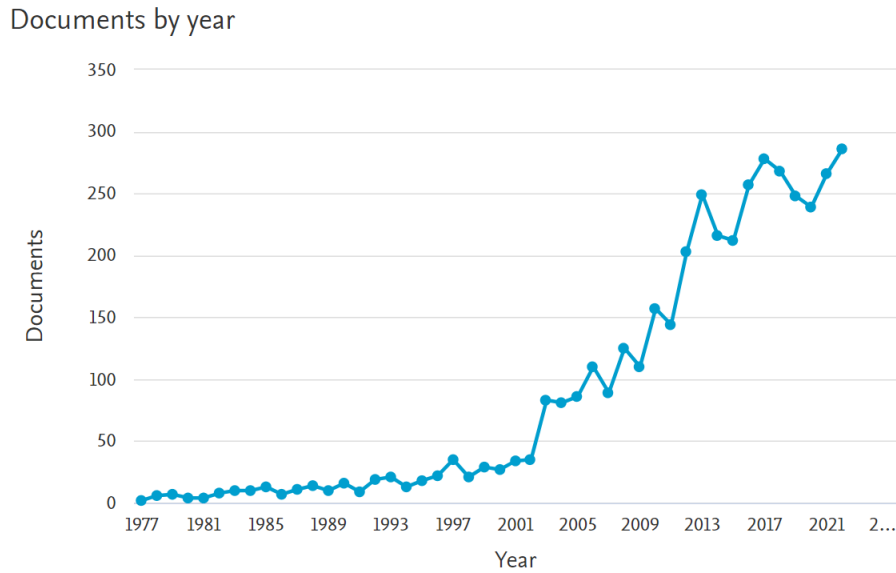

Documents by year

Fig. 16: Relph's 'Place and Placelessness' number of citations per year in published academic papers (Source: Scopus)

The book has contributed to trigger new approaches and debates about place studies, prompting research on the nature of place, stimulating the publication of many related studies, and bringing the discussion to the attention of scholars coming from different perspective, allowing therefore the insurgence of diverse interpretations and uses of the notion.

Relph's philosophical perspective is a phenomenological one, which focuses on the essence of place itself, rather than an epistemological one insisting on the origins of the theories of place which has remained more relevant in a contemporary context since the cultural turn. Phenomenology is a tool to use by erasing assumptions and prejudice to study and investigate what seems to be obvious. Relph applies this approach to study the relationships between people and place and demands for more 'anthropocentric' research which evaluates experiences of place (Atkinson et al., 2005; Seamon, 2008; Freestone and Liu, 2016). Indeed, one of his fundamental aims is to give an understanding of human situations, actions, meanings, and people's experiences of place in everyday contexts by investigating aspects such as place attachment, sense of place, and place identity.

Place and Placelessness suggests that place has a role in ordering human intentions, experiences, and actions within itself, and, at the same time, the dialectical relation between space and place is structured on human experience which distinguishes them and give them significance. To review it in the current context of the XXI century, where placelessness has become a significant aspect of culture and society, a multi-disciplinary approach is needed to adapt the concepts of space and place to different situations, conditions, or problems.

Seamon (2008) investigates one of the main questions which contemporary researchers address, that is how to maintain and construct places nowadays, in a world and society characterised by continuous changes and loss of traditional 'truths'. He believes Place and Placelessness provides a suitable language to deepen the enquiry. The introduction of the notion of placelessness in particular has been a milestone, assuming a central role in the development of research in the discipline.

The main characterizing elements recognised by scholars in the analysis of placelessness are: its ubiquitous urban forms; the remote mass-production of products to be then transported into the city; the presence of forms and constructions which do not belong to the context in which they are inserted and therefore assume universal forms with the main purpose of being functional. The places affected by such condition may even be called 'anywhere places' (Montague, 2016). The idea of placelessness acquires a slightly more positive connotation in Augé's notion of 'non-place'. If place is for both the authors subjected and shaped by human intentions and emotions, Augé intends to propose a more open idea of placelessness rather than Relph's conception of a 'bland and dull' space (Dovey, 2016). As Freestone and Liu (2016) explain, while placelessness is the lack of sense of place given by people's experience, non-places lack social relations.

Although placelessness seems to be a negative, unstoppable process affecting contemporary - mostly urban – places, urban forms are today consciously created to use space by enhancing the characteristics of existing spatial forms and by supporting the development of new interest and functions for the urban space to be experienced. It is social change which leads such decisions and redefinitions of urban spaces. Such practices of urban-planning are part of the newly professional activity of place-making, which in today's urban design practices consists in 'the provision of urban spaces that alleviate homogeneity and encourage greater public use' (Bishop, 2016). Even urban and

local governments now involve place-making in their wider development strategies. Easthope (2016) claims that urban-planning also requires a place-based approach to be applied, that is to consider the character and feel of places. As Relph (1976) states, humans need a relation with place to live meaningful experiences, and that would be impossible in environments where a 'one-size-fits-all' formula leads the planning process, ignoring landscapes uniqueness as well as the emotional feelings of people for those places they individually and communally experience.

Public social life and spaces must be a focus of urban-planning and place-making processes to avoid the phenomenon of placelessness to spread. Marshall (2016) reckons public spaces are central in XXI century cities and people in some way expect to be provided with increasingly high-quality places to experience the many recreational or social activities possible today. Contemporary cities have indeed pluralistic and diverse publics, depending on differences on similarities about personal or physical aspects, interests, as well as factors like wider demographic and social dynamics, or technological advancements. Public life and spaces provide social and cultural products, and when not evaluated the city risks to be solely led by economic rationalism which lacks social prosperity and relations, activating therefore processes of isolation and placelessness. The presence and influence of people is even more important in an historical moment in which globalization and mobility cause a constant crowding of cities due to the presence of visitors. Relph's view of tourists experiencing homogenized places at superficial level overlooks urban challenges local governments face to attract business and tourism. Cities compete today at a global level by offering services and suitable environments for leisure and business that could bring new visitors. Place-making initiatives promote projects for public spaces in order to provide public contexts for both citizens and visitors, considering this last category just as an urban sub-culture during the planning processes.

Among the comments and reviews which have followed its publication, Place and Placelessness has been the subject of a number of scholars' critiques through the last decades.

Seamon (2008) analyses three of the major critiques academics have raised about Place and Placelessness and responds to defend the text. First, he deconstructs Marxists and social constructivists' accusation of essentialism in Relph's discourse. According to them, Relph assumes a universal human condition to be revealed as the core of human

experience by erasing 'non-essentials', such as historical, cultural or personal features, overlooking therefore different circumstances that characterize experience. Seamon claims that this criticism fails to notice Relph's phenomenological recognition of the multiple dimensions of unique human experience, that are one's personal condition; one's historical, social, and cultural context; and one's situation as a 'typical human being' in a human world. Phenomenological thinking also works on dichotomy and so general-specific or conceptual-lived world are opposites that coexist in Relph's work. In the same way Seamon rejects the claim that Place and Placelessness would favour home, centre, and dwelling over horizon, periphery, and journey. In fact, the book recognizes the negative connotation that both an excess of home or journey could acquire, giving relevance to the dialectical interrelations exemplified. Similarly, the third case regards again Relph's alleged preference of place over placelessness, insideness over outsideness, and rootedness over mobility. Relph's conceptual structure is nevertheless very flexible and its language, especially through the insideness-outsideness continuum, allows to describe individual or group experiences in their unique situations and, moreover, how place themselves can be experienced differently not only by different people but even by the same person.

The notion of insideness on its own has been subject to criticism as well, since it has been read as defence of local identity. As Davison (2016) reports, the eradication of the local as recognized by Relph, has also been noted by contemporary cosmopolitan critics. Today's scholars are not concerned for this trend, because they conceive place as 'open and discontinuous spaces', in a constantly changing world. People still look for forms of local attachment, places where to 'feel at home' and 'feel safe', or what is more generally referred as belonging. The ways of belonging have obviously changed due to the increasing rates of mobility and therefore the sense of belonging is not at risk of disappearing, but rather it may change in its expressions. Being home and the sense of belonging are also related to cultural traits. Tomaney (2016) studies the relations of the feeling of wellbeing and the home – to be distinguished from the house, which implies a different, probably less impacting experience. The dwelling place is involved in shaping people's identity as demonstrated in Relph's theoretical discourse about place.

Authier (2013) comments on Relph's quote 'to be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and to know *your* place'. The author

considers this statement to convey an idea of a static condition, not suitable for human fluidity in adapting to situations and evolving in time. Therefore, there is not one place or one perspective, but the concept of place enters the consciousness and it is then perceived differently depending on culture and life experiences.

One last consideration comes from Dovey (2016) who suggests avoiding reductionism, since place can acquire diverse meanings depending on their contexts and purposes. He refers particularly to reduction to texts and essentialism, that is 'the idea of place becoming an original source, the authentic source of meaning, the exclusive one right away. He reports Doreen Massey's argument for an 'open and global sense of place' where differences are given relevance instead of singularity. Dovey proposes an idea of place and placelessness as not opposites but rather intertwined notions, or as Liu (2016) writes, hybridized and integrated to respond to contemporary attitudes and changes. As the identity of places derives from human experiences and meanings, places can acquire different identities; none of the identities considered is the 'true' one and therefore none of the perspectives is wrong because place is polysemous (Atkinson et al., 2005). Place shows then a 'multiplicitous' nature, a condition to recognize in the process of places becoming placeless or non-places.

According to Dovey, place is also multi-scalar, but not in a hierarchical sense. It is a mix of top-down and bottom-up processes, a conception which proves its multiplicity and the possibility to consider place and placelessness as other than simple opposites. Dovey recognises part of this idea in Relph's book, specifically when it introduces the multiplicity of place experiences and the degrees of insideness and outsideness.

3.1.2 Space and Place Revisited

Cresswell (2009) believes that the most important contribution humanistic geographers have given to the wider discipline is the distinction between 'the abstract realm of space and the experienced and felt world of place'. At the forefront of this innovation is Yi-Fu Tuan, who is known for introducing the fundamental notion of place, in a humanistic perspective into geographical studies marking the difference with the scientific definition of place for humanist consideration of its lived and meaningful aspects. Thanks to his writing, especially Space and Place, he has opened the discipline to different dimensions of space, such as aesthetic or emotional ones, and furthermore he

has claimed that the impact of human emotional attachment to place is what actually creates and supports place (Atkinson et al., 2005).

In the text, place is defined as a centre of meaning and a field of care, exceeding the conventional meaning of location and becoming therefore influential in the discipline, as well as for philosophers, literary theorists or social scientists. The book has therefore constantly received much academic attention from many different fields since its publication (Fig.2):
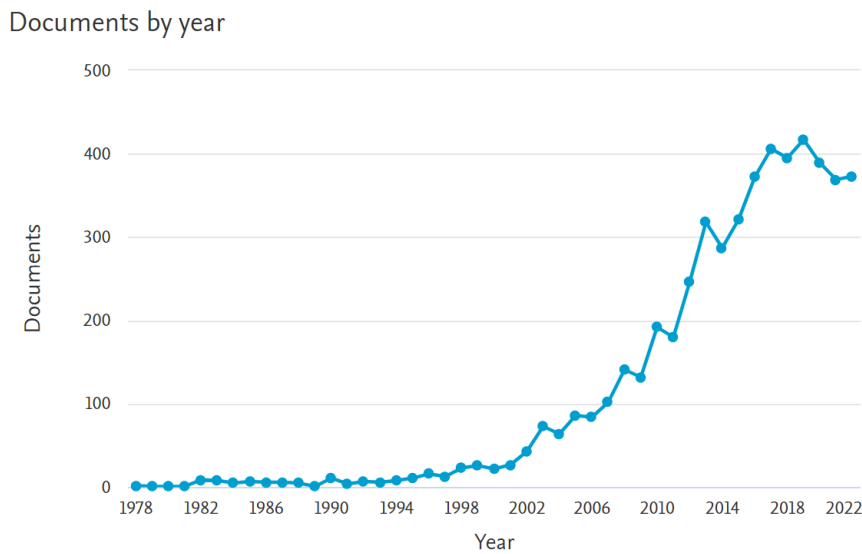

Fig. 17: Tuan's 'Space and Place' number of citations per year in published academic papers (Source: Scopus)

Space and Place follows humanist geography intent to understand the relationships between human beings and the world surrounding them with a specific focus on experience. In this way, he studies the way in which this relationship allows to transform environment into place, and the whole processes of place-making themselves.

The philosophical foundations of Tuan's book have been analysed, revealing traits of both phenomenology and hermeneutics. Janz (2017) is particularly interested in the last one, which he identifies as 'hermeneutics of space and place'. He emphasizes Tuan's intent is not to propose a hermeneutic method, nor to draw a path for the discipline in this direction aligning to the ideas of other philosophers or specific theories. In fact, Tuan's aim is that of unveiling the ambiguities and ambivalences of human experiences of place, especially dwelling, and the underlying relationships human-place. He defines himself a

humanist and even delineates a broadly shared definition of humanist geography – as already discussed above in the paper – in which humanities penetrate geographical studies in order to better understand concepts such as geographical knowledge, territory and place, crowding and privacy, livelihood and economics, and religion. Janz recognises in some way the effective lack of methodology which has been evidenced by some critics, but at the same time he claims Tuan has been dedicated in pursuing his humanistic goal of analysing human experiences without the influence of scientific methods isolating events and facts from subjective impressions. He therefore defines Tuan's writing a 'humanist hermeneutic of space and place' which purpose is to study common traits and differences in human experiences by considering the multitudinous expressions of space and place.

Tuan's work on place also allows to deeply investigate people as human beings, describing their constitution as biological beings, social beings, and unique individuals. He discovers that, in the same way he can study place through people's interaction and influence on it, he can understand human beings and each one of their features as affected by the influence of environmental perception, attitudes, and values (Seamon and Lundberg, 2017). Perception is, in Authier's (2013) words, the lens through which a person views experience. Perceptive processes are activated through language and the senses in order to live and understand experiences and create therefore meanings. In Space and Place Tuan delves into the role of senses for their experiential dimension. Easthope (2016) comments on Tuan's view of sight and touch as the only essential senses to fully experience place, the ones without which geographical research is 'virtually impossible'. Tuan conceives the other senses as integral in enriching spatial experiences, and Easthope insists on their relevance in establishing the identity of place through knowledge and awareness of place. The human sensory system is a holistic one which refers to a complex geographical everyday experience in which external stimuli are mediated by all the senses. Sensory responses are necessary for place to convey meanings and emotion, otherwise it may risk losing quality and personality and therefore being pervaded by placelessness. Taste is not just important on its own, but on a symbolic level too as food is a significant cultural element. Smell reveals information about the character and identity of a place, recalling to memory past experiences and emotions. In denying the exclusive role of visual elements in world experiences, he introduces indeed the

cooperation of memory, past experiences, and expectations. The main difference Easthope highlights his thought the world of sounds, which is a spatially constructed one enabling to expand visual space and spatial awareness to discover areas that cannot be perceived with one's eyes. He proposes the concept of soundscape, a landscape in which the human-place relationship is mediated through the totality of the sounds that characterize the environment. It involves both a physical and a perceptive experience, deeply influencing people and their relationship with place. Today there are devices such as earphones which allow to personalize one's experience of place through music, to shape and manipulate place perception within a self-induce state of isolation. What Easthope wants to suggest adding to Space and Place discussion about sensorial activity in space is to preserve soundscape, because, in the same way as landscapes, their absence would limit place diversity and richness, leading again to a spread of the phenomenon of placelessness.

3.1.3 Contemporary and future research

Humanistic geography, in its intent to study and understand experienced and felt places, has not dedicated much research to the power relationships which affect places. Some critics interpret humanistic approach in studying place as too fixed and rooted in the past – in particular in the 1970s, when much of the founding theory of the discipline was delineated – and therefore such approach would risk turning places into locations for exclusionary practices (Cresswell, 2009). As already explained in the first section of this chapter, this kind of critiques have been coming from scholars influenced by feminism, Marxism, and poststructuralism since the publication of the book, but especially since the 1980s. This trend they set is the first hint of the advent of the following new cultural geography, which will lead to the gradual relevance of humanistic geography until the 1990s, when it almost disappeared as an explicit subfield. Although this distancing from humanistic geography as a sub-discipline, the main topics on which humanistic geography focused have survived as research enquiries, and they still challenge some scholars, above all those philosophers interested in the phenomenological aspects of place. For this group of scholars Relph and Tuan's books have represented two fundamental milestones and starting points for a renewed geographical thinking, often subjectivist in its view of place as integral to human existing because humans are always

'human-being-in-place' (Seamon and Lundberg, 2017) and experiencing the environment surrounding them.

Some other researchers take instead distance from humanistic geography, proposing 'anti-humanist' approaches to contrast some core humanist themes. In particular they contest an alleged 'fictitious character', that would be the tendency of people to act unconsciously, being totally unaware of the reasons for their actions (De Azevedo and Pimenta, 2006).

However, research agenda keeps enlarging, focusing on human actions in place, their interaction with space, and the significance people give to places. These endeavours encompass the theoretical interdisciplinarity which both Tuan and Relph strongly advocate in their respective texts and a useful interaction between physical and human geographies investigating in human beings' perceptions of physical landscapes. Sapkota (2017) indeed calls for a rethinking of research practices to better study the physical world with individual experience and the help of philosophical and methodological thoroughness, namely a practice involving the techniques and ideas of a humanistic approach.

Relph and Tuan have obtained the multidisciplinary interest they have always wanted to foster. Some of the contemporary fields which have benefitted from Tuan and Relph's research involve psychological and neurological studies of human well-being correlated to places. Authier (2013) has conducted a psychological study to fill an academic void in the impact of psychology of place and what the bond with place can reveal of a person. It is Relph and Tuan's works which first recognised a deeper experience of place. The language of place indeed introduces a whole framework encompassing place attachment, sense of place, rootedness, and home useful in investigating people's lived experience, identity, and well-being in psychological research. Tuan even includes the importance of feeling and emotions in the development of place ideas, which is of course relevant for Authier's work. She analyses the concepts of spaciousness and freedom, knowledge of place related to memory and subconscious feelings, and the psychological impact of uniformizing processes in society and place – namely, placelessness. Another big theme is that of nostalgia, which is suggested by all the four classics analysed and which will be deepened later in the chapter. Examining the significance of place for people she demonstrates as true the theory of place as a sort of

particularization of space in the moment in which meaning is attached to it. She acknowledges the interdisciplinary character of her research which takes information mainly from anthropology, sociology, geography, philosophy, and even architecture.

The experience of space and place is also interesting for the field of environmental psychology, and for professionals in urban development and architects. Place and Placelessness has been influential in landscape studies for architects as the perception of 'sense of place' is fundamental in thinking about the suitable design to realize, above all in public spaces where many individual and communal factors intervene. The theories of space, place, and placelessness acquire particular relevance in architects' research for the qualities of space and form, meaning, and experience that the discipline wants to create (Corkery, 2016).

One last example of contemporary application of humanists' notions of space, place and placelessness is the redefinition of them all in a digital world. Gutsche and Hess (2020) explore the way journalism has changed since the advent of new technologies. According to them, journalism shapes and is shaped by the places in which it is produced, and their attempt is to develop the concept of *placeification*, turning digital news environments which the audience faces from spaces into places of significance.

Hence, the academic relevance they both acquire goes beyond the borders of geographical enquiry, and still today they manage to attract new generations of researchers, resonating for their ability to stimulate cross-disciplinary cooperation.

3.2 NEW CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY: COSGROVE AND JACKSON

Cultural geography traditionally investigates the relationships of humans with the environment, introducing more political and social concerns. The renewed interest which has invested the discipline over the last decades has addressed the understanding of nature in different social contexts.

Cressweel (2010) insists that cultural geographers in XXI century face an exciting time, since the cultural turn – which began in the 1980s with the rise of the 'new cultural geography' – has taken place and cultural geographical theories have been widely recognized or shared as common-sense. Cosgrove and Jackson are regarded as two guiding personalities in this transition forasmuch as their publications have influenced

generations of writers and the approach to the discipline itself. Their 'New Directions in Cultural Geography' (1987) in general and their single books more specifically, have presented an idea of a cultural geography which aim should be to define an account of culture which draws on Marxist cultural studies and understands culture as integral to human social and experiential constructions (Tolia-Kelly, 2016), or as they say, 'the very medium through which social change is experienced, contested and constituted'.

Through their own styles and concerns they have raised questions regarding themes as historical materialism, a body of theory which shares affinities with Marxism, insisting on humans' self-production of reality and the world they live in. Marxist discourse indeed penetrated the discipline in the '60s during a wider radical transformation in which geographers' activism allowed the spread, among others, of feminism, anarchism, ecologism, and humanism (Duncan, Johnson, Schein, 2004). Landscape studies of the '80s, as those proposed by Cosgrove, have then included issues regarding identity politics, nations, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, environment – with a reapproach between humans and physical geography – and social class.

The cultural turn in human geography focuses on a broader concept of 'cultural' since its occurrence in the 1980s. It involves entities, processes and relationships which gradually open up to 'new-subject-matters' – often with an interdisciplinary interest and approach – enlarging the narrow and restricted realm of human achievement considered by the then mainstream conception of culture (Philo, 2009).

One of the major critiques to the sub-discipline comes from the so-called non-representational cultural geographers. New cultural geography addresses both theories and things, that means to, on one side, decode and interpret reality, and on the other, to consider intentionality and cultural products. They cannot be separated from the understanding of how power – relations regarding class inequality, gender, and race – operates through representation. Non-representational geography intends to bring back the attention on experience and practices, relying less – or possibly not at all – on representations. Representations and cultural products are partial and cannot be trusted as methodological tools to examine the world. Moreover, they claim new cultural geography overextends a representational analysis defined as 'discursive idealism' which rests on a Euro-modern version of culture (Anderson, 2018).

Anderson (2010) argues that non-representational geographies face a paradox in their refusal of the world of representations: there is not a methodology of approach which could result in experiences or practices themselves, there will always be some kind of cultural product. It is important and inevitable in Anderson's view, to work with representations; he appeals for representational and non-representational geographies to cooperate in a beneficial 'culturally geographical approach to place' which analyses and investigates agents, activities, contexts, and ideas that affect places.

Furthermore, an excessive focus on theory would raise concerns for an abstract and distant discipline, not involving everyday life situations. Such distance from the everyday also leads to a critique of elitism.

The following sections will analyse more carefully these criticisms in the particular cases of Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape and Maps of Meaning.

3.2.1 Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape Revisited

The book, especially since being part of a rich corpus leading new cultural geography, has been labelled a classic of human geography. Indeed, it is still relevant in cultural geographic academic studies, and it provides a good introduction to this world for those who critically approach the discipline. Thanks to its help in directing cultural geography towards a major shift, the text is still frequently referenced and cited (Fig.3) and it is often part of academic courses programmes.

Berg (2005) proposes a critical review of Social Formation which highlights both strengths and weaknesses he notes through the reading, although admitting a certain bias due to the influence it has had on his academic path. The themes Berg finds to be more concerning for Cosgrove are those related to social theories of society and space, power relations, and class relations within landscape. Cosgrove is regarded as having prompted a shift from the liberalist 'status quo perspectives' of mainstream North American cultural geography to a critical neo-Marxist orientation. The critical approach is one of the biggest strengths of the book, as it provides tools and language for scholars to critically think about space, while its radical foundations and class discourses attract readers interested in radical geographies.
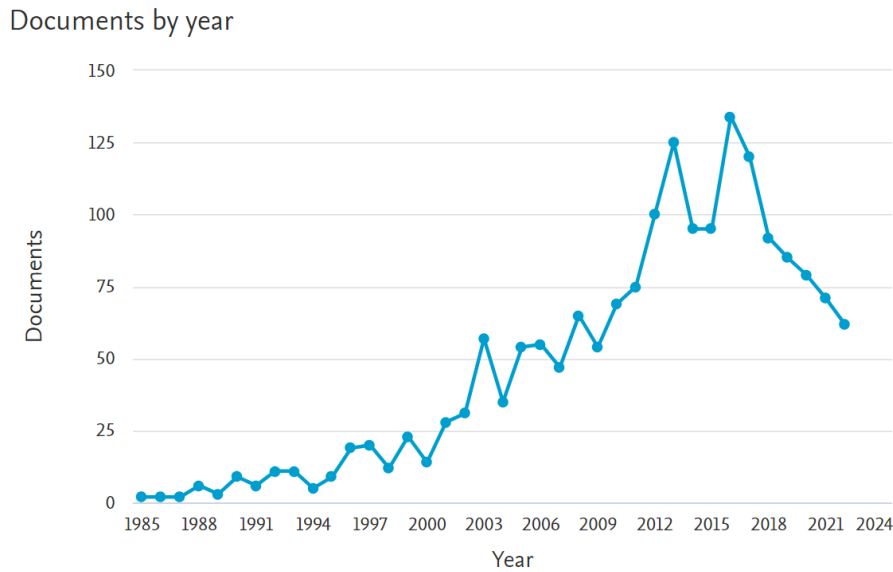
Fig. 18: Cosgrove's 'Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape' number of citations per year in published academic papers (Source: Scopus)

The main deficiencies identified regard Cosgrove's privileged position in geographical field. His white masculinity in academic research is still addressed especially by feminist critiques that also pervade new cultural geography. He focuses more on class relations than other aspects such as gender, race, or ethnicity as structural elements in social formations. Berg reports how, ironically, Cosgrove reproduces himself in some way the hegemonic structures of high culture that he wants to criticize. Cosgrove comments on Italian Renaissance landscape art reproducing the capitalist social formations in which they were produced, but then he experiences himself some of the privileges that white men experience as a class in the 1980s. Moreover, Social Formation is addressed for its references to 'high culture', especially painting and architecture, limiting its adherence to everyday life material issues. According to Berg, the solution to part of these criticisms could have been for Cosgrove to work more explicitly on neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony as Jackson did.

On the other hand however, Cosgrove is said to propose a unique geographical thinking which balances tradition and innovation (Townsend, 2015). He brings vision, imagination, and representation at the centre of geographical studies and thinking, with a particular focus on landscape as a medium to create geographical meanings and knowledge. Social Formation indeed investigates the social and cultural politics of landscape, an understanding of the world which is central to the understanding of

ourselves as well. In this sense, landscape 'constitutes a discourse through which social groups have historically framed themselves and their relations with other groups or land' (Townsend, 2015).

Together with other new cultural geographers Cosgrove started to consider the extent to which cultural products represent spaces and places and their unbalanced inherent power relations (Philo, 2009). In Social Formation he explores such relations in a class discourse which derives from a Marxist approach in geography. He believes cultural geography needs to work on an approach which combines the political-intellectual agenda of Marxism and the interest in ways of life that early cultural geography showed. In the text Cosgrove therefore claims the possibility for the development of spatial theories of culture and landscape within geographical Marxism, working on the understanding of the connections between culture, social life, and economy, and predicting the advent of the so-called cultural turn in geography (Duncan, Johnson, Schein, 2004).

In his class studies Cosgrove sees a correlation between the emergence of capitalist class structures and the reformulation of the landscape 'way of seeing'. A renewed perspective in cultural geography involving class relations could serve in better understanding daily practices and conditions or situations of power, exploitation, and oppression which prevail in particular places and even participate in the construction of places themselves.

Townsend (2015) asserts that Cosgrove most lasting legacy is probably maintaining a coexistence of both human geography and physical geography traits, promoting a unification of the discipline. Cosgrove in his opinion proves that it is possible to self-identify as both a geographer and a humanist: Social Formation leads new cultural geographies for demonstrating the effectiveness of integrating humanism in the research filed. Furthermore, Cosgrove's work gets credit for its work on geographical tradition and, at the same time, an effort to pave the way for future potential interdisciplinarity.

3.2.2 Maps of Meaning Revisited

Maps of Meaning is today widely acknowledged as both the heart of Jackson's project and a core text at the forefront of the cultural turn. He has participated to the rise of a critical human geography through the emergence of Marxist geographies.

Bonnett (2014) defines 'critique' as a central attribute of genuine intellectual enquiry, a rigorous analysis which not only contains judgement, but also gives explanations or even solutions to the main problems. It is what Jackson does in the text when criticising Sauer's anachronism, trying to propose an advancement for geography which is stuck in the past and attached to 'traditional' scholars or research agendas. Jackson indeed conducts a sort of a 'political turn', bringing fresh air to the discipline but not imposing a particular perspective for researchers to consider. Maps of Meaning is then considered a political and critical book and new cultural geography in general is defined as having an 'insistently critical, political edge', foreseeing what is today recognised as radicalism in geography. Jackson therefore supports new cultural geography as a trend keeping the 'radical flame burning', diverging from an older generation not enough involved with political aspects.

Maps of Meaning also aims at revitalizing the sense of cultural politics. Cultural politics is, according to Korf (2020), an analytical framing of politics in society that recognises 'the cultural' as a vital site for political struggles over meaning, wherein different social groups negotiate questions about identity, belonging, inclusion or exclusion. Involving both symbolic and material practices, it is often conceived by geographers as spatial politics, that considers the struggles over identity and how territories are constituted. Central to the theme of cultural politics is the Gramscian notion of 'hegemony' which is reported in Maps of Meaning. Jackson is actually one of the first geographers to talk about cultural politics and explicitly investigate the topic in his work, examining the processes of construction of meanings, and social relations or subordination in geographies of gender, class, race and ethnicity, and sexuality.

The text is praised as an 'accessible, clear-sighted, and geographical introduction' to cultural geographic theorists and concepts, published by Jackson as a programmatic statement on what cultural geography was, is, and what it should become (Lorimer, 2005). It is a classic which represents a connecting point between ideas and trends, fostering further research inside and outside the discipline and inspiring academic development, as proved again by the quantity of citations it has achieved from the 1990s until current days (Fig. 4).

What Jackson builds is an intellectual project, a network to construct a materialist conceptualization of social actions, spatial processes, and power relations through social

and cultural theory. Moreover, he aims at settling a materialist cultural geo which he considers more suitable for issues like identity, politics, race and ethnicity, sexuality, and language. Researchers writing in the '80s are concerned with such topics also because they realize cultural geography – and geography in general – helped in some way to create or resonate forms of inequality and exotification (Duncan, Johnson, Schein, 2004). They propose, with Jackson in front line, agendas for geographical research which aim at investigating ideologies, hegemony, power and resistance. To do so, social sciences and methodologies external to the discipline are considered as well, such as cultural and media studies, sociology, or critical social analysis.
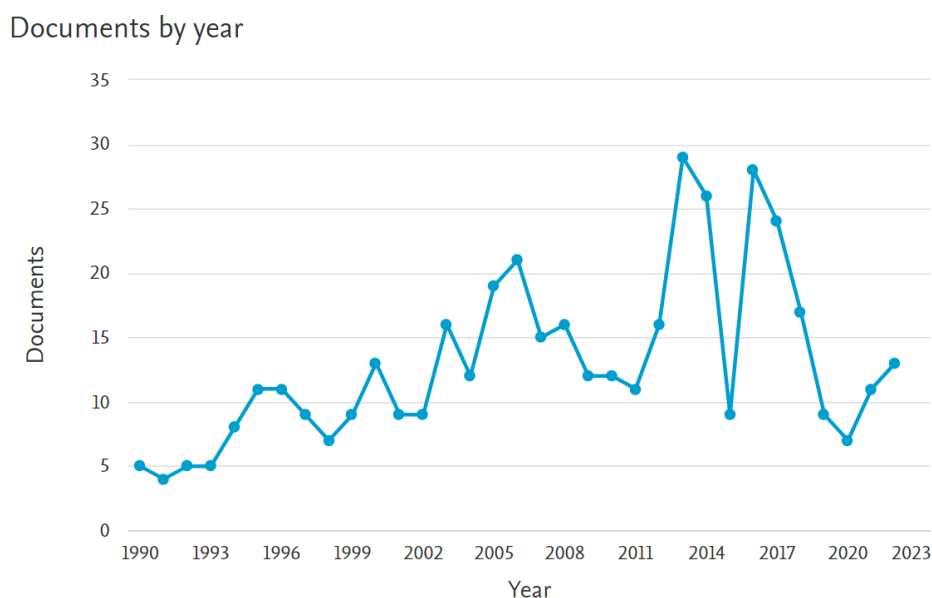

Fig. 19: Jackson's 'Maps of Meaning' number of citations per year in published academic papers (Source: Scopus)

Crang (2010) proposes instead another historiographic narrative to read Maps of Meaning and new cultural geography today. In the 1980s, a new advanced intellectual agenda in British Cultural Studies flourishes in response to a by then old conception of cultural geography, guided by the success of Maps of Meaning. The popularity this trend acquires triggers a 'cultural turn' inside and outside the sub-discipline and wider discipline, but such fame soon loses some of its spirit. Its novelty and purpose start to dissipate as new cultural geography grows, resulting in a collection of research texts which does not build a coherent intellectual agenda. In this way, new cultural geography

has lost its fashion, becoming a sort of an 'administrative label' (Crang, 2010). This reading however oversimplifies and flattens the work brough out by cultural geography in the codification of cultural products and 'representations'. Crang eventually recognises that that same loss of fashion may have helped cultural geography in finding a new energy more recently, as the discipline is no longer concerned with acquiring credibility or relevance, but it focuses on a more ordinary active engagement with the topics of research. In the same way as previously noted with Cosgrove indeed, the problem with new cultural geography is the same new cultural geography has criticized in the first place, that is not being engaged with ordinary politics and issues.

Maps of Meaning has certainly been helpful in setting some provocations for cultural and spatial thinking. Thanks to its agenda addressing the asymmetries of power through politics of history, culture, identity, property, and belonging and their influence on geographical concerns, it has provided a theorization which allows to dig into a variety of cultural, social or political issues (Bartolini, Raghuram, Revill, 2016). Today it is therefore necessary to ask: what are current provocations and concerns for contemporary cultural geography, how have they changed, and how should they be addressed? One still unresolved issue is the definition of 'culture' and the 'cultural'. Bartolini, Raghuram, and Revill suggest cultural geographers may have been content with a wide pluralism which accepts different approaches even without engaging with one another. The relationships between the cultural, the political, and the spatial then need to be reviewed for their current problematizations, also outside of the academic world. They finally agree with Jackson's idea of not sticking to entrenched positions but rather focus on how cultural geography, being a field in which to widely study the world, might include diversity and therefore be mobilized for the future.

3.2.3 Contemporary and future research

Finding the direct results of Jackson and Cosgrove's work in contemporary research is not as easy as for Tuan and Relph who introduced innovative theoretical notions which can be widely adopted in many fields of study. Nevertheless, as already demonstrated in the chapter, they have been relevant in prompting the advancement of the discipline towards more social and political prospects. The kind of research they have inspired is

therefore related to issues such as landscape, inclusion, diversity, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity.

The two authors aim at suggesting with their publications further research in cultural geography, but also to catch the attention of other discipline for geographical material. They succeed in this, as their proposal have reached fields such as urban planning or branding. For example, de San Eugenio Vela, Nogué, and Govers (2017) have conducted an enquiry on the use of visual landscape to project a place branding strategy, the so-called 'landscape branding', or 'brandscape'. To do so, it is necessary to understand the landscape as a social and cultural construction, considering its visual and aesthetic aspects in their broader context, and following therefore the theorization new cultural geography proposed. Moreover, they explain that place branding is constituted by three main elements: place identity, place image, and consumer experience. It is easy to recognise the first two concepts which derive from human geography studies; the third one can be as easily understood by just considering the consumer as either an insider or an outsider: thus, Relph's theories are unveiled. They recognise landscape has now become a tool for advertising, marketing and branding industries, a symbolic construct for positioning places destined to pure and total consumption. In a similar way landscape is exploited and shared today through technology, especially apps such as Instagram. The idea of landscape on Instagram loses part of its meaning as the app turns landscape representations into merely hedonistic displays which create social competition. There is a tendency to display one's possibility to travel and experience a place, a tendency which direct consequence is a form of competition over the best and most exclusive landscapes to show off. This reflects Cosgrove's vision of landscape as a composition made through subjective experience, which reflects social differences. Photography and apps allow to create a particular and specific idea of a place, influenced and characterised by the importance and values people give to it. It is a landscape filtered by the eyes of the photographers, almost with the same modalities as Cosgrove described for painters, a product for public fruition which represents reality but with a paradoxically low realism. In the same way, Instagram serves as a booster for tourist attraction thanks to just a limited representation of some features of the landscape to promote. It does so by playing on the emotional response of the viewer, especially on the nostalgic feeling recalled by specific types of landscape associated to past memories and feelings. Nostalgia is a factor which

is proved to have a strong impact on people's behaviour (Chi, Chi, 2022) even in relation with space, above all for tourists' experiences. Nostalgia, which was even treated as an illness in the past, is defined as "a wistful or excessively sentimental yearning for return to or of some past period or irrecoverable condition." This notion is used in many fields, especially in psychology and marketing: the latter case is relevant for the discussion because the founding relation is that between people and the landscape they experience, or as Chi and Chi (2022) report, 'when nostalgia triggers such as landscapes evoke people's nostalgia, people tend to connect themselves with the nostalgia trigger'.

Travellers, visitors, and tourist are also the subject of cultural geography enquiry, as they have become relevant in urban landscape and in urban planning thanks to the higher mobility offered today. The role of the outsider is a major argument discussed in large part by both humanistic geography and new cultural geography. Nowadays, the outsider is mostly thought in Tuan's vision of the outsider, somebody who comes from another place with new meanings and influence into a new environment or society. This role corresponds partially with that of tourists or 'visitors' (Neilson, 2015). Contextualizing tourism in Jackson's research, a result is ethnic tourism. Yang (2010) wrote in this sense that "tourism exerts a powerful influence shaping cultural images of ethnic groups in many countries", meaning that outsiders have determined meanings and representations, often based on prejudice and stereotypes, which diverge from the original ones given by the local societies. The advantage for the city is surely an economic one, but conditions like social isolation and exclusion of those ethnic groups are not resolved or improved.

One last example derives from Jackson's research on sexuality and resistance, in particular, all those studies regarding 'gay places' in urban spaces. The research in this field has largely increased and it includes the territorial manifestations of pride which the LGBTQ+ community conducts to promote their rights and, in geographical concerns, their right to the city. Duncan, Johnson, and Schein (2004) write about the meaning and forms proposed in the Gayfest, which they define an illustration of how sexuality and gender can shape human geography, working as a loud acknowledgement of the group's existence. It is therefore a way to increase their visibility. Cefai (2013) includes in her text three main concerns she found in Maps of Meaning: gay geography, feminism, and visibility. She studies the visibility of the lesbian community through medias – especially

films and tv shows – and then relates the issue of visibility to the politicisation of space in geographies of sexuality and gender.

There is no doubt that Jackson and Cosgrove have deeply impacted geographical and non-geographical studies, opening up to a conception of multidisciplinary network that has become today so wide that it is sometimes difficult to define the border between different disciplines.

CONCLUSIONS

The present dissertation has demonstrated how the four works have been relevant in fostering research – internal and external to geography – regrading especially the notions of space, place, and landscape. Their popularity is the same today – if not intensified – after decades from their publication, as seen in the previous graphs representing the citations in academic research texts, in which even an increase is highlighted in the number of references made in diverse fields of knowledge. Texts such as these ones have indeed proved to be so progressive that they even could pass as newly published ones 40 or 50 years later, both for the topics they discuss and the approaches they apply to their research.

The paper agrees with Koops and Masa's (2017) argument of a still-existing deep bond between place and identity which are intertwined in a process of co-production, that consists in place being the 'raw material' for the creation of identity. Even though mobility and the globalized world may have changed our perceptions, forms of attachment and emotions towards places and home, such places are still indispensable to the creation of self-identity and recognition. As they have suggested, rootedness and feelings of attachment for the local can still exist in diverse networks and changing intensities, involving a different connotation of home and dwelling which might be more 'fluid'. Indeed, one's identity may flow between multiple places – hence with an emotional difference between home and house – and be influenced by different place lived-experiences.

Although globalization and increased mobility have brought major changes in society, further studies must certainly focus on the relation between these kinds of fluidity and the emotional attachment to place people still feel the need of. Such studies could take many forms and directions: addressing the physical aspects of place, considering the social, political, and economic situations of places and the consequent formation of power structures within it from different points of view, or examining the communities' influence in creation and modification processes in place.

These latter proposals are related with the issues brough up by British new cultural geography which has also influenced the American branches of the discipline, spreading the awareness in the field of the need of understanding the changing times, the

development of place related studies in their contemporary context profoundly affected not just by culture and traditions, but also by subtle political strategies and new lifestyles. They have thus brought the political into cultural studies.

Some examples have been shown of how current works are directed towards an interdisciplinary approach to place studies, starting from the theoretical and practical notions and challenges proposed by the four authors. Drawing themselves from other disciplines as anthropology, sociology, psychology, or art the two sub-disciplines have expanded their theorization of the construction of place and identity, involving cultural and social traits such as, among many others, ethnicity or race, gender, social class, and spatial context.

The contexts of application of these notions and theories are possibly endless. Even though a coherent and unified cultural agenda does not seem to have been delineated to date, the research which has originated from these sources is something that the four authors must be proud of. Their works has indeed accomplished their main task, which is not to impose a path to follow, but rather to propose ideas and approaches to be tried and studied through empirical research in a wide network of academic text. They have paved the way for a new generation of geographers engaged with human presence in space and as agents in reciprocal processes of creation of significance with places. Even the criticisms they have raised are important for having caught the attention of more scholars on the themes they wanted to explore. Critical works is exactly what they were asking for in the first place, a discipline which digs into the details and particularities of the world, not avoiding the problematics afflicting it.

A final consideration is that these four texts may even be considered to serve as 'metageographical' texts, as by proposing routes and plans for the discipline to develop, they implicitly describe what they assume as the state of their current discipline itself, a transversal examination of its strengths and weaknesses to address, and its potential for advancement.

All their work is thus purely and wholly dedicated to Geography.

RIASSUNTO

La tesi si concentra sulle due principali sub-discipline della Geografia Umana che si sono sviluppate nel corso della seconda metà del secolo scorso, ovvero quella umanista e la cosiddetta 'new cultural geography'. Lo scopo è quello di 'mappare' lo sviluppo delle idee e delle tematiche fondanti della geografia del XX secolo, quali *space*, *place*, e *landscape.* Il metodo scelto per affrontare questo lavoro è una ricerca e revisione bibliografica riguardo a quattro testi considerati classici della disciplina, due per ognuna delle due sub-discipline.

Lo sviluppo della geografia umana a partire dagli anni '70 circa si suddivise in tre fasi principali. La prima, tra gli anni '70 e l'inizio degli anni '80, è caratterizzata dall'introduzione di un paradigma qualitativo e multidisciplinare, una geografia fenomenologica detta geografia umanistica. A partire dalla metà degli anni '80 cresce invece l'interesse verso l'aspetto sociale del *landscape* e delle sue comunità, un approccio 'antipositivista' che sorge in conseguenza al 'cultural turn', la nuova geografia culturale. Propone infatti nuove prospettive sociali e relazioni spaziali derivanti da nuove tendenze nella disciplina. L'ultima fase è quella che maggiormente contraddice l'approccio della geografia culturale fino a quel momento studiata: la geografia 'non rappresentativa', la quale critica l'utilizzo delle rappresentazioni come strumento di studio principale a discapito delle esperienze stesse. Le prime due correnti vengono poi analizzate più dettagliatamente nei primi due capitoli della tesi, mentre nel terzo ci si concentra più in generale sulle maggiori critiche, evoluzioni o commenti su di esse.

La geografia umanistica, prende probabilmente il proprio nome da due radici diverse: da una parte l'influenza delle branche umanistiche sviluppate in altre discipline come la psicologia o la sociologia; dall'altra, è sicuramente influente la corrente umanista diffusa in Italia nel XV secolo che ha lavorato sulla centralità dell'uomo e la sua capacità di influenzare il mondo esterno con le sue conoscenze ed esperienze. Partendo da basi che già andavano sviluppandosi negli anni precedenti, si esplicita negli anni '70, grazie anche ad una sua formalizzazione data dalla proposta di definizione di Yi-Fu Tuan. Nel 1974 Tuan pubblica un articolo in cui, distaccandosi dalle scienze più classiche che fino a quel momento avevano guidato la disciplina, concettualizza un'idea di geografia rivolta verso lo studio della condizione umana in relazione con la natura e lo spazio. Il punto di partenza è infatti quello di segnare una distinzione rispetto ai metodi più scientifici e quantitativi

che non esplorano la sfera umana e la sua influenza sullo spazio. Il pensiero umanista consiste nel creare una geografia costruita dall'uomo per l'uomo, introducendo approcci descrittivi con basi filosofiche, in particolare dalla fenomenologia e dall'epistemologia che riguardano la sfera soggettiva ed esperienziale, in questo caso all'interno di un determinato spazio. Le cinque tematiche principali evidenziate nella ricerca umanistica sono: la conoscenza geografica, lo spazio e il territorio con la loro identità e il senso di attaccamento che essi possono creare, l'affollamento e la privacy, la vivibilità e gli aspetti economici ed infine l'aspetto religioso e la ricerca di significato da attribuire allo spazio.

Il professor Tuan e il professor Edward Relph sono due delle personalità più influenti della sub-disciplina, avendo loro proposto definizioni e nozioni diventate fondamentali per la ricerca geografica. Tra le loro pubblicazioni, sono certamente di rilievo rispettivamente 'Space and Place: The Perspective of Expereince' (tradotto come Spazio e luogo: una prospettiva umanistica) e 'Place and Placelessness'.

Place and Placelessness viene pubblicato nel 1976 con lo scopo di attivare l'interesse nei confronti dell'esperienza spaziale personale all'interno degli studi geografici, modernizzando tematiche e metodi di studio. I punti più importanti della sua analisi riguardano la relazione tra spazio e luogo, le componenti e le caratteristiche delle esperienze, l'identità dei luoghi e delle persone all'interno dei luoghi stessi ed infine il sense of place e l'attaccamento dell'essere umano nel processo di creazione dei luoghi. Il fondamento filosofico è fenomenologico, ovvero riguarda la condizione umana di vivere e conoscere un luogo e i relativi significati nell'esperienza spaziale. Lo spazio è quindi concepito come un continuum alle cui estremità giacciono esperienza e pensiero astratto e caratterizzato da specifici tipi di spazio lungo di esso.

Una condizione del luogo è quella locativa, ma non è sufficiente o necessaria per la sua essenza. La sua forma fisica però, rappresentata dal landscape, mantiene il suo spirito e la sua possibilità di essere descritto. Inoltre, il luogo è in stretta relazione con il tempo, in quanto è soggetto al cambiamento o alla persistenza dei propri elementi nel corso del tempo, condizionando così le esperienze e le forme di attaccamento nei suoi confronti. In questo modo si lega allo sviluppo e al declino delle culture da cui è vissuto, diventando anche una rappresentazione del tempo presente che però mantiene elementi per il ricordo del passato. Il legame con il luogo che deriva dalle esperienze personali e di gruppo

definisce luoghi specifici che possiedono un particolare significato, come per esempio la casa, percepita come centro vitale e parte della propria identità.

Come le persone, i luoghi hanno una propria identità che è il risultato di tre componenti: l'ambiente fisico statico, le attività che si svolgono al suo interno e i significati conseguentemente acquisiti. Il luogo è infatti strutturato in uno schema egocentrico, ovvero avente l'uomo al centro di uno spazio percettivo all'interno dei quali si posizionano come interni o esterni con diverse intensità secondo l'interesse o l'intenzione messe nell'esperienza. L'identità del luogo persiste fino a che rimanga plausibile e quindi permetta di sviluppare al suo interno interazioni sociali e mantenere i significati attribuiti. Una delle principali innovazioni proposte da Relph è proprio la possibilità di perdita di questa identità, cioè una geografia caratterizzata dal fenomeno di *placelessness*, un'attitudine volta a soddisfare criteri di funzionalità, superficialità e conformità. Sono infatti le caratteristiche principali di un fenomeno definito come un ambiente che manca di significato, relazioni umane, radici e simboli.

Relph spiega il passaggio da place a placelessness studiando i livelli di *awareness*, di coscienza nelle persone del *sense of place* e del processo di creazione dei luoghi. Il *sense of place* è la capacità di riconoscere i luoghi e le loro identità e può, come già anticipato, esprimersi in diversi gradi di coscienza, e di conseguenza autenticità o inautenticità. L'inautenticità è una caratteristica che favorisce l'insorgere del *placelessness* allo stesso modo delle contemporanee tendenze di globalizzazione, che permettono una maggiore mobilità, lo sviluppo di consumi e culture di massa e una elevata standardizzazione del landscape, soprattutto urbano. Già negli anni '70 Relph nota un contesto urbano che definisce un present-day landscape connotato da razionalità e in un certo senso persino confusione data dall'artificialità delle sue forme.

Concludendo, Relph auspica una prospettiva in cui l'esperienza si fondi nuovamente su atteggiamenti e tendenze autentiche e coscienti, piuttosto che su semplici pianificazioni razionali. L'obiettivo del suo lavoro è stato infatti quello di trovare un approccio adatto alla progettazione e creazione degli ambienti da vivere evitando procedure strettamente matematiche e conferendo invece significati profondi. In questo modo, secondo lui, sarà ancora possibile creare luoghi autentici e non abbandonarsi al dilagarsi dei fenomeni di placelessness.

Space and Place (1977) presenta invece un lavoro esplorativo più profondo sulla dimensione esperienziale e sulle differenze tra space e place. La sua trattazione si basa sia su approcci filosofici, sia su un'analisi percettiva attraverso i cinque sensi, lo sviluppo umano, a partire dell'infanzia, all'interno dello spazio e la conoscenza fisica del mondo esterno. Le tre tematiche principali affrontate sono quindi: gli aspetti biologici dello sviluppo umano rispetto allo spazio/luogo, le relazioni tra space e place e l'esperienza o conoscenza della dimensione spaziale.

Per quanto riguarda l'aspetto biologico, esamina le abilità percettive ottenute grazie ai cinque sensi, dichiarando vista e tatto come le uniche in grado di fornire da sole una percezione spaziale completa, definendole quindi 'facoltà spazializzanti', mentre gusto, udito e olfatto sarebbero solo delle integrazioni per arricchire quelle percezioni. Inoltre, , introducendo ricerche psicologiche e pedagogiche, studia la crescita dei bambini e lo sviluppo delle loro abilità spaziali a cui mano a mano si aggiunge la conoscenza spaziale. La conoscenza spaziale è un'articolazione simbolica in parole ed immagini, ovvero uno strumento mentale per rafforzare l'abilità spaziale. Conoscenza e abilità (tra cui il senso dell'orientamento) funzionano in simbiosi permettendo al corpo di muoversi liberamente nello spazio.

Lo spazio è definito come 'termine astratto per un complesso insieme di idee' influenzato da aspetti ed attitudini culturali, al cui centro è sempre posizionato l'uomo. È strutturato secondo un determinato vocabolario più o meno condiviso da tutte le culture: la linguistica è infatti uno degli strumenti che Tuan utilizza per comprendere il valore di alcuni elementi spaziali.

Nell'esame delle tipologie spaziali, in cui delinea una suddivisione tra spazio mitico, pragmatico e architettonico, definisce come lo spazio diventi luogo ogni volta che gli viene attribuito un significato, diventando parte di esperienze intime, sia individuali che di gruppo. I luoghi intimi sono posti di riposo e cura, come la casa, e sono visti da Tuan come stazioni, pause per soddisfare i propri bisogni. Riconosce poi una relazione profonda con la dimensione temporale. Anche il luogo ha una relazione con il tempo, in quanto la mente umana è in grado di elaborare movimenti sia spaziali che temporali, a volte fondendoli ed evocandoli contemporaneamente. Una possibile lettura di questa relazione vede il tempo come movimento e il luogo come pausa nella corrente temporale. Un *goal* può essere quindi inteso sia come obiettivo temporale che spaziale. Secondo

un'altra lettura invece, 'serve tempo per conoscere un luogo', suggerendo la necessità di una tempistica per poter sviluppare un sense of place, abbastanza da poter rendere la conoscenza del luogo inconscia e familiare. Di conseguenza, le esperienze del luogo possono essere percepite in maniera differente da persone diverse perché la percezione del tempo dipende dalla fase di vita e dalla condizione della persona stessa. Infine, secondo una terza opzione, il luogo ha la capacità di rendere il tempo visibile attraverso la sua funzione memoriale, in quanto il luogo è per Tuan concepibile come oggetto e in quanto tale può congelare il tempo.

Le domande poste da Tuan sono provocazioni che mirano alla crescita della coscienza riguardo le relazioni che l'essere umano vive quotidianamente e che possono essere esaminate secondo differenti punti di vista, derivanti dall'integrazione di un approccio multidisciplinare.

La nuova geografia culturale è il risultato del cultural turn presentatosi negli anni '80 del secolo scorso, generatosi per cambiare la direzione della disciplina verso l'inserimento di aspetti sociologici e storici nella ricerca, con il fine di ottenere rilevanza in un più ampio settore accademico. La branca britannica degli studi geografici, influenzata da discorsi femministi, post-strutturalisti e marxisti, prende le distanze dalla scuola americana guidata da Carl Sauer e considerata ormai 'antiquaria' per i suoi metodi e vengono approcciate pertanto le scienze sociali. Le due opere scelte per l'analisi sono 'Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape' di Denis Cosgrove e 'Maps of Meaning: an Introduction to Cultural Geography' di Peter Jackson, tra le colonne portanti della corrente.

Cosgrove conduce un'indagine storica riguardo al landscape che lui definisce un processo ideologico, un modo di vedere il mondo, un prodotto sociale. Egli da una rilettura in chiave marxista, analizzando il contesto sociale partendo dai cambiamenti storici, primo fra tutti il passaggio da feudalesimo a capitalismo. Per studiare questa trasformazione non solo economica, ma sociale e sovrastrutturale, parte dal contesto del paesaggio italiano rinascimentale, utilizzando il landscape e l'arte paesaggistica come mezzi per una maggiore comprensione della realtà del tempo, soprattutto analizzando un contesto rurale. Analizzando il concetto di classe e le strutture che compongono la società, affronta il tema dell'egemonia, del controllo sociale e spaziale e le conseguenti forme di resistenza. Tra le forme di controllo e razionalità descritte, si trova la città ideale, la quale

risponde rigorosamente alle caratteristiche e regole dell'umanesimo rinascimentale e quindi l'imposizione dei valori delle classi sociali più elevate su quelle inferiori. Come esempio sceglie Venezia, punto di riferimento sia per il suo valore urbano, che per il suo valore artistico, soprattutto nell'epoca di palladio, grande maestro che influenzerà l'arte architettonica di tutta Europa e persino quella americana. Venezia e il mondo Fiammingo si distinguono inoltre per l'utilizzo delle doti artistiche nell'utile pratica della cartografia.

Il suo excursus temporale termina nel mondo contemporaneo, in cui la tecnologia ed il progresso hanno cambiato nuovamente non solo le strutture ed i sistemi sociali, ma anche i paesaggi stessi, diventando prevalentemente urbani.

La geografia ha nel frattempo guadagnato il suo status di disciplina intellettuale a sé, non solo interessata nei processi naturali, ma anche nello studio delle azioni umane e perciò impegnata sia negli aspetti fisici e sociali della Terra. In questo contesto, la sua speranza per il futuro è quella di trovare nuove relazioni con lo spazio che vedano il landscape come un prodotto sociale, un modo di vedere che si proietti sul territorio attraverso le due forme particolari.

Jackson fa un ulteriore passo rispetto a Cosgrove prendendo in considerazione una pluralità di culture e quindi molteplici landscapes, rifiutando una visione unitaria della cultura. Ritiene che la disciplina abbia bisogno di un aggiornamento e che debba considerare nuove problematiche sociali diventate ancor più di rilievo al giorno d'oggi. Apre il suo approccio ad un possibile materialismo storico influenzato da idee marxiste che abbia una visione critica della cultura rispetto a tematiche sociali, politiche ed economiche.

Le relazioni e strutture di potere sono tra le maggiori preoccupazioni della ricerca di Jackson, il quale esamina attentamente le ideologie e le forme di egemonia (come intesa di Gramsci 'il potere della persuasione') riscontrabili nella società e quindi le forme di dominio e subordinazione e di imposizione di valori culturali oltre che normativi.

La linguistica ed il linguaggio ritornano come temi forti, elementi fondanti dei processi storici come rappresentazioni e strumenti dei processi stessi. Anche questi sono profondamente influenzati dal contesto sociale nel quale vengono inseriti e considerati. Funzionano anche come mezzi di resistenza, dimostrando le implicite relazioni di potere. La resistenza può avere diverse forme o rituali e può anche acquisire particolari forme territoriali, acquisendo più o meno rilevanza in base a che livello possono preoccupare le

autorità. Consiste infatti nel cercare soluzioni simboliche o rituali nuove a problemi che non possono o non si riesce a risolvere in campo politico ed economico. Per decodificare questi simboli sono necessarie conoscenze di base derivanti da diverse discipline come per esempio l'etnografia o l'economia e pertanto Jackson sostiene uno sviluppo della materia in termini di interdisciplinarità.

Uno dei problemi riscontrati nell'analisi delle forme di controllo, è quello della visibilità, in quanto è essa a rappresentare la problematica maggiore per le autorità. Infatti le autorità tendono solitamente a 'segregare' le forme di resistenza, ribellione e in generale diversità. La visibilità viene ritenuta una criticità dalla governance perché da una percezione di mancanza di sicurezza e controllo che potrebbe preoccupare la parte più elitaria della popolazione. Questo non succede solo a livello storico, ma anche nel mondo contemporaneo, accentuando le forme di segregazione spaziale e di stereotipizzazione dell'outsider, soprattutto in termini di etnia, classe, sesso e altri fattori di discriminazione come la sessualità. Quello che Jackson intravede è l'insorgere di una geografia della resistenza, che studia le parti discriminate della società, inserendosi in un discorso di classe. Propone quindi riflessioni sulle tematiche femministe e del trattamento della donna, su tematiche di sesso e sessualità ed infine razzismo, dimostrando quanto i soggetti appartenenti a queste categorie discriminate siano entrati a far parte dell'agenda politica anche per la loro distribuzione territoriale. Ciò che emerge sono strutture patriarcali e di eredità imperialista, soprattutto in territorio europeo dove la colonizzazione è parte integrante della storia fino a tempi recenti. La geografia come disciplina accademica aveva anche partecipato alla diffusione di tali ideali fino al secolo scorso e per questo motivo, secondo Jackson, dovrebbe lavorare per studiarne le conseguenze e possibili 'riparazioni' al giorno d'oggi.

Il finale del libro racchiude un'agenda che l'autore propone per stimolare la futura ricerca in ambito della geografia culturale, suggerendo un'idea più inclusiva e pluralista di cultura da interpretare. La sfida che lancia alle future generazioni di ricercatori è quella di studiare la costituzione spaziale della società mediata dalla cultura e, in senso più ampio, dalle componenti politiche. Ma soprattutto, prospetta una geografia aperta alla collaborazione e alla multidisciplinarietà che permetta un esame della molteplicità delle culture presenti e le loro manifestazioni nella società e nelle relazioni di potere sottostanti.

L'ultima parte della tesi, tratta delle riletture e valutazioni contemporanee dei quattro classici, revisionando materiale bibliografico che include critiche e commenti alle sub-discipline e agli specifici lavori.

La geografia umanistica viene criticata principalmente per il suo metodo non verificabile e misurabile scientificamente, così come da accademici appartenenti a diverse scuole di pensiero: femministi, marxisti e post-strutturalisti. Essi si concentrano sia sui metodi che sulle tematiche di ricerca, essendo in un momento di evoluzione della materia che vuole includere maggiormente discorsi di disuguaglianza e diversità, politica e potere, e modernizzazione del concetto di place.

Place and Placelessness, viene riconosciuto come testo storico e chiave per lo sviluppo della geografia umana, ma viene anche contestato, oltre alle già esposte idee radicali, per il suo favorire il place e l'attaccamento rispetto alle più moderne tendenze di placelessness e mobilità. In questo senso, ad essere criticata è la nozione di *insideness* che parrebbe essere favorita in difesa degli aspetti di identità locale.

Space and Place invece è stato oggetto di studio per la sua componente filosofica che riesce però a rimanere una linea guida senza imporre una determinata idea o ideologia. Tuan non è interessato alla presentazione definitiva di una tesi per la disciplina, ma il suo intento è quello di proporre spunti metodologici e tematici per un avanzamento della geografia umana.

La geografia umanistica non si è soffermata sulle relazioni di potere che incidono sui luoghi, risultando ad altri studiosi quasi troppo radicata nel passato. Nonostante ciò, è stata in grado di ispirare nuova ricerca sull'interazione con lo spazio ed i significati attribuiti ad esso. L'interesse per la corrente colpisce anche settori esterni, come studi psicologici o neurologici sul benessere legato allo spazio vissuto, studi di sviluppo urbano e architettonico, o studi sui concetti di space and place da applicare nel contemporaneo mondo digitale.

Per quanto riguarda la nuova geografia culturale, la critica maggiore arriva dalla geografia 'non-rappresentativa', che vorrebbe riportare l'attenzione sull'esperienza e sulle pratiche, distaccandosi dalle rappresentazioni. Il problema di tali accademici giace però nella contraddizione dell'inevitabilità di interfacciarsi con le manifestazioni concrete delle esperienze e pertanto più recenti correnti di pensiero hanno prospettato una

geografia che punti sulla cooperazione in favore di un 'culturally geographical approach' per lo studio spaziale.

Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape ha sollecitato l'avvento di una tendenza critica neo-Marxista, fornendo un linguaggio adatto ad approcciarsi in modo critico allo studio dello spazio. Le principali carenze dipendono invece dalla posizione privilegiata da cui Cosgrove conduce i propri studi. Ironicamente, viene dimostrato come l'autore rispecchi e riproponga in qualche modo le strutture egemoniche che egli stesso critica. Infatti, il suo lavoro sembra concentrarsi su una versione piuttosto elitaria della cultura. In ogni caso, Cosgrove è capace di bilanciare nei suoi studi la tradizione e l'innovazione. L'aspetto forse più rilevante che gli viene riconosciuto è l'aver mantenuto dei tratti della geografia fisica nei suoi progetti di geografia umana, spingendo per l'unificazione della disciplina.

Maps of Meaning viene elogiato per essere in prima linea nel cultural tur, un'introduzione chiara alle teorie e pratiche della geografia culturale, una sorta di dichiarazione programmatica di cosa la geografia cultural era, è e come dovrebbe evolvere. Costruisce un progetto intellettuale, una rete per costruire una concettualizzazione materialista delle azioni sociali, dei processi spaziali e delle relazioni di potere.

I due pilastri della corrente hanno perciò stimolato lo sviluppo della materia verso aspetti sociali e politici, allargando anche in questo caso i loro orizzonti verso un'ampia multidisciplinarità. Gli esempi di nuova ricerca riportati riguardano infatti progetti di pianificazione urbana e branding urbano, studi sul turismo, in particolare sui turisti come outsider che partecipano alla vita cittadina, ed infine numerosi studi sulla sessualità e sulle dimostrazioni territoriali delle comunità LGBTQ+ per il loro 'right to the city'.

Il crescente interesse per le relazioni umane con lo spazio ha coinvolto e ispirato, come esposto nei paragrafi precedenti, anche filoni di ricerca esterna alla disciplina geografica, come per esempio il mondo delle scienze sociali come la psicologia, la sociologia, o la demografia. La popolarità dei quattro lavori oggi è rimasta la stessa, se non aumentata, denotando la loro importanza a livello accademico e concettuale. La possibilità di applicazione delle nozioni e concetti che propongono è potenzialmente infinita, dato che, come da loro stessi auspicato, hanno suscitato interesse nella ricerca interdisciplinare, spianando la strada per le generazioni future nel settore ed oltre.

Un'ultima considerazione vede infine i quattro testi come testi con funzione 'metageografica', parlando essi della geografia stessa e della sua condizione, un'esaminazione trasversale delle sue forze e debolezze ed eventuali punti da sviluppare per un ulteriore miglioramento.

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