

Essay: Humanist Perspective of Space and Place

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the humanistic perspective of space and place in the field of behavioural Human Experience, Cultural geography. Drawing on a range of disciplines, including biology, culture and architecture, the author explores the complex relationship between humans and their physical environment. The importance of place, the interplay of space and place, the influence of experience and cultural factors, and the role of the built environment in shaping social roles and relationships are explored. The article also highlights the importance of preserving historical structures and offers directions for future study in geography and ethics.

INTRODUCTION

In his seminal work on behavioural geography, Tuan is concerned with the meaning of places and their relationship to human experience. He highlights places as focal points where basic biological needs such as food, shelter, recreation and reproduction come together. Tuan emphasises the duality of space, which he sees as both a source of security and freedom. Space is associated with openness, possibility and a sense of liberation, while places are limited, constrained and fraught with a sense of security.

A fascinating aspect of Tuan's study is his investigation into why places acquire meaning. He assumes that humans possess a symbolic impulse and that cultural context shapes the meaning attributed to particular places. Tuan acknowledges the validity of this approach, but also argues that universal features that might reflect the human condition have been overlooked. He provides geographical examples of common characteristics found in different places, such as local customs and social expectations. In addition, Tuan emphasises the role of culture, arguing that it can either harmonise with or disrupt human nature.

Biology emerges as a central theme in Tuan's article. Using the example of intuition and infant responses, he explains the interplay of space, place, boundaries and movement within these boundaries. The relationship between place and space is presented as crucial, with each influencing the other. This intertwining informs individuals of openness, freedom and the potential threats in the universe, thereby evoking feelings of security and stability.

The article also looks at the broad spectrum of human experience and knowledge. Tuan argues that experiences can be conceptualised and symbolically represented, and that people have an intimate and conceptual familiarity with their homes, cities and countries. Artists serve as mediators for these nuanced experiences. Tuan argues that people's experiences motivate them to understand, express and reflect on reality. Consequently, people embody their emotions in the spaces they inhabit, and the physical environment facilitates such experiential encounters. Therefore, a place remains a particular kind of inhabitable entity.

A compelling aspect of the article is the exploration of the relationship between the body, personal relationships and spatial values. Tuan introduces the principle of spatial organisation, in which the position and structure of the human body play a crucial role. In addition, interpersonal relationships are also considered, suggesting that people shape their spaces in accordance with their biological needs and social connections. As the human body occupies space in different positions, humans strive to conquer, control and manage the universe, with space occupation symbolising success and order.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Review Tuan's "Space And Place: Humanistic Perspective" (1979).

The author impressively links philosophical concepts with architectural interpretations. For example, the prevalence of towering buildings symbolises the claim to dominate the skyline. These architectural structures reflect social stratification through spatially hierarchical plans, design and decoration. When

we observe the trend of skyscrapers in major cities such as New York City, Dubai and Shanghai, it is clear how these structures visually assert power and create a sense of awe and hierarchy. Motel design and architectural style are also discussed, highlighting the concepts of confinement and spaciousness. In recent years, more and more boutique motels have emerged that focus on an open and airy design with large windows, open spaces and natural elements. These designs cater to the modern traveller's desire for freedom and relaxation, creating a tranquil atmosphere amidst the busy cityscape. Tuan claims that space is perceived as quantifiable and distinct, with a strong association between space and a sense of freedom. In Western societies, space is a metaphor for freedom. The concept of open space is being explored, denoting an area without recognised patterns of human meaning - a blank canvas waiting for humans to give it meaning. This trend can be seen in the emergence of public parks and green spaces in urban environments, where people seek a break from the confines of the built environment and connect with nature.

Another noteworthy point is that place can only be truly understood in contrast to open spaces. In search of seclusion, people are often drawn to remote places that are devoid of human experiences, feelings and meanings. This trend is evident in the popularity of remote accommodation, such as eco-lodges, which are tucked away in pristine natural landscapes and offer individuals the opportunity to switch off and find solace in unspoilt landscapes. The article also looks at intimate experiences of time and place in experiential space. Tuan points out that "things and places quickly lose their meaning if the right people are not present" This coincides with the contemporary trend of experiential tourism, where travellers seek authentic and meaningful experiences by immersing themselves in the local culture and interacting with local communities. These experiences create a deeper connection to a place and leave lasting memories.

When asked about the importance of preserving historic structures, Tuan emphasises aesthetic, moral and spiritual stimulation. This is in line with the global heritage conservation movement, which seeks to protect and restore historic landmarks and buildings. For example, UNESCO World Heritage Sites such as the Taj Mahal in India or the Acropolis in Greece are protected not only for their historical value, but also for the inspiration they convey and their cultural significance. Tuan's insightful analyses pave the way for future study in the fields of geography and ethics. Advanced study could explore the impact of technology on humanistic perspectives of space and place by examining how virtual environments affect our perceptions and experiences. In addition, study could look at the ethical aspects of urban planning and design, and how space and place can be designed to promote inclusion, sustainability and social well-being. Tuan's work thus highlights the importance of space and place in shaping human experience and the role of the built environment in influencing social dynamics. By examining related trends and examples, we can better assess the relevance of his ideas in contemporary contexts and gain insights for future study and practical applications in different fields.

Table 1. Overview of Key Concepts and Their Explanations

Concept	Explanation
Space	Refers to the physical dimensions and extension of an area or environment.
Place	Describes a specific location with unique attributes, meanings, and experiences associated with it.
Humanistic Perspective	Approach that emphasizes the subjective experiences, emotions, and cultural significance of individuals in relation to space and place.
Behavioral Geography	Field of study that examines the relationship between human behavior and the physical environment.
Cultural Significance	The importance and meaning attributed to a place or space by a particular culture or society.
Built Environment	Man-made surroundings, including structures, architecture, and design, that shape and influence human experiences.
Experiential Space	The personal, subjective encounters and interactions individuals have within a particular space or place.
Preservation of Historic Structures	The act of protecting and conserving historical buildings and landmarks for their aesthetic, cultural, and historical value.
Geography and Ethics	The exploration of ethical considerations, responsibilities, and implications within the field of geography.

To sum up, Tuan's study offers a humanistic perspective on space and place, illuminating the multi-layered relationships between people and their physical environment. By exploring the biological, cultural and experiential dimensions, Tuan shows how places are imbued with meaning and influence human behaviour. The article links philosophical concepts, architectural interpretations and considerations of time, providing valuable guidance for future study efforts in geography and ethics.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This essay on behavioural geography and the humanistic perspective of space and place has shed light on the complicated relationship between individuals and their physical environment.

The main conclusions from this study include:

- 1) Places are of great importance to individuals because they are centres of felt values, fulfil biological needs and provide a sense of security and freedom.
- 2) Culture plays a crucial role in shaping the meaning of places, either in harmony with or in opposition to human nature.
- 3) The interplay of space and place highlights their interdependence and how they shape individuals' perceptions of openness, freedom and threat in the universe.
- 4) The built environment, including architectural design, has the potential to influence human emotions, perception and social roles.

So, based on the above, several recommendations can be made:

- 1) Urban planning and design should take into account the humanistic perspective to create spaces and places that foster a sense of well-being, identity and community.
- 2) Cultural conservation measures should prioritise the preservation of historic structures and landmarks to maintain aesthetic, moral and spiritual appeal.
- 3) Future study should explore the impact of behavioural geography in different cultural contexts and how different cultural factors influence the perception and use of space and place.
- 4) Collaboration between geographers, architects and urban planners can lead to the development of sustainable and people-centred environments.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

- 1) Although this essay has provided valuable insights into behavioural geography and the humanistic perspective of space and place, it is important to recognise its limitations. Some areas that should be further explored are:
- 2) Exploring the role of technology and virtual spaces in shaping behaviour and perceptions of place.
- 3) Exploring the influence of socio-economic factors on the meaning and use of space and place in different communities.
- 4) Exploring the impact of globalisation and migration on the cultural meaning of place.
- 5) To conduct longitudinal studies to observe changes in behaviour and relationship to space and place over time.

THANK- YOU NOTE

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