

Article

Life-Space: Is It Anywhere Outside Our Minds?

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Abstract: This paper explores the intricate relationship between our personal experiences of space and the autobiographical nature of our geography. Our geographical awareness is profoundly shaped by the places we have been, encompassing a rich tapestry of places such as childhood homes, educational institutions, vacation spots, and bustling city streets. These spaces become imbued with personal memories and significance, forming the backdrop of our individual narratives. While these experiences are inherently personal and unique, they are also shared in a broader sense. This duality of personal and communal experience adds layers of complexity to our understanding of space. Furthermore, our experiences of space are deeply intertwined with the passage of time.

Keywords: mind; body; representation; memory; anticipation; epochs of life; everyday life

1. Introduction

Our geography is not just a static map; it is a living, temporal narrative that weaves together the threads of our experiences. Ultimately, our experiences of space are deeply autobiographical, intricately intertwined with the passage of time, and central to our sense of identity and belonging (Weintraub, Karl J. "Autobiography and Historical Consciousness." *Critical Inquiry* 1, no. 4 (1975): 821–848. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1342851> Accessed on 10 December 2023) [1]. For a more complex analysis of geography and the projected understanding of personal identity, cf.: Boland, Philip. "SONIC GEOGRAPHY, PLACE AND RACE IN THE FORMATION OF LOCAL IDENTITY: LIVERPOOL AND SCOUSERS." *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 92, no. 1 (2010): 1–22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40835383>. Accessed on 10 December 2023 [2]. Morgan, Thomas L. "The City as Refuge: Constructing Urban Blackness in Paul Laurence Dunbar's 'The Sport of the Gods' and James Weldon Johnson's 'The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man'." *African American Review* 38, no. 2 (2004): 213–237 [3]. Dundon, Alison, and Susan R. Hemer. "Ethnographic Intersections: Emotions, Senses and Spaces." In *Emotions, Senses, Spaces: Ethnographic Engagements and Intersections*, edited by Alison Dundon and Susan R. Hemer, 1–16. University of Adelaide Press, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.20851/j.ctt1sq5wpt.4>. Accessed on 10 December 2023 [4]. Our experience of space is inherently autobiographical (Danahay, Martin A., and Elsie F. Mayer. "Introduction." *CEA Critic* 57, no. 1 (1994): 1–8. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44377127>. Accessed on 10 December 2023) [5]. As the "self" is not unidimensional but rather incoherent and fragmentary, autobiography can no longer be a record of one's life for historians to interpret but rather the object of literary interpretation. "It seems more appropriate to ask, "What isn't autobiography?" (p. 1)). On the one hand, our awareness of geography is finely attuned to the places we have personally encountered. These locations encompass a spectrum, from our childhood homes (including our own, those of our parents, uncles, and grandparents) to city dwellings, vacation retreats, coastal getaways, and rural abodes. Additionally, we include in this realm the residences of our friends and the educational institutions we have attended, such as schools, high schools, and universities. These places serve as pivotal landmarks within the landscape of our personal life stories. The situation we are in is not understood as the sum of the "I" plus the "world." We are



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in the world, which means we obtain all the content of the world life structured as in a “totum analyticum,” i.e., the whole is more than the sum of its parts. If we analyze the detail of the detail, we can lose sight of the big picture. The space of geography is not the space of geometry. How can we reduce the corner of a tabletop to an angle, the side of a tabletop to an edge? So, each point in geography also corresponds not only to location in latitude and longitude but also to the experience of the place and the appropriate place for each thing. For example, if we consider the cutlery in the drawer, the suit in the closet, and the car in the garage, the objects a (cutlery), b (suit), and c (car) are not just inside. The “in” expresses a quality. The same is true if you say on the phone: “I’m in the classroom” or “I’m in the restaurant.” What is meant is the following: I am teaching or taking classes, I am eating. When each of us is in a place, the meaning is in what we are doing there, even when we are not doing anything there. The meaning is never “positional,” objective, or substantive, but verbal: being there. (Schmidt, Silke. “Life Writing Theory: Constructing Life, Claiming Authenticity.” In *(Re-Framing the Arab/Muslim: Mediating Orientalism in Contemporary Arab American Life Writing)*, 47–136. Transcript Verlag, 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1xxs1s.5> Accessed on 10 December 2023 [6]). The whole is more than the sum of its parts. If we analyze the detail of the detail, we can lose sight of the big picture. cf.: GRIFFIN, FRED L. “In Search of Lost Time in Psychological Space.” *American Imago* 70, no. 1 (2013): 69–106. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26305042>. Accessed on 10 December 2023 [7].

On the other hand, while this experience is profoundly personal and inherently non-transferable, we also inhabit these spaces alongside others. Take, for example, the notion of “our parents’ house,” “a bustling city street teeming with people,” or “a crowded beach.” (For a contrast between an interpretation of the meaning of geography as a natural science and as a philosophical exegesis of its object, cf.: Harrison, R.T., and D.N. Livingstone. “Philosophy and Problems in Human Geography: A Presuppositional Approach.” *Area* 12, no. 1 (1980): 25–31. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20001528>. Accessed on 10 December 2023) [8]. These locations assume a communal dimension that extends beyond their individual significance.

Furthermore, any associations tied to these spaces are intrinsically temporal. Expressions like “summer vacation spot” are closely intertwined with the season of summer itself. In this context, summer transcends its mere role as a season and becomes interwoven with memories of childhood summer vacations. Similarly, phrases like “where high school was” and “high school time” or simply “my high school years” carry temporal connotations that influence our comprehension of these spaces.

In essence, each point on the map bears more significance than mere geographical coordinates; it holds profound meaning within our autobiographical geography. Our interaction with these spaces is not passive but active. They define and mold us, immersing us in a historical narrative that is uniquely our own.

Our geography cannot be reduced to mere coordinates, latitude, and longitude. Instead, it actively locates us within the intricate fabric of our lives. We might even venture to say that it permeates us, unfolds around us, and is temporally vibrant. All our spaces enfold us, creating a distinctive ambiance that becomes an integral component of our individual narratives.

2. Biographical Time Elements

2.1. A Place in Our Memory

A location undoubtedly holds a repository of memories (Our access to the past is not only or primarily that of theoretical, intellectual memory. In nostalgia or melancholy, and in the memory of past times, we are thrown into the past even without wanting to be, and the experience is involving and affective. For trauma as access to the past, cf.: Sheffer, Jolie A. “Recollecting, Repeating, and Walking Through: Immigration, Trauma, and Space in Mary Antin’s *The Promised Land*.” *MELUS* 35, no. 1 (2010): 141–166. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40587214>. Accessed on 10 December 2023) [9]. Nevertheless, it

is not confined solely to what is familiar or what we recall about it. Furthermore, even recollection does not precisely replicate past events. Different experiences can unfold within the same locales. The concept of a 'holiday,' for instance, may change its physical setting, but the essence of the experience remains consistent. Additionally, it is possible for holidays to be perceived differently each year, even when spent in the same place. This phenomenon is akin to one's lifelong residence, the school we attended, the sports we practiced, or the places we have dwelled in, where various experiences shape the overall narrative.

2.2. *A Place in Our Future*

A place brings anticipation. We also anticipate our vacation destinations. Places hold potential, but they can also provoke anxiety. (There are a lot of futures that every human being has let go of and left in the past. Past futures can also come true if we work for them. But today is the tomorrow of yesterday. The experience of the present is conditioned by the future, not only in the sense that we react by fleeing from a threat and chasing pleasure. When nothing seems to be expected, when we are "stable," there is a neutral anticipation of the future of promise and threat. But that does not mean there is no future time to be taken as present and past when it has come and gone. Cf.: Pels, Peter. "Your GUTS Tell(s) You It's Time: How an Anthropology of the Future May Look at Stress." *Etnofoor* 32, no. 1 (2020): 93–108. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26924852>. Accessed on 10 December 2023 [10]. Geography as a historical science, Dennis, Richard. "History, Geography, and Historical Geography." *Social Science History* 15, no. 2 (1991): 265–288 [11]. Often, we must wait to see how things unfold. This anticipation occurs when we move, change schools, relocate within a town or to another country, or switch gyms or sports clubs. Basically, whenever a change is on the horizon, there is that moment of anticipation when we try to predict what is to come.

Much of this happens in our minds as we mentally project ourselves into imagined scenarios, attempting to foresee the future. Anticipation is not merely intellectual; it is emotionally charged. It is filled with expectation. When we travel, we might not even want to plan extensively or think about what lies ahead. Anticipation involves a proactive aspect, envisioning scenarios and emotions. Even before settling in a new city, the prospectus of it already projects us onto its streets. Like all living things, man is future-oriented. A goal can be a means or an instrument, just as it can be a final goal for the time being. Whatever you go toward can be a goal or another link in the chain, which is the starting point for another execution sequence. If we go on vacation to a place we do not know, the goal is to have a vacation, rest, recreation, and have fun. But we need to know where the hotel is, where we are going to eat, how to get to the beach, where to exercise, where to go walking in the evening. "The prospecting organism must construct an evaluative landscape of possible acts and outcomes" (Seligman et al. 120) ("The prospecting organism must construct an evaluative landscape of possible acts and outcomes" (Seligman et al. 120). Seligman, Martin E. P., Peter Railton, Roy F. Baumeister, and Chandra Sripada. "Navigating Into the Future or Driven by the Past." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 8, no. 2 (2013): 119–141. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44281864> Accessed on 10 December 2023) [12].

2.3. *A Place in Our Lives*

Our geographical experience, in autobiographical terms, possesses both a collective (family and society) and a historical structure. Even when we find ourselves alone at home or in an isolated place, we invariably carry within us a multitude of individuals. (Heidegger analyzes this paradox. A person can be alone in a place without the presence of another human being and still be "accompanied" by someone. A holiday home can have no members. The house is full of the presence of past lives. Soon, it will be full of people who are about to arrive. We can be in the middle of the crowd and be utterly alone, without companionship. (Heidegger. 1927, pp. 120–121) Heidegger, M. *Sein und Zeit*. Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1986) [13].

In an academic setting, one's life revolves around the campus, departmental buildings, administrative offices, classrooms, library, cafeteria, gyms, recreational facilities, markets, shopping areas, churches, hospitals, and more (Teachers in Distress. Cf.: Reininger, Michelle. "Hometown Disadvantage? It Depends on Where You're From: Teachers' Location Preferences and the Implications for Staffing Schools." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 34, no. 2 (2012): 127–145. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23254107>. Accessed on 10 December 2023 [14]. Carrying the house on your back: Guarnizo, Luis Eduardo. "The Economics of Transnational Living." *The International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 666–699. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30037753>. Accessed on 10 December 2023) [15]. Initial impressions often stem from interactions with people who serve as practical gateways to our academic endeavors. Similarly, various activities have their own essential individuals and places. Shopping districts, leisure zones, places of worship for the faithful—each has its unique set of locations to know, including drugstores and hospitals for health concerns.

Upon settling into a location where one plans to spend a significant period, we begin to grasp aspects we had previously envisioned and play out scenarios. We finally meet in person the individuals we have corresponded with via email, seeking their guidance to navigate our new surroundings. However, unforeseen situations inevitably arise as we immerse ourselves in the environment. We cannot possibly predict everything that will unfold a year in advance while still anticipating the future, whether it be in Lisbon or across the Atlantic.

3. A Place in Time

3.1. *Running into Places*

For the purpose of analysis, let us examine our connection to the existential space that encompasses our lives. What do we mean when we refer to 'where we live'? Different epochs or moments in time offer distinct perspectives on this concept. Our relationship with our hometown consists of multiple layers, yet the mental and emotional concept does not always align with the physical expanse of the city.

Consider, for instance, the street of our childhood or the location where we spent our vacations. When we recollect these places, they emerge in our minds with immediacy. Often, they appear virtually, possessing a vividness and impact that surpasses the perceptual world, even if the physical houses we resided in no longer exist. We are transported there as if we share a contemporaneous connection with experiences from long ago, facilitated by a form of telepathic or mediumistic resonance. The geographical space housing these places may overlap with our current surroundings, with the place itself aligning precisely with where we are now. We conceive intelligent actions as directed by an evaluation of future prospects rather than solely being influenced by past events. (Seligman et al. (2013) [12]. This framework allows for the incorporation of diverse research areas, ranging from animal learning theory to rational choice theory, from empathy and emotions to motivation and control, and from retrospective memory to future projection. We contend that emphasizing the importance of a forward-looking perspective in the human mind offers greater predictive and explanatory power in understanding actions than a framework that solely attributes actions to past influences (Seligman et al. (2013, p. 129)) [12].

3.2. *The Same Place with Different Functions*

3.2.1. Present Memories of Past Perceptions

The place where I am currently writing these words has undergone a transformation into a home office. It once served as the living room in my grandparents' house (Yi, Zeng, and Wang Zhenglian. "Dynamics and Policy Implications of Family Households and Elderly Living Arrangements in China." Edited by Nicholas Eberstadt. *China's Changing Family Structure: DIMENSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS*. American Enterprise Institute, 2019. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24663.5>. Accessed on 10 December 2023) [16]. The transition from my current experience to my childhood recollections does not solely rely on memory. It is not always as active as it is at this moment; it can be passive, marked

by a subtle shift in time. Suddenly, without a clear reason, I find myself slipping back in time. I see my grandfather sitting in his favorite chair, listening to the radio. Then, just as abruptly, I return to the present. The vividness of the remembered scene rivals that of my current perception.

This mental passage acts as a portal, bridging the realms of perception and memory. It unlocks the horizon of the past, much as it opens the door to the present. But in the past, did anyone anticipate that the living room of my grandparents' house would one day become my office? Was there an inkling of my current circumstances in the past, a possible future? But where does the future originate? The future of this space does not align with the future of my current perception. The future of perception essentially crystallizes the way I perceive things now. However, the future of life possesses its own dynamic. This becomes most apparent when we recall childhood memories. Those children from the past always remain children in our recollection, even though they have grown into adults, much like myself.

There is a facet of things that remains unchanged, as we once perceived them in the past. Yet, simultaneously, there is a transformation in the essence of things, akin to how time alters the appearance of people. I might not be able to perceive this space again, and it is possible that this space may not even be accessible in the future.

3.2.2. Present Anticipation of Future Perceptions

Anticipation represents a projection of mental possibilities that perpetually resides within us. It is akin to going to bed each night with the expectation of waking up in the same place. When we leave our homes in the morning, we anticipate returning to them by day's end. Even when days, weeks, months, or years pass, we hold an expectation of reuniting with the people we left behind (Children waiting for marshmallows (Mischel, 1966), pigeons pecking more for larger future rewards versus smaller immediate ones (Mazur & Logue, 1978). Kahneman and Tversky (1979) describe how people simulate future states of the world in order to guide their decisions in the present. (Fukukura et al., 2013, p. 146) Fukukura, Jun, Erik G. Helzer, and Melissa J. Ferguson. "Prospection by Any Other Name? A Response to Seligman et al. (2013)." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 8, no. 2 (2013): 146–150. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44281866>. Accessed on 10 December 2023) [17].

This form of waiting, which remains anonymous and passive, is an enduring presence in our lives. It is a subject of memory, yet it results from our expectations or the waiting we passively assume. We seldom actively contemplate its persistence. However, another noteworthy aspect comes to the fore when we return to places. We might perceive them as being exactly the same, but they appear different to us. Depending on the day, the season, and our age, houses, streets, and neighborhoods can appear both unchanging and ever-changing. Our geographical world expands when we venture out, a centrifugal movement radiating from a central point. Conversely, there is a centripetal force, a pull to return. We find ourselves returning every time we venture out, or sometimes, we may resist returning. Nevertheless, the possibility of return must exist, even if it remains unfulfilled. Thinking about the future is a crucial part of how we achieve our goals. Scientists have proposed that our brains use a special system involving the hippocampus (a brain region) and other parts of the brain to imagine future events, especially when it comes to navigation or finding our way around. We conducted a study using advanced brain imaging to see if this is true in humans. It is like our brains create a map for the future journey. (This activity in the hippocampus helps us plan and imagine future events, especially when we are trying to reach specific goals. Cf.: Brown, Thackery I., Valerie A. Carr, Karen F. LaRocque, Serra E. Favila, Alan M. Gordon, Ben Bowles, Jeremy N. Bailenson, and Anthony D. Wagner. "Prospective Representation of Navigational Goals in the Human Hippocampus." *Science* 352, no. 6291 (2016): 1323–1326. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24748099>. Accessed on 10 December 2023) [18].

Conversely, we may consistently seek novelty, yearn to meet new people, explore new places, and engage in different activities. We acknowledge that novelty awaits us for a time. However, it is also possible to encounter novelty in a repetitive manner. For example, flight attendants, airline pilots, and frequent travelers may be familiar with numerous countries worldwide, their airports, seaports, and hotels, yet how many of them have genuinely experienced those places? Martha Muchow's quest for the conditions of experiential possibility in child-centered habitats allows us to perceive our own geographical experience from an existential perspective. Our geography remains open to new possibilities.

Returning to our places of origin does not necessarily entail physical relocation; it can involve a transformation in our experience. We may revisit the beaches of our childhood, finding them devoid of their previous emotional impact, yet at times, these places can rekindle our past sensations. We sense the metamorphosis within them. Conversely, we may recognize the need for change, but change is not solely driven by physical relocation. Our personality does not necessarily transform with a change of location; we can undergo profound changes while staying in one place. The question arises: how can we expose ourselves to this potential for change?

4. A Space Bubble in a Passageway: Von Uexküll's "Umwelt" (World Environment)

We inhabit a kind of space bubble traveling through time. Each bubble is a unique perspective, or rather, our existence resides within an ever-changing corridor of time and through time, as articulated by Jakob von Uexküll. Between us and any form of content, there exists a structured space with a complex network encompassing it. Each point of perception aligns with a corresponding point on the object. However, the way each person perceives and interprets these points can vary, and it can also change for the same individual over time. What gives rise to this variation, and how does it evolve?

Our personal geography is fundamentally shaped by our emotional responses, which define our emotional experiences. The finite nature of our lives, experienced as a continuous countdown, plays a significant role in shaping our emotional responses. We do not exist in isolation within a confined space; we coexist with others, and our relationships with them are ever-present and influential.

The prefix 'um' typically conveys the notion of 'around.' However, when we delve into the concept of the Um-Welt, it transcends a mere two-dimensional spatial idea. It is not simply about depicting living organisms, be it plants, animals, or humans, with circular natural fields essential for survival, marked with perimeters that delineate the boundary zones beyond which they would venture outside their comfort zone ("[a]n oak tree that is populated by many animal subjects and is called upon in each environment-world to play a different role. Since the oak tree also occurs in various human environment-worlds [. . .]. In the completely rational environment-world of the old forester, [. . .] the oak felled by the axe is nothing more than a few fathoms of wood, [with a] precise measurement. [The] same oak in the magical environment of a little girl for whom the forest is still inhabited by gnomes and goblins [is] completely different. The little girl is startled abruptly, when the oak looks at her with an evil face. The whole oak becomes a dangerous demon. [. . .] For the fox who built her den among her oak roots, the oak became a solid roof that protects her and her family from weather occurrences. [. . .] The oak also presents a protective shade in the owl's environment. Only this time it is not its roots that are completely out of its world-environment, but the powerful branches that serve as a protective barrier. For the squirrel, the oak tree with its rich branches, which offer comfortable stepping stones, takes on a climbing tone, and for the songbirds, who build their nests in the distant branches, it offers the necessary supportive tone. [. . .] In the ant's environment-world, all the remaining oak disappears behind the split bark, whose valleys and heights become prey fields for the ants. [. . .]The beetle looks for food from under the bark that he himself loosens. That is where it lays its eggs. [. . .]His larvae pierce their way under the shell, where, protected from the dangers of the outside world, they continue to eat their food. [. . .]But they are not entirely protected. For not only does the woodpecker, which shreds the bark with its

powerful beak, pursue them, but also the wasp destroys them. The wasp with its sharp sting penetrates the hard oak wood (in all other world-environments), as if it were butter, to inoculate it with its eggs. If we were to summarize all the contradictory qualities that the oak exhibits as an object, only chaos would result. And yet they are only parts of an established subject itself which is the bearer of all the world-environments and which everyone cares for not recognized by all the subjects of those world-environments and never likely to be recognized by them." Uexküll and Kriszat, *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen: Ein Bilderbuch Unsichtbarer Welten* 1934, pp. 93–94) [19].

Consider, for instance, how a beach comprises an extensive mound of sand or how a swimmable sea is formed from a vast volume of water. Similarly, think about a house constructed from a cold and inhospitable concave rock. In this context, the environment signifies a surrounding world, an ambient realm that does not adhere to neatly nested circles or rigidly drawn boundaries, demarcating the familiar and habitable 'here' from the unfamiliar and challenging 'hereafter.' The 'hereafter' represents a departure from the everyday norm, where one feels at ease, akin to a fish in water, into the 'hereafter' of the extraordinary, where one feels like a fish out of water (Pred, Allan. "Social Reproduction and the Time-Geography of Everyday Life." *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 63, no. 1 (1981): 5–22 [20].

The hinterland embodies the comfort zone—inviting, hospitable, and a pleasant place to reside. Beyond this affective boundary, which lacks fixed or established physical demarcations, lies a realm that extends outside the comfort zone. Here, it is unwelcoming, unfamiliar, potentially perilous, and disconcerting. One becomes an outsider, alienated from the familiar.

In the framework outlined by von Uexküll, the environment resembles a globe or a soap bubble within the larger morphological structure of the foam. Any content is viewed through the lens of soap formed from the multiple bubbles comprising the foam.

5. Our Home in the Middle of Our Street: Martha Muchow's Sociological Interpretation of Umwelt

5.1. Martha Muchow's Sociological Interpretation of the World Environment

The world in which we live is not something that can be reduced to the three-dimensional world of mathematics. In the course of our lives, the places in which we live are located in completely different "worlds." Each age has a world of its own. In her analysis of the world of children, Martha Muchow shows that the living space in which children 'live' is not the mathematic space that is the object of cognition. The space we exist in is the space of the city, the urban fabric, at least for people born and living in the city; this includes the overall characteristics and extent of the environment that children encounter daily or are familiar with and specific features of the environment they interact with and the activities they engage in within those locations.

Detailed field studies of specific places where children gather and how they utilize those spaces. Muchow analyses two distinct zones: 'play space' and 'roaming space'. These zones likely represent areas where children engage in play and explore their surroundings. (Wohlwill et al., 1985, p. 205). (Wohlwill, Joachim F., Seymour Wapner, Phil Schoggen, and Alexander W. Siegel. "Martha Muchow, 1892–1933: Her Life, Work, and Contribution to Developmental and Ecological Psychology." *Human Development* 28, no. 4 (1985): 198–224. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26765062>. Accessed on 10 December 2023) [21].

The world we inhabit cannot be solely reduced to the three-dimensional realm of mathematical geometry. Throughout our lives, the spaces we dwell in exist within entirely distinct "worlds." Each stage of life presents its unique world. In her examination of the world as perceived by children, Martha Muchow highlights that the living environment in which children 'reside' differs from the mathematical space that serves as an object of cognitive study. The space we occupy pertains to the city or the urban environment; at the very least, it is the space shared by individuals born and living in the same city.

This expansive cityscape is, in essence, a “fiction” (Fiktion) (Muchow et al., 2012, p. 157) (Muchow, M., Muchow, H.H., & Behnken, I. (2012). *Der Lebensraum des grossstadtkindes*. Beltz Juventa) [22]. There is not a single universal city nor a singular, overarching urban space that applies universally in terms of size, significance, or frequency.

It is readily apparent that each individual possesses their unique city because they are the carriers of their own spatial experiences. The existential geography of an individual can vary widely or remain narrow in scope. An individual may reside in diverse locations or stay in the same place throughout their lifetime. There exists no space independent of a subjective perspective (“There is no such thing as ‘space independent of the subject’ (von dem Subjekt unabhängigen Raum gibt gar nicht)” (ibid.)). City life not only differs structurally between children and adults but also becomes evident in our own personal experiences over the course of our lives.

5.2. *There Are as Many Cities as There Are Individuals*

Each individual possesses their unique city. The number of cities in existence is equal to the number of people, and distinctions stemming from factors such as gender, age, social class, education, talents, and personal characteristics consistently fall behind the concrete, individual existence. The significance of a place evolves over time, for this potential for transformation is inherently embedded in the essence of every human being. Furthermore, each person who enters our lives brings about changes within us, consequently altering the manner in which we perceive our existential geography. Similarly, when someone departs from our lives, a similar transformation occurs. Whether these individuals were in close proximity or located in different corners of the world, we cease to visit places we once frequented with them. The essence of a place is an intricate construct of social experience. Even landscapes devoid of human habitation serve as a canvas upon which humanity leaves its imprint—a testament to the absence of humans. *As we have interpreted, space is immersed in a deep emotional affective atmosphere.* (“Space and affect, the material and representational constantly work together to appropriate the grammar of belonging and attachment to the national state.” (Ashraf, Kazi, Jyoti: 2010, p. 60) [23]. “Hometown thus is not merely a sentimental production but a sedimentation of the social practices, the rhythms of regular life, and their occasional peaks and ruptures. The practice of the everyday, in large part, is characterised by a repetition, the reproduction of habits and rhythms that are most often anonymous and unselfconscious until they are disrupted” (op. cit., p. 63). ASHRAF, KAZI K, and JYOTI PURI. “Hometown: The City in the Postnational Landscape.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 45, no. 41 (2010): 59–64. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25742180>. Accessed on 10 December 2023) [23]. Attempting isolation does not negate the presence of others, as our desire to distance ourselves from them invariably generates an interconnectedness. Is not a dwelling infused with the traces of past occupants who no longer reside within its walls? The concept of exclusively geometric space is an illusion. Geometric space, both historically and perpetually, remains inexorably linked to existential space. When we deconstruct a living room into parallelepipedal prisms, planes, lines, and points, we find only geometry as long as we isolate its constituent elements. However, a dining room is more than a mere prism with parallelepipedal contours. What we perceive within this specific experience, such as when we inhabit a house without ascribing functional divisions to each room, extends to our comprehensive spatial experience. We dwell within an existential geographical realm, not one confined by geometric parameters.

6. Objective Real Places Are Autobiographically Appropriated—The Concept of Reconfiguration

Experience represents a profound transformation of our perceptual reality, at times even an alteration of reality itself. It is notable that the street from our childhood shares the same geographical coordinates on a GPS device as the beach where we spent our youthful vacations. Nevertheless, the ‘meaning’ associated with these two locations is markedly distinct. While that street and beach may physically persist, our perception reveals that they

are not the same entities. According to the perspective articulated by Martha Muchow, a city encompasses the entirety of spatial existence. In essence, space in its totality constitutes our existential geography—a complex tapestry of places where we have traversed and where our existence is inherently intertwined, entailing the locations that house our life's narrative. Whether our life truly defines our 'geography' is a question that eludes a simple response, one that extends beyond the scope of this discussion.

Diverse temporal epochs give rise to distinct locales. How did our perception of space evolve during our childhood and youth? During childhood, a child's world is centered around the street where they reside. It is from this point that their living space extends, radiating outward as a central hub. The inner layers of this spatial configuration take on a ring-like structure characterized by a higher density of activity. Conversely, the peripheral regions exhibit centrifugal tendencies, with activity dispersing further from the core. The degree of density within these spatial configurations is influenced not only by proximity and distance but also by the frequency of visits to specific locations (the 'density' of such arrangements being influenced by multifarious factors). Spatial theories cannot be drawn intellectually only. We need to understand how we are in a given space. So when we say to somebody on the iPhone, "I'm about to begin classes," it means I am in a school room on the faculty campus. When I say, "I'm in traffic" it means I am late. We are "spatial" beings. The preposition "in" has as many meanings as the pragmatical meaning it assumes for any given situation. Knoblauch et al. (2020) [24]. apply the operative concept of "Re-figuration" for spatial research in social theory. However, we can apply it to every situation and circumstance. They focus on the processes of change in spaces and the conceptual and diagnostic challenges involved in reconfiguring these spaces. Their central concept is 're-figuration,' a fundamental concept related to both space and time. Re-figuration is an operative concept exploring the relationships between spatial forms and mediatization, translocalization, and polycontextualization, thereby highlighting trends in the dynamics of change. 'Re-figuration' describes various socio-historical processes of spatial change (Knoblauch, Hubert, and Martina Löw ad loc. Therefore, when we sit down in the same place for many hours, we do the following in order to respond to any situation: sitting at the desk to write, watching movies, and eating. We reconfigure any place through time. Any locale we are in allows reconfiguration. On the other hand, we can reconfigure any place to read: in the waiting room, the coffee shop, or the railway station.

Also, in the realm of online spaces, some are easily accessible and those that present barriers to access. The criteria for determining accessibility can vary significantly. This variance is influenced by geographical factors, shaping the web's inclusivity or exclusivity. In our diverse life experiences, we engage with a multitude of spaces. These spaces include educational institutions, sports arenas, language learning centers, family residences, vacation destinations, and places of travel, among others. While some of these places may exist in close proximity to each other, forming contiguous spaces, others may be more distant both in terms of geography and time. For example, our high school might be located next door to our grandparents' house, which existed in a different era during our childhood but became our high school at a later point in time. Alternatively, these spaces may be entirely disconnected, with significant physical and temporal gaps separating them. We might recall instances when we traveled hundreds of kilometers every weekend to reach a particular destination. In some cases, individuals and families adopt nomadic lifestyles, akin to diplomats, teachers, doctors, and priests, constantly moving between distinct spaces. These varying spatial configurations and their relationships with time shape our experiences and interactions with the world around us.

The interpretation and analysis of physical spaces often hinge on the principle of symmetry, a fundamental concept that holds true in geographical spaces. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that this principle may not apply universally in other types of spaces, referred to as non-geographical spaces. Within these

non-geographical spaces, characterized by attributes such as time, network connectivity, and cost considerations, we encounter the concept known as “distance asymmetry.” Distance asymmetry signifies that the distance between two objects may not be the same when traveling from one to the other and then back. One location is closed to the public and only open during opening hours, but it is open to employees. We wait in the waiting room for our name to be called to enter the office. Everyone is sitting in the room waiting for the class to start. Everyone is in the gym, waiting for training to begin. They let us into the house, but someone won’t come down to talk to us. The street is an open space, you can cross from one sidewalk to another, drive, walk, run down it. But in order to play, there needs to be a real or imaginary “other”. Otherwise, it is a meaningless landscape. (DUSEK et al.) [25] For the important operative concept ‘re-figuration’ applied to various socio-historical processes of spatial change, cf.: Knoblauch, Hubert, and Martina Löw. “The Re-Figuration of Spaces and Reconfigured Modernity—Concept and Diagnosis.” *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* 45, no. 2 (172) (2020): 263–292. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26897908>. Accessed on 10 December 2023 [24].

Distance from one’s place of residence, in tandem with the regularity of visits to specific locales, interacts with natural boundaries, such as rivers and mountains, contingent upon the urban context. This principle also applies to latency periods. Various places fall within the spectrum of visitation frequency, ranging from those frequented almost daily to those seldom ventured into, encompassing spaces that are either inaccessible or publicly accessible and frequently frequented, such as parks and beaches.

The city’s spatial dynamics are not solely defined by centripetal forces. At the end of the day, the inclination is to return home, reflecting an understanding of the expanses beyond immediate view and the realm of the unknown. However, when we venture into unfamiliar territory, another pole of spatial engagement is formed. This interplay between concentric, centripetal, and centrifugal radiations emanates from the core family nucleus.

It is important to note that the term ‘radiation’ is not a complete metaphor, as it can inadvertently evoke a two-dimensional perspective. Rather, it better resembles an atmospheric phenomenon akin to the concept of climate. In essence, climate envelops us, influencing not only our physical sensations, such as bones and calluses but also our mental states, which can fluctuate in response to weather conditions. Analogously, we encounter a diverse array of environments, and it is the presence of individuals that imbues these places with their distinctive character. Ultimately, it is people who shape the essence of a place.

7. Biographical Structure of Space—The Street We Live in

The same street holds distinct meanings and experiences for children and adults, reflecting the existential organization of space. Typically, the central layers of this spatial construct form a concentric ring around the core living area and are tightly interconnected. In contrast, the peripheral layers radiate outward in all directions and are similarly tightly woven. The degree of this “density” is influenced by various factors (Cf.: Dandonoli, Patricia, Jack Demick, and Seymour Wapner. “Physical Arrangement and Age as Determinants of Environmental Representation.” *Children’s Environments Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (1990): 26–36. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41514715>. Accessed on 10 December 2023: [26]. From a cognitive development perspective, we do not expect children to develop a mature geometric understanding of space, guided by an internalized Euclidean reference system, until they reach the concrete operational stage (around 7 years old). This perspective raises several important questions. Specifically, are there general differences in how individuals of different ages, including adults, represent large-scale spatial arrangements? Are there distinctions in how people represent unfamiliar real-life spatial arrangements compared to artificial setups in a laboratory, for instance? This study investigates whether there are variations in individuals’ representations when dealing with environments that involve

interconnected parts, such as social areas, versus those where dimensions are isolated in a controlled setting. Lastly, we will examine if there are differences between how adults and children represent space based on their cognitive development. Throughout their investigation, they considered the most effective measures for assessing individuals' comprehension and representation of large-scale space. (Dandoly et al., 1990, p. 26)) [26].

One fundamental factor is the distance from the surrounding environment, although this is not universally applicable to all cases. Another critical determinant is the presence of natural boundaries, which can significantly influence spatial organization.

Evidence suggests that children's perceptions and engagement with the street differ from those of adults. For children, the street possesses a unique quality of "opening up," particularly when they are joined by a friend or someone of the same age. Even if a child is initially alone on the street, they often await the arrival of others to initiate play. The arrival of companions signifies the opening of a space that was previously unexplored. When alone, a child may experience boredom or resort to inventing games with imaginary companions, engaging in conversations with them as if they were physically present (The interpretation and analysis of physical spaces often hinge on the principle of symmetry, a fundamental concept that holds true in geographical spaces. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that this principle may not apply universally in other types of spaces, referred to as non-geographical spaces. Within these non-geographical spaces, characterized by attributes such as time, network connectivity, and cost considerations, we encounter the concept known as "distance asymmetry." Distance asymmetry signifies that the distance between two objects may not be the same when traveling from one to the other and then back. One location is closed to the public and only open during opening hours, but it is open to employees. We wait in the waiting room for our name to be called to enter the office. Everyone is sitting in the room waiting for the class to start. Everyone is in the gym, waiting for training to begin. They let us into the house, but someone won't come down to talk to us. The street is an open space, you can cross from one sidewalk to another, drive, walk, run down it. But in order to play, there needs to be a real or imaginary "other". Otherwise, it is a meaningless landscape. Cf.: DUSEK, Tamás, Lívia ABLONCZY-MIHÁLYKA, Petra KECSKÉS, and Zsuzsanna PÁLFFY. "TIME-SPACE ASYMMETRY VERSUS TIME-SPACE SYMMETRY." *Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management* 17, no. 4 (2022): 68–81. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27181036>. Accessed on 10 December 2023) [25].

However, when parents call the children inside, and everyone departs from the street, it seems to "vanish" or "close" momentarily, existing only in anticipation of "tomorrow." This dimension of time carries the promise of reopening, and what reopens is not a physical entity but rather an avenue for activity. It is the act of play that serves as a portal, channeling imagination and creativity, effectively transforming the street into a playground, a battleground, and a realm where children hold sway (For the relationship movement-space rather than time-space, cf.: Merriman, Peter. "Human Geography without Time-Space." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 37, no. 1 (2012): 13–27. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41427925>. Accessed on 10 December 2023) [27].

For adults, streets primarily serve as conduits to essential destinations and activities driven by pragmatic life organization and business imperatives. The structural layout of living spaces is heavily influenced by the demands of daily life, shaped by considerations such as work commitments and personal agendas. Depending on the nature and urgency of these agendas, individuals may traverse streets to attend to various matters, ranging from transportation and administrative tasks to refueling at gas stations, dining at restaurants, or seeking entertainment options. Modern commercial hubs and specialized districts further enhance social and communal life by providing a wide array of opportunities for interaction.

In contrast, for children, the landscape of streets is intimately tied to their immediate needs and experiences. Their sphere includes schools, streets for play, locations housing playgrounds, parks, swimming pools, family members' homes, and the residences of friends. Within this context, individual preferences emerge—some may find solace in

the familiarity of home (Empirical research in environmental psychology has provided support for the special role of home in peoples' minds, identifying the characteristics that distinguish the idea of "home" from merely a place of residence. Qualities such as community, privacy, self-expression, personal identity, and warmth are used to describe homes, but not mere residences. (Graham et al., 2015, pp. 346–347) [28]. For connecting home psychology to the broader field, cf.: 351: "Broadly speaking, there are two main ways to change one's environment. First, changes can be brought about by manipulating features of the space itself, sometimes temporarily (e.g., playing some soothing music) and sometimes more permanently (e.g., changing the flooring in one's living room). Second, changes can be brought about by moving to a new environment with preexisting features likely to facilitate a desired state. [...] Specifically, personality (e.g., traits, values) and other individual differences (e.g., age, gender, health) dictate psychological and physical parameters that are better suited to some spaces than to others; thus, extroverts are better suited than introverts are to places that facilitate lively socialising. In spaces like the kitchen, where a varied (but limited) set of ambiances were desired, different people may use the same space to meet different needs." (Graham et al., 2015, p. 351) [28]. Graham, Lindsay T., Samuel D. Gosling, and Christopher K. Travis. "The Psychology of Home Environments: A Call for Research on Residential Space." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 10, no. 3 (2015): 346–356. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44290084>. Accessed on 10 December 2023 [28], while others may opt for remote work or telecommuting, seeking the solitude of their abode. Concurrently, there are those who gravitate toward outdoor activities, group interactions, or solitary pursuits. Consequently, individuals' relationship with space is characterized by varying degrees of comfort and discomfort.

For some, the street and neighborhood can extend the warmth of home, fostering a sense of affective closeness. The threshold at which spaces transition from hospitable to inhospitable remains somewhat ambiguous and may vary from person to person. Conversely, when individuals undergo significant life changes, such as switching schools, gyms, residences, streets, cities, or experiencing shifts in family dynamics, workplaces, or occupations, it is natural for these transitions to mark turning points in their spatial experiences and perceptions. (The most central layers (die zentralen Schichten) are ring-shaped (ringförmig). They are located around the housing site. These zones have a tight mesh. The peripheral zones radiate centrifugally in all directions, loosely and loosely (strahlenförmig nach allen Richtungen verlaufen und meist locker gefügt sind). (Martha Muchow.1935: 158) [22].

The street serves as a secondary abode, an exterior realm uniquely cherished by the child. This affection and pride are not easily comprehensible from an impartial standpoint. Objectively, this street lacks any distinctive attributes or superior qualities when contrasted with its urban counterparts. Its aesthetics may not be remarkable, with monotonous gray buildings and an absence of greenery restricting glimpses of the sky to a mere sliver amidst the clouds. Nonetheless, the street possesses an innate beauty. It embodies 'home' in its purest sense. Within its confines lie companionship, an intimate familiarity with every nook and cranny, a profound understanding of the neighborhood, and an ability to navigate not only within the block but also across the parish, district, and the entire cityscape. Home, as a concept, emerges as a subjectively constructed entity intricately tied to environmental factors. Consequently, the sense of home thrives and thrives only through the lived experience of street life. That which is most vivid and prominent is that which one contends for, and in this context, we ardently protect our home. The assailants who threaten it are strangers. When two streets, whose residents never intersect, engage in a fierce altercation, they transform into two homelands, two abodes locked in conflict. In these moments, what is subjectively perceived as home assumes an objective dimension, visible through the prism of the state's authority (Martha Muchow, 1935. pp. 98–99.) [22].

8. Space and Time Plasticity—The Case of the Shopping Mall

The orienting schema, potentially ingrained in us from childhood, remains an enduring foundation in our lives. This schema, while not exclusively spatial, primarily embodies affective dimensions, shaping our entire lived experience and persisting throughout our existence, be it a mere decade or a millennium. The same physical location can lose its sense of familiarity and emotional resonance, transitioning into an intolerable and unwelcoming space. In such instances, the drive to survive compels individuals to conquer and adapt to what may seem inhospitable, even if they never revisit it. Conversely, a neutral locale has the capacity to metamorphose into a hospitable one. (The complex structure of the relationship between the mental mode of being and the physical mode of being is described through the fourth dimension or the third space. A theoretical, cognitive, and strictly geometrical approach to space is transformed through time and movement, the notion of proximity and distance, interiors and exteriors, entrances and exits. Michelis, P.A. "Space-Time and Contemporary Architecture." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 8, no. 2 (1949): 71–86 [29]. Every space, locality, can be approached through what Bhabha calls the "third space" Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 50 (Kalua, F. (2009), n. 41, p. 350) [30]. According to Bhabha, there exists a unique concept called the "Third Space" that emerges at the intersection of representations of space (governed by established structures and concepts) and representational space (involving symbols and personal experiences). This Third Space arises when two fundamentally different systems of representation coexist within the same physical or shared space. Over time, these systems blend and separate within this shared space, giving rise to entirely new kinds of spaces referred to as Third Spaces. Kalua, Fetson. "Homi Bhabha's Third Space and African Identity." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 21, no. 1 (2009): 23–32. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40647476>. Accessed on 10 December 2023) [31].

For children, places exhibit remarkable plasticity; a street or sidewalk can become a racetrack for miniature cars, while a road transforms into a bicycle race circuit, and a square serves as a soccer field. The playground assumes paramount importance in the world of children, serving as a constitutive element of their environment. In contrast, in the realm of adults, the concept of a playground becomes nearly obsolete. Instead, main streets hold great significance as hubs for commerce, transportation, sightseeing, and leisurely strolls. Yet, from the child's perspective, these main streets function primarily as 'transit spaces,' serving as transitional zones that are traversed and left behind (Muchow et al., 2012, p. 159) [22].

Young individuals tend to congregate in specific areas of the city where they can meet peers of the same age or frequent certain beaches more than others. Family-friendly beaches are less appealing to younger crowds. Nightlife destinations, such as bars and clubs, evolve over time in accordance with changing trends and fashion.

The city's structural layout is essentially a reflection of the interests and preferences of its inhabitants. Athletes, for instance, are drawn to locations where they can train, while those inclined toward the arts center their lives around places offering music lessons, among other activities. It is worth noting that a single young person may have a range of interests, resulting in a diverse life map that can vary in density and extent, depending on their individual passions and needs.

The shopping mall is an object with a contextual referent that takes on varying significance depending on the visitor. Among adults, distinctions arise between those who work in stores within the mall and those who visit as customers. Furthermore, a visit to a store within the mall can serve different purposes, such as leisurely strolls, window shopping, or catching a movie.

However, in the streets, there exists a nuanced difference in meaning for individuals of all age groups, including children, young people, adults, and seniors (As analyzed by Martha Muchow in the context of the shopping mall "Karstadt" in Hamburg. Cf.: Muchow et al., *Der Lebensraum des grossstadtkindes* 2012, pp. 147–156) [22]. In this discussion, we aim to emphasize the analytical framework that can be applied to various objects, extending

beyond shopping malls to encompass diverse streets in different locations (urban centers and suburbs), varied commercial and specialized districts (ranging from outdoor markets to indoor venues), and distinct city centers (each catering to different interests such as arts, finance, or fashion).

The shopping mall embodies a realm of adventure, as evidenced by the potential for playful activities on escalators. It serves as a place for independent exploration, complemented with information services designed to assist newcomers in finding their way. Furthermore, the mall offers a diverse range of services, including a 'citizen's store' housing post offices, banks, travel agencies, pharmacies, offices, fitness centers, and more.

The mall functions as a backdrop for experiences and expeditions, as observed in the context of 'Erlebnisse' and playful escapades. Its essence lies in the potential it holds, a potential shaped by the demands of its visitors. The outcomes, whether positive or negative, hinge on meeting those demands. Visitors seek what they desire, and their enjoyment depends on their success in finding it. For young people, it can serve as a meeting place, a social hangout, or even a venue for romantic encounters.

Moreover, the mall exists not just as a passive entity but as a dynamic organism, offering a wide array of spaces for diverse activities, akin to the vibrancy of streets, neighborhoods, and entire cities (It offers the background for experiences and expeditions (Hintergrund für "Erlebnisse" und für Streiche), it is the big world (die grosse Welt.). Muchow et al., *Der Lebensraum des grossstadtkindes* 2012, p. 154) [22].

At the heart of the shopping mall lies its inherent potential. This potential, however, is contingent upon the demands it seeks to meet, and its realization hinges on the outcome, whether positive or negative, of those demands. Visitors to the mall can find what they seek, have an enjoyable experience, or, in some cases, may need to return another time. For young individuals, the mall can serve as a platform for meeting peers, socializing, and even fostering romantic relationships.

Furthermore, the mall exists not merely as a passive structure but as an active entity, offering diverse spaces that accommodate a wide range of activities. Much like a city's streets, neighborhoods, and overall urban environment, it thrives as a living organism.

For adults, architectural freedom entails designing functions that transcend one-dimensionality. While meanings may not always be unequivocal, these spaces are invariably 'places' where various activities unfold. For example, sidewalks must remain unblocked from improperly parked cars to facilitate residents' ingress and egress from buildings. Plazas serve as thoroughfares for vehicular circulation, and different areas within a city host places for shopping, services, parks for leisure, and more. Shopping centers and neighborhoods within urban settings often provide amenities and conveniences that are not readily available in other areas.

This dichotomy between the city center and its periphery imbues each with distinct connotations. Within a city, there can be multiple centers akin to distinct towns, each with its own unique character and offerings. Conversely, the periphery encompasses various zones, some of which are well-serviced and in close proximity to the population, while others are more distant and less accessible.

9. One Person Several Cities

From an emotional perspective, a city contains multiple layers (From a sociological and political point of view, the different layers that make up the urban space are analyzed. But what is at stake is the possibility of understanding the affective atmosphere and the impressions and states in which each person is left in by the multiple experiences of a city. Everyone has their own access if the conditions of the possibility of experience are the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience. We can look at personal photographs taken in public places. We can compare them to postcards. There is an absolute difference between the same photographed place. I am affectively shielded from what I see on the postcard because the familiar landscape is not integrated into my life. For the multiple layers of the political considered city, cf.: Di Masso, Andrés. "Grounding

Citizenship: Toward a Political Psychology of Public Space." *Political Psychology* 33, no. 1 (2012): 123–143. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41407024>. Accessed on 10 December 2023 [32]. For a theological, metaphysical approach to space and time, cf.: Shiner, Larry E. "Sacred Space, Profane Space, Human Space." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 40, no. 4 (1972): 425–436. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1460891>. Accessed on 10 December 2023 [33]. For the individualization of space and time, cf.: Anderson, Maureen J., Thomas V. Petros, Bill E. Beckwith, W. Wade Mitchell, and Sara Fritz. "Individual Differences in the Effect of Time of Day on Long-Term Memory Access." *The American Journal of Psychology* 104, no. 2 (1991): 241–255 [34]. For virtual space and how it affects our everyday space and locals, cf.: Saunders, Carol, Anne F. Rutkowski, Michiel Genuchten van, Doug Vogel, and Julio Molina Orrego. "Virtual Space and Place: Theory And Test." *MIS Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (2011): 1079–1098 [35]. Lindberg, Casey M., Diemtrinh T. Tran, and Meredith A. Banasiak. "INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN THE OFFICE: PERSONALITY FACTORS AND WORK-SPACE ENCLOSURE." *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 33, no. 2 (2016): 105–120. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44987371>. Accessed on 10 December 2023) [36]. One can spend their entire life in the same location or frequently visit familiar places, even in distant corners of the world. The passage of time often unites these places across eras despite their inherent diversity. This phenomenon is particularly relevant for diplomats or professionals who frequently travel.

Conversely, it is entirely possible for the street of one's childhood, the home of one's grandparents, or the vacation spot of fond memories to evolve and change while remaining in the same physical location. Over time, our affective relationship with these places transforms them. They can become comforting and evocative of a sense of home or unfamiliar and alien. Returning to places where we experienced happiness always holds a special significance. These places are never indifferent to us. At times, they may initially appear neutral, but soon, they envelop us in an atmosphere of nostalgia. Even when no one we miss is present, these places retain their status as the backdrop for moments of happiness, creating a sense of walking through a ghost town devoid of anyone who holds emotional significance.

For a very young kid, objects such as "stairs," or even more focused objects such as "stairsteps," "sidewalks," and "pavements," but also "inside of buildings," "back of the cars," and "other streets," take on completely different meanings. In different games, it is on the stairs where people play, on the steps where small children inhabit their world, on the insides of buildings, on the backs of cars where we hide, on other streets where the others live, with whom we have fought or who are our friends.

The organization of space extends beyond our understanding of inhospitable or unfamiliar places, characterized by negative experiences or unsettling vibes, often associated with anticipating danger. Exploring new territories can also be exhilarating and stimulating, for instance, venturing into the city center during the early years of gaining autonomy or heading to the beach with friends. In these situations, the experience of the unknown carries a sense of eager anticipation.

Anticipation plays a significant role in our lives, varying depending on our destination. Whether embarking on a weekend getaway for relaxation or traveling abroad for work, we engage in a certain level of anticipation. For instance, an academic going abroad for a semester anticipates finding various facilities such as departments, colleges, universities, dormitories, gyms, recreational spaces, nightclubs, libraries, and classrooms. However, the city's character differs for individuals with distinct professions.

Yet, from an emotional perspective, the pattern of orientation remains consistent. It involves the tension of anticipation, the attempt to foresee or predict future events, and the emotional and affective planning ahead. This planning extends to the exploration of geographical space, encompassing considerations of where to obtain necessities, where to fulfill desires, and how to ensure a satisfying quality of life.

The abstract space, defined only by its street names, now finds its place on both virtual and physical maps. People visit, inhabit, or incorporate it into their contemporary systems, such as agendas, schedules, or life calendars, even if it is destined to fade into oblivion.

The orientation framework a child develops from their own street continues to shape the orientation of the adult, as demonstrated through experiments. This holds true even if the adult has long departed from that particular street. Whatever exists within 'their' street in terms of personal and material circumstances holds significance for the future. This significance is even more deeply ingrained in the child's 'world.' It forms the foundation of their 'worldview,' even though it may soon slip away from their conscious experience or perception (The urban child's living space differs from that of the urban adult only in form and structure, but hardly in content when viewed as a lived and experienced space. Muchow et al., *Der Lebensraum des grossstadtkindes* 2012, pp. 158, 159 [22]. The home is undoubtedly a family space rather than a street space. But everything that is "in" "her" street, in terms of his personal material circumstances, is also important for the future).

10. The Space We Live in and the Time of Our Lives

We gain a unique perspective on our adult environment when we observe how a child interacts with specific aspects of it, especially when those aspects are rich in content. This observation reveals a distinct way of perceiving. It transforms a particular segment of the city into the child's personal world. Have we truly grasped the true living space of a city child? On weekdays, it is likely that the child perceives their parents' home as an immediately accessible, personal, familiar, and intimate space (Muchow et al., *Der Lebensraum des grossstadtkindes* 2012, pp. 158: "Aber auch an Wochentagen dürfte die Wohnung der Eltern ein unmittelbar gegenwärtiges, dem Kinde personal zugehöriges, vertraut und innig empfundenes Raumganzen sein. Dabei ist die Wohnung dann fraglos mehr ein Familien-Raum als ein Grasstadt-Raum") [22].

Young girls were asked to write about how they spent "last Sunday" (For gender as a qualitative modifier of geography experience, cf.: Edelman, Lee, and Elizabeth Bishop. "The Geography of Gender: Elizabeth Bishop's 'In the Waiting Room'". *Contemporary Literature* 26, no. 2 (1985): 179–196 [37]. With a few exceptions, the girls' essays are completely unreflected and naively written. They are not burdened with problems, such as explaining their attitude toward Sunday (108 girls have written the essays over 57 Sundays without much thought (völlig unreflektiert und naiv geschrieben). (Muchow et al., *Der Lebensraum des grossstadtkindes* 2012, pp. 102–107)) [22]. Sundays hold a unique significance for boys. Generally, they are described with little emotional attachment to specific places. The focal point of the Sunday experience often revolves around family life, notably the communal act of dining together, a luxury rarely achievable during the busy workweek, which tends to dominate the entire day on Sundays.

Interestingly, the absence of family-related mentions in other aspects of the day is attributed to a sense of indifference. This indifference stems from the natural need of parents to rest and the equally innate need of children for autonomy and freedom. Consequently, it becomes evident that a significant portion of the girls in the study engage in domestic chores, with nearly half of them serving as domestic helpers. Additionally, approximately one-third of these girls either receive visits from relatives and acquaintances in their homes or partake in leisurely strolls with their parents (Ibid., pp. 102–103.).

Each day of the week, the same moment can feel different. Time is not merely the accumulation of seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years. What if the entirety of our lifetime existed within the very first second of our lives, vibrating and condensed, just as it does in the final seconds of our existence, without ever being depleted or stretched to its limits?

Between the initial and final moments lie all the moments in between, each simultaneously marking a beginning and an end, even if only for an instant. Despite their shared date, each day is distinct due to the varying ways we experience them. Some pass swiftly

in a matter of hours, while others are filled with loss. These days remain unnamed, defined only by their dates, yet each carries its own unique essence.

Life often forms patterns of familiarity and identity. We experience the phases of the day in a consistent manner, even when we alter our norms. Days are also distinguished by epochs or eras. Consider the summer afternoons of our childhood vacations; they are moments that can never be relived. However, the concept of a 'summer afternoon' or 'afternoon' maintains a recognizable daily phase, irrespective of whether it is summer or winter, childhood or adulthood, as it adheres to a formally identical pattern.

11. Conclusions: Existential Geography as Space Wrapped in an Autobiographical Self-Referential Time

We exist within a constantly shifting structure akin to fluid foam. Our movements are often imperceptible, like the slow flow of glacial rivers. Life can be seen as a series of interconnected and sequential horizons, often existing out of sync with each other. It is like a complex system of tubular horizons where different facets of the world unfold in eccentric and both outward and inward-moving motions. This intricate temporal orientation propels us relentlessly toward the future. This 'tubular horizon' serves as the vital backdrop that evolves over time and fundamentally shapes everything it encounters. It is the very condition that makes the appearance of everything possible, including itself, other entities, and various manifestations.

From a human perspective, the concept of space undergoes transformations corresponding to shifts in the world environment. For instance, an astronomer's world environment is characterized by the stately procession of suns and planets. A seafloor researcher encounters the mesmerizing forms of deep-sea fish with their intimidating mouths, long antennae, and luminous organs. Chemists endeavor to decipher the mysterious connections between the fundamental building blocks of nature—92 elements—as if they were letters in an alphabet. In contrast, the world of nuclear physics is one of ceaseless electron activity, marked by frenetic agitation. Physicists explore the realms of ether waves, while music researchers delve into the realm of sounds. Behaviorists propose that the body gives rise to the mind, while psychologists posit that the mind constructs the body.

The role played by nature as an object within the diverse environment-worlds of natural scientists is inherently paradoxical. An attempt to summarize its objective characteristics would result in chaos. Yet, all these distinct environmental worlds are nurtured and sustained by the singular ambient environment that remains perpetually closed to all others. Beyond all the worlds generated by this central world, the subject-nature remains forever concealed and unknowable.

What would one say about the seven billion, seven hundred and thirteen million, four hundred and sixty-eight thousand, two hundred and five (7,713,468,205) inhabitants of planet Earth?

Let us simplify the question: Is the world that we perceive from a distance merely an illusion, or is it a genuine and objective reality? Is the celestial dome above us real, or is it an illusion? Is the horizon line that separates the sea from the sky an actual boundary, or is it a visual trick? Are we, along with the animals and plants, enclosed within the expanse of the sky, or do we serve as carriers of the world itself?

Furthermore, does each individual animal, plant, or living entity possess its own unique world, as described in the preceding paragraphs, in which it immerses itself, adapts to its environment, establishes its climate, and crafts its atmosphere? Does it exist within a framework of horizontal and tubular time, inhabited by a multitude of distinct and ever-evolving realities that vary significantly from one being to another? Can we say that each living entity brings along its own 'tubular' world, as proposed by V. Uexküll, where, for example, a dog perceives only canine objects and not those relevant to humans? (Cf.: Uexküll and Kriszat, *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen: Ein Bilderbuch Unsichtbarer Welten* 1934, pp. 217–219: [38] "Each environment-world of an animal forms spatially temporally, as in its content a delimited part of the phenomenal

world of the observer. 15. Each animal carries its world-environment with it like an impenetrable shell throughout the day. 16. The same applies to the phenomenal world of the observer. Also, this phenomenal world, which presents him with his environment-world, isolates him completely from the universe. 18. An absolute universal space and an absolute universal time that encompasses all living things do not exist. 19. The world of phenomena of each human being also resembles a fixed shell, which surrounds him from his birth lasting until his death. 20. The rise and fall of these worlds is the ultimate problem that science is pursuing with unfailing certainty”).

However, we can pose the question in an even more radical manner. It is conceivable that in a broad and perhaps even universal sense, each of us exists individually and distinctly from one another within a soap bubble. This soap bubble represents not only my existence but also the existence of all living beings, plants, and animals, spanning from our presence on Earth to intergalactic space.

A radical perspective on this issue is encapsulated in the Latin adage: ‘quidquid percipitur ad modum percipientis percipitur,’ which translates to ‘whatever is understood is understood in the way of one who has understood what he has understood.’ In essence, this implies that I comprehend the world in a manner distinct from all other living beings. The mobile horizon within which every living being operates can be likened to a surreptitious, atmospheric entity akin to what Leibniz described as a ‘monad,’ with its microclimate varying from person to person. Everything that manifests itself is perceived uniquely by each observer.

The question arises: Is there a common ground for shared understanding? Furthermore, from such a profound perspective, is it possible that the world we once inhabited as children has been lost in the depths of time?

The intricate and ever-changing anisotropic space within a household, inhabited by diverse individuals, eludes the grasp of traditional geometric space. This existential geography or personal space, where each individual resides throughout their lifetime, undergoes continual transformation. Yet, this metamorphosis or mutation remains largely unnoticed in our perception. The ambiance or environment enveloping each person is deeply influenced by their emotional experiences and affectivity.

To comprehend the metamorphic nature of autobiographical, affective spaces shaped over a lifetime, we can examine localized observations on streets or within childhood and adolescent environments. In doing so, we aim to expand the scope of geography into the fourth dimension of time. This represents the ontological ‘truth’ of places. Each person’s experience of a place is uniquely personal, leading us to consider that perhaps all spaces are integral components of an encompassing environment or atmosphere. In contrast, astronomical, mathematical, and geometric understandings appear somewhat naive in light of the boundless diversity within each inhabitant of planet Earth—or one might even say the universe.

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