“The marvel of a house is not that it shelters or warms a man, nor that its walls belong to him. It is that it leaves its trace on the language. Let it remain a sign. Let it form, deep in the heart, that obscure range from which, as waters from a spring, are born our dreams."

- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1939)

“… the worst thing that can befall you is that a knot should give way, letting all it held together fall apart and be dispersed. And when your gods die, you die. For you live by them.”

- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1950)

# University of Alberta

An Expressivist Psychology of Inhabited Spaces

by

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Dedication

For Ruben van Gelder

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Abstract

Modern experience is replete with expressions of spatiality. When people try to express their experience for others, they rely centrally upon spatial metaphors to make sense of things. Expressions of being "aimless" or "disoriented" in life, "close" to or "distant" from other people, "inner" and "outer" lives, all tell us something about how people are situated in their spaces. In psychology, too, we often see spatial language used to express how an individual "navigates" or "explores" a space, without much consideration of how the kinds of spatial metaphors used express culturally specific understandings of human existence.

I propose a psychology that articulates how human beings experience inhabitation in an inherently spatial manner. I show that the spatial nature of human life requires an interpretive approach centered on expression and space. In this thesis I introduce a new cultural and social psychology based on the "expressivist" philosophy articulated by Charles Taylor and Isaiah Berlin, and exemplified in Gaston Bachelard's poetics. Unlike the vast number of psychologies that take spatial language for granted, the expressivist arguments explored in this thesis make serious claims about the relationships among language, space and expression. *I argue that the language of home is the primary way in which people express their psychological situation.*

I show how expressivism implies a genuinely cultural and social psychology that acts as an alternative to the "self-contained" conception of the individual inherited from Enlightenment philosophy. In making this argument, I draw centrally upon the expressivist concepts of inhabitation, space and expression. I show how an

expressivist psychology can use the languages of space and expression to interpret how people make sense of their inhabited spaces. Ultimately, the expressivist psychology proposed here situates the meaning of personal experiences in common, moral and poetic spaces.

# Preface: Things We Lost in the Fire

This thesis was not originally concerned with inhabited spaces. When I began this project years ago, I set out to articulate an interpretive method for understanding stories and storytelling. The narrative psychology I pursued was based on Charles Taylor's idea that language and expression are central to who we are and how we experience things, and I worked out John Shotter's "social poetics" as a potential method for interpreting stories. But early on, a colleague asked, "I understand that you're interested in stories. But what about the situations that stories are told in? Every story has to be told in a certain kind of place or space." I had no answer to the question. I was stuck.

I set out for a year listening to other people's stories, reading stories, and trying to tell stories of my own. I started paying attention to the kinds of physical spaces that stories were being told in, and how these spaces came to shape the kinds of stories that could be told. Stories told at the dinner table with immediate family were different than the kinds of stories told with extended family, and much different than those told in the intimacy of the bedroom. Some stories were powerful expressions of moral ideals and desires, while others tried to transport me into other places through depictions of imaginary places. But I still could not grasp the relations among spaces and stories and expression.

One day, I met a young woman who began to tell me about a fire that had destroyed her family's home. No one was injured in the fire, but the family lost all of their possessions and the house was completely destroyed. I had through a house fire recently myself… my mother's home had been destroyed by a fire just a few

months earlier. Her stories resonated with me. I hoped that our experiences had something in common, but over the months that followed I began to appreciate how differently we had experienced the same kind of house fire. I was moved by her stories, but I had no way of grasping the deeper significances it had for her life, and for mine.

In the months after the fire, my friend became increasingly emotionally inexpressive and socially isolated; losing interest in almost all of the activities that had defined her life prior to the fire. Although the house had been rebuilt and furnished in a similar style to the original home, she said that her bedroom felt like it "wasn't hers"; that it belonged to someone else. She commented that friends and family did not seem to understand, how the things she lost in the fire were more than possessions; when they were eventually replaced they were "just not the same." She had stopped exploring a forest nearby the home, and instead spent her time role-playing a character in a virtual world on the Internet.[1] When I asked her what her life was like before the fire, she said that she could not remember that part of her life very well, because it "got erased" after the fire. Often, she would run downstairs in the new house to retrieve a personal item, only to realize a few steps down that the item had burned with the old house. With a distant expression on her face, she said to me, "It's like I still have a house. But I don't have a home anymore."

Simply calling this "depression" did not capture the meaning of her experience. When speaking with her, I got the sense that her home was more than

[1] The virtual world she retreated to after the fire seemed like a minor detail at the time. It was not until much later that I appreciated how this online world was the only place she 'felt at home'; it was the place that kept her safe in this traumatic period. I return to the importance of this virtual world in the conclusion of this thesis.

just a place for working and sleeping and socializing, but it was central to who she was. The home was a place where she could be *herself*. Her memories and her passion for life were somehow contained in it. And when the home burned to the ground, her desire to express herself and engage in relationships with others had become buried in the same ashes. All of the stories she told, all of the things she said, seemed to express a powerful loss of the space that she was most herself in. She was living in the rebuilt house, but she could not *be at home in it.*

The thesis had to change direction. "Her" fire was not "my" fire, but it could be if I found a way of opening myself up – something that does not come easily to me – to her and her world. I needed some kind of approach that allowed me to dwell in her expressions of grief, confusion, obliteration, so that I might understand what the fire meant for her. The stories she was telling me were not only expressions of who she was and how she felt, but always came back to the destruction of the spaces she called home. *She did not just live in the house, she was the house she lived in*.

From then onwards I looked at the philosophy of Charles Taylor and the "topoanalysis" of Gaston Bachelard in a new light. The change in focus temporarily put stories and their interpretation on the back burner, in order to explore the different aspects of space that people's stories were giving expression to. Charles Taylor and Gaston Bachelard, each in their own way, are concerned with understanding how all spaces have moral, social and imaginary aspects.

Through these expressivist thinkers, I came to understand that if our domestic spaces are bound up with who we are; then more generally the self is an expression of inhabited spaces. In North American life, the house or apartment may

be the most important inhabited space. But there are other spaces that powerfully define us: the workspace, the wilderness, institutional spaces, public spaces, the imaginary spaces of books and the Internet, and more. This insight led to the idea that stories and storytelling are not only expressions of self. Stories first and foremost express how a person experiences the spaces they inhabit (or in some cases cannot inhabit). I turned away from developing a method for interpreting stories as texts; and instead turned towards interpreting and disclosing the spaces that stories are told in and the spaces that stories express. From this new perspective I began to appreciate how an inhabited space (or uninhabitable one as this young woman struggled to articulate) demands to be expressed to another person; it is the *space* that somehow calls for its story to be told. This was no longer an academic project from which I could distance myself through a systematic analytical method. The thesis became the entry-point for understanding how my own stories and experiences reflect the kinds of spaces *I* inhabit. If there is a thesis statement implied in my experience it is this: expressions of *home* and *inhabitation* are constitutive of the self, and when the spaces that a person is at-home-in transform, the self changes with them. Home is the abode of the psyche.

In the chapters that follow I do two things simultaneously. I knit together thinkers with different histories and philosophical backgrounds, to show that these people have something to say about the relationships between expression, space and inhabitation; this is the conceptual aspect of my expressivist psychology. I take up a few different stories – all from radically different cultures and told by different kinds of people – to show how each of the people telling the stories struggle with

inhabiting spaces and articulating an understanding of their world for others. All of the cases I interpret involve people, similar to the young woman I spoke of earlier, who are going through extreme changes to their inhabited spaces; people who are stuck 'living' in a space but are not 'at home' in it. All of their stories invoke spatial metaphors that require an expressivist psychology that can interpret their meanings.

I proceed by outlining the question of spatial experience by situating it within the current context in academic psychology. I show how our current conceptions of space emerge from competing accounts of spatiality that are inherited from naturalism. I argue that another conception of space – "inhabited space" - can be articulated from expressivism. Going back and forth, between naturalism and expressivism, I show how the notion of inhabited space offers a richer and deeper understanding of the human psyche than a subject-object understanding of space and self.

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## Chapter One: What Kinds of Spaces Do People Inhabit?

A pernicious issue in social and cultural psychology concerns how individuals experience communal reality. A few different classes of psychological accounts exist that try to make sense of the relationship between the individual, reality and communality. Taylor (1992, p. 32-41) points out two mutually opposed yet ironically compatible psychological accounts. Naturalist accounts attempt to determine biological or cognitive or cultural mechanisms, schemas and structures that stand outside of personal experience, in order to posit a universal human psychology. On the other hand, Taylor (ibid.) points out how some romantic understandings of the self ground the reality of things in an inner self, for example the poet-genius whose writing exemplifies *creatio ex nihilo*. Romantic reality emerges from inside the individual, whose experiences are only accessible through intuition or reflection or artistic expression, where great emphasis is placed upon the feeling individual who is above all concerned with inner meaning. Both the naturalistic and the romantic accounts, in some way, make an ahistorical and self-contained individual the focus of psychological investigation. In this paper I am sympathetic to the romantic account, yet hope to divest it of its lingering reliance upon a non-communal and ahistorical conception of self. I make this disciplinary contrast to highlight how much the idea of a self-contained individual still dominates our conceptions of self and identity in social psychology. Charles Taylor (2008, p. 157) comments on this relation,

> The mistake of moderns is to take this [naturalistic] understanding of the individual so much for granted, that it is taken to be our first-off

> self-understanding 'naturally'. Just as, in modern epistemological thinking, a neutral description of things is thought to impinge first on us, and then 'values' are 'added'; so here, we seize ourselves first as individuals, then become aware of others, and of forms of sociality.

But what is an naturalistic view of human nature, and how is it evident in contemporary understandings of the self? According to Taylor (1989, pp. 49-50), the rationalistic and disengaged study of human nature is exemplified early on in the philosophical works of John Locke, in his conception of what Taylor calls a "punctual self". The punctual self is characterized as a subject of rational self-control and self-reflection whose world is understood in terms of their individual and subjective needs or desires. Because the punctual self is fully self-contained in terms of its self-awareness, it can be an object of rational study whose structure remains untouched by its own self-reflections. Contrasted with Taylor's conception of the self as constituted through moral and social expression – ideas explored later in this thesis - the punctual self is a static object of reflective study engaged in rational reflection. The punctual self takes an instrumental approach to its own body, habits, desires, emotions and feelings, such "that they can be *worked on*, doing away with some and strengthening others, until one meets the desired specifications." (Taylor, 1989, pp. 159-160) The proper study of human nature, emerging from the Lockean view of the self and his political philosophy, is that the individual can be a *distant* object of empirical study. Thus, in the Enlightenment a conception of the rational individual emerges that is compatible with the natural scientific methods that later become dominant in social and cultural psychology.

But these are not the only competing accounts of the nature of reality and self. In response to naturalistic psychologies, different forms of social constructionism (SC) emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. Stam (2001, p. 294) notes how social constructionists articulated a part of the discipline that was anti-realist, anti-objectivist, anti-essentialist, anti-individualist and anti-subjectivist, each purportedly grounding social psychology in sociality and cultural practices.[2] In this new vision of social psychology, realities are "socially constructed" and thereby emerge from normative social practices – conversations and dialogues - that are historically and culturally situated. Important differences appear in this formulation of the psychological… where in the naturalistic accounts there is an objective truth discoverable through natural scientific methods, the question of human *meaning* central is central to social construction. People central to the social constructionist movement, like Ken Gergen, John Shotter, Michael Billig and Rom Harré, articulated new questions surrounding the "nature" and meaning of scientific knowledge, memory, mind, self, individuality, emotion, motivation, disciplinary power, language and more. In SC, every psychological domain could potentially be removed from the head of the individual and placed into the sphere of social discourse, replacing inner psychological processes with outer social processes (Shotter & Billing, 1998,). Meaning, in this account, is constructed at the social level.

Where the current discourse in theoretical psychology wrestles with questions concerning selfhood, moral and spiritual life, normativity and sharedness

[2] Although I speak in general terms of social constructionism, Stam (ibid.) points out that SC comes in so many different forms that speaking of SC as a uniform movement is a misnomer.

and consensuality, it has been noted that the current social constructionist movement has often, and ironically, taken up some of the foundational assumptions about individuality and culture that emerged with Enlightenment naturalism (Baerveldt & Voestermans, 2005, pp. 451-452; Stam, 2001, pp. 294-295). Critics of SC note that its post-modernist forms struggle with questions surrounding the meanings of and relations between individual experience, consensuality, agency, embodiment, history and language (cf. Baerveldt & Voestermans, 2005; Sampson, 1996; Stam, 2001). This leaves open some room for discussion regarding the relationships between these questions.

Instead of taking these basic disciplinary questions up head-on, I think that the relationships between individual experience, consensuality, history, and agency can be approached through a concept implicit in all of them: the language of *space* is taken for granted in SC. I am inclined to ask, if we "socially construct" our reality, what notion of *space* has to be assumed in order for construction to make sense?

There are a few competing expressions of spatiality that psychologists might turn to in order to understand human inhabitation. I will discuss three understandings of spatiality common in psychology: the geometric/objectivistic space of naturalism, the constructive space of SC, and an expressivist conception of space as a stronger alternative.

## Geometric Space: An Enlightenment Conception of Spatiality

Gaston Bachelard and J.H. van den Berg are both expressivist thinkers who articulate a common concept, "geometric space", to describe physicalistic

conception of space drawn from the languages of geometry and mathematics. The notion of geometric space has a long tradition in psychology that both Bachelard and van den Berg trace back to the Newtonian conception of a rule-governed universe. For Bachelard (1994, p. 68) geometric space is the medium in which objects exist, move around, and relate to one another in; a medium indifferent to emotions and feeling. Van den Berg (1961, pp. 53-58) asserts that the natural sciences are predicated upon Descartes' thesis that all matter can be understood in terms of its "extensiveness" (*res extensa*): objects are measurable in terms of properties or dimensions that do not change, regardless of the object of study. Van den Berg (ibid.) argues that this observation casts all material objects into homogeneity, for if one can think of any object in terms of its position in space (ie. in terms of its length, width and height), it becomes possible to imagine that the object is equal to another of identical dimensions. Therefore the world can be thought of in terms of its essential homogeneity: a stone Courthouse is composed of bricks that could be organized into a swimming pool or a factory. Objects can be decomposed into smaller objects, and re-arranged into different configurations. It is unsurprising then that Descartes identified the knowledge of physical existence with the knowledge of pure mathematics; knowing the extensiveness of objects was to know how to conceive of them in terms of mathematical motion and location in space (Leclerc, 1972, Chapter 16). This is essentially a rationalist doctrine. The language of geometric space is carried into the present natural science psychology, where prevalent understandings of space in psychology involve spatio-cognitive accounts of how humans and animals learn to navigate spaces in their acquisition and use of

landmarks, maps, and spatial concepts.[3] In this respect, a geometrical understanding of space makes measurable distances, task performance, physical objects and mental schemata the primary units of analysis, and subsequently draws its conception of space from an objective account of reality. The psychological upshot of the geometrical understanding of space is that space and individual are radically separate from one another; space is a meaningless vacuum that acts as a container for objective human activity.

## Spatial Metaphors in Social Constructionism

We could begin by thinking of SC as a group of theories that draw primarily upon metaphors of construction. Different manifestations of the construction metaphor appear throughout SC. Language is understood as a linguistic "tool" for constructing thought and identity. Meaning is constructed through social "interaction". Semiotic tools like symbols and gestures "mediate" higher mental processes. Interlocutors "negotiate" and "position" their identities in conversation. People "account" for themselves by speaking from different discourses. There is the narrative construction of identity, identity construction and identity building; people "construct" a sense of who they are with narrative tools. Life is self-constructed, dialogically constructed. And so on. These kinds of phrases appear in the extant SC literature with little comment from their authors about the expressive qualities of the language.

[3] Tomasello's (1999, pp. 50-58) synopsis of contemporary cognitive research that accounts for human cognitive development in terms of Piaget's (1952, 1954) seminal studies on the infant's appropriation of sensory-motor skills in space, are an exemplification of space understood geometrically.

In my view, the notion of construction can be understood as a form of spatial work. Anyone who has spent time remodeling a home or even building one can appreciate what construction metaphors mean in an everyday sense. Christopher Alexander, an architect and theorist who works from an expressivistic perspective, laments the meanings that "construction" and "building" have acquired in modern home-building:

> In the modern world, the idea that houses can be loved and beautiful has been eliminated almost altogether. For most of the world's housing, the task of building houses has been reduced to a grim business of facts and figures, an uphill struggle against the relentless surge of technology and bureaucracy, in which human feeling as almost been forgotten… What happens there is something remote from feeling, an almost disgusting concern with opulence, with the taste of the marketplace, with fashion. Here, too, the simple values of the human heart do not exist.
>
> (Alexander, 1985, p. 14)

When one "constructs" a home in the manner Alexander critiques, the process typifies the process of rational work: the owner draws up a rough layout, the architect designs a plan following the layout, and the builders execute the rules of the layout using their tools to produce the final structure. Each step of the process makes building a *home* synonymous with planning and execution, both of which are rational enterprises. Many individuals coordinate their actions with one another, often requiring constant "negotiation" and meticulous "accounting" for resources, in order to execute the intended plan. Someone "positions" the Architects and builders alike take up the tools of production, pencils and hammers, and raw materials, to create the end product. The meaning of the intended product is created through many individuals who participate with one another in a rational process. The

property owned by an individual (or group of individuals) is comprised of individual buildings designed for efficiency and predicted utility.

This characterization of the process of home building seems exaggerated, but as Alexander reminds us, the great majority of houses are mass-produced in a way that excludes expressions of human meaning, emotion, spirituality, play, aesthetics, community, imagination, meaning, morality and unpredictability. SC theories implicitly hold this kind of understanding of "construction". When human sociality and language are understood through this sense of "construction" in SC, the notion of "meaning-making" loses its connection with the human heart and takes on the appearance of coldly conscious work.

Authors like John Shotter (2003, p. 18) have already pointed out that lingering vestiges of rationalism remain implicit in SC. His idea is that the social-cultural background or, in the language of this thesis, the *space* that precedes construction is what is crucial to understand. Despite being labeled a social constructionist (and sometimes taking up the category for himself), Shotter (2005, p. 150) comes to the realization late in his career that social constructionism was only a "way-station on the way to somewhere else." As I have written in other work, Shotter is the only social constructionist to take the first steps towards the idea that all expression appears in a space of some kind.

Construction metaphors are not the only kind of metaphors evoked in SC. Shotter makes the notion of "joint action" central to his version of SC. The concept of joint action is central to most of Shotter's thoughts on the construction of social reality and dialogicality. Shotter (1993a, p. 39; 1993b, p. 110) conceives of joint

activity – the experience of becoming part of a shared space with another person through dialogical talk – as both a site for the constitution of social reality and a point-of-origin for new meanings and social possibilities. In other words, as people respond to one another's expressions, they begin to construct a shared space. So is that way, joint action means that interlocutors construct a shared space as a consequence of their mutual attunement to a common activity.

But what does the "joining" metaphor mean in Shotter's joint action concept? Consider for example the kinds of images evoked by the following phrases: that two people create a "joint reality" in conversation, that a walking stick "connects" the blind person to their environment, that speakers "jointly" construct a world in dialogue, or that computers "mediate" between "inter"-locutors. Each of the conjunctives used in these phrases act to bring together two separate entities that, through some kind of activity, form a momentary interactive site.[4] Joining metaphors retain an implicit understanding of social communality that suggest how self and other are inherently separate entities that can be connected or coupled together through some kind of relational action. It would follow then that meditational-interactional accounts of dialogue *begin* with the assumption that human beings are ultimately separated from one another, or from their environments, and only later come to construct moments of social communality through some kind of momentary responsive activity (Soffer, 2001, p. 665). In Shotter's answer to SC, something is constructed – a social reality is erected – and

[4] It is important to note that Shotter's recent work, that makes Merleau-Ponty's images of "chiasm" and "intertwining" central metaphors, takes a step away from conjunctive theories of meaning-making.

the individuals now share in their joint creation. In this way, the joining metaphor preserves some kind of self-contained individual who finds themselves in relationships of exchange (or negotiation) with other individuals. Joint action and its metaphors of conjoinment imply a lurking individualism: two people meet and begin creating a relational space with one another.

At least three problems emerge from the notion of constructed space implied in various forms of SC: (1) social reality is understood as a project of rational work that confuses construction with *expression*, (2) the space in which construction and conjoinment happens is assumed and unarticulated, and (3) people are made too detached from their spaces of meaning. There is no unity or fusion or co-constitution of reality – the rift between people seems unbridgeable.

Beyond social constructionism and naturalism, is there another conception of individuality, self, identity and sociality that does not place some kind of self-contained individual at the epicenter of its psychology? What would a social and cultural psychology involve, if the Enlightenment conception of self and society was turned on its head, and the social truly preceded the individual, both in ontogenetic and sociogenetic time?

I advance an expressivist understanding of spatiality as an alternative to both geometric space and the spatial metaphors used in SC. In the following section I show that the language of "inhabited spaces" neither relies upon geometry or construction, and instead draws from expressivism. Spaces can be understood experientially by providing accounts of *how* we inhabit different kinds of spaces and what meaning these spaces have for the people who inhabit them. The expressivist

psychology I advance in this thesis is primarily interested in articulating the nature of inhabited spaces.

Inhabited Spaces: An Expressivist Understanding of Spatiality

A diversity of scholars and writers who were concerned with the kinds of philosophies and works of art that emerged in the Enlightenment, anticipated the kinds of issues encountered much later in the social constructionist movement. Found in the stories, philosophical writing and music of scholars of the 18th century and again later in the Romantic period, are interpretations of human life that already take history, the expressive arts (broadly understood to include literature, poetry, myths, dance), religion, spirituality, philosophy, community, sociality, language, psychology, morality and ethics, culture and temporality all together as constitutive elements of human nature. These "expressivist" thinkers (Johann Gottfried von Herder especially) as Charles Taylor and Isaiah Berlin have named them, have been influential in producing accounts of human meaning in terms of *expression*.

My interpretation of expressivism attempts to weave a path around the languages of naturalism and social constructionism by showing how human experience is neither the result of internal psychical mechanisms nor is the product of interpersonal construction. In other words, psychological spaces are not cognitive maps that represent an external reality, nor are such spaces the outcome of interpersonal dialogue. In the expressivist view I posit in the thesis, *psychologies emerge within spaces that are already fully charged with social and cultural meanings*

*and practices*. We are caught up in spaces before we recognize them as spaces. People who inhabit spaces simultaneously reshape the space, and are shaped by their participation in the space, such that there is an ongoing dialectic of space and person. We inherit spaces and as we are brought up in them; just as a home is the space where a child develops.

In general, the expressivist tradition seems to grow from at least four interconnected notions (Berlin, 1999, pp. 58-59; Berlin, 2000, pp. 168-242; Mos, 1995, p. 43; Taylor, 1985, pp. 90-91; Taylor, 1989, Chapter 21):

1. That in giving expression we manifest our inner world of feelings, ideas, beliefs, ideals and understandings for others. In other words, that the human world is not founded upon an external or objective reality, but is rather held as an intersubjective or social reality constituted in human expression that *unfolds* over time. This is the communal aspect of expressivism.
2. That the human world cannot be decomposed into an atomistic or mechanical structures that obey eternal laws and cannot be predicated upon essential truths that stand outside of our lived practices. Instead, the human world is a *living whole* that cannot be totally grasped or exhausted by theory, and aspects of that world can be revealed through a plurality of understandings. The irreducibility and inexhaustibility of meaning in expressivism creates a demand for a pluralistic understanding of meaning.

3. That each person and society has its own unique way of being human, each with rituals, myths, styles of garb, social practices and histories that constitute it as a *particular kind of person or people living at a particular time*. This is the historical and anthropological aspect of expressivism.
4. That *personal meaning* is shaped in expression. The meaning that an expression has is not reducible to a tradition, history or any kind of claim to truth external to itself; expression therefore transforms the very situation in which it appears. For expressivists, the main site of this transformation is the self and the awareness one has for one's lived situations. This is the *poetic* aspect of expressivism.

In the prior sections I have disputed conceptions of reality (social or objective) and self inherited from Enlightenment traditions that prioritize the objective over the expressive. In the following section I begin to work out an expressivist psychology. I characterize the expressivism Taylor and Berlin articulate from the work of Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), whom these authors see as a central figure in the expressivist tradition.

## Herder's Expressivism

Isaiah Berlin and (later) Charles Taylor are vital figures in the recovery of scholars like Hamann, Herder and Goethe, and in so doing are the first to articulate the expressivist conception of culture and language. Herder's understanding of language takes center stage in the articulation of Taylor's interpretation of expressivist anthropology. For Herder, individuals express their nature through

their participation within a communal whole; human beings are expressers of culture. Hans Joas, who is a Herder scholar and colleague of Charles Taylor, writes (1996, p. 82), "Herder did not only see collectives and cultures as the preconditions that make individual self-development possible, but conceived of cultural forms [expressions] in terms of collective self-realization." That is, the myths, symbols, images, dances, paintings, songs, linguistic expressions and stories expressed in a cultural community are not just the local self-expressions of individuals, but they are also an expression of the entire history of a culture's meaningful potential through a common language (Berlin, 2000, p. 189). Herder's understanding of the individual's relations to their speech community reveals an expressivist view. Each culture, and each individual within that culture, "has its own way of being human, which it cannot exchange with that of any other except at the cost of distortion and self mutilation." (Taylor, 1977, p. 15) In other words, to express something is simultaneously an act of self-realization and of social-cultural realization. A culture lives out of a certain history and expressive practices specific to them, but these cultural forms are expressed in the lives of individuals who continually reshape these forms.

At the personal level, Taylor's (1977, p. 17) interpretation of expressivism means that expression involves bringing to fruition one's inchoate sense of the world, and in doing so, clarifying *just what one's sense of the world is*. When people speak, sing, pray or write, they give expression to cultural forms through a common language, and these expressive practices also give people a sense of *place* and experience in the world. The notion of expressivism is therefore powerfully spatial,

for it draws out expression and space as complementary aspects of cultural practices. Not only does a human being's life unfold in a manner particular to their time and place and cultural milieu, but more importantly: the very act of expression shapes the meaning of that particular time and place and cultural milieu. In my view, expressivism makes *homo cogitans* give way to *homo poeta*.

Not only does an inherently social and cultural view of individual expression emerge from expressivism, but expression also reveals the individual self's constitution in community. Expressivism is a turn away from the Enlightenment ideal of the isolated thinker or the Romantic ideal of the self-expressing genius, towards that of the human being caught up in a matrix of cultural meanings. Thinking on Herder's expressivism in their paper "Is Expressivism Dead? Reconsidering its Romantic Roots and Its Relation to Social Constructionism", Fishman and McCarthy (1992, p. 649) note how expressivism must be understood as an inherently communal understanding of expression. Fishman and McCarthy (1992, p. 650) relate a passage from Herder's (1966, p. 128) essay *On the Origin of Language* to clarify this point,

> I cannot think the first human thought, I cannot align the first reflective argument, without dialoguing in my soul or without striving to dialogue. The first human thought is hence in its very essence a preparation for the possibility of dialoguing with others.

Herder is saying that thought, contrary to the idea that thinking is the rational work of an individual, is in fact always in preparation for public speech. In other words, expression (linguistic or otherwise) not only fulfills the humanity of the individual, but it also realizes the individual's communality with others. The communal

dimension of expression, for Taylor (1995, p. 104), emerges from the idea that expression always expresses communal normative standards… that there is an "irreducible rightness" to any kind of expression. Irreducible rightness or normativity means that all expression is in the domain of the social and cultural, is part of a practice that makes some expressions but not others the *right ones* to express a state of affairs or experience. One cannot define the rightness of expression outside of the realm of human meaning; one is always referred back to the historically and culturally situated human inhabitant.

So to express is also to act within an evaluative space that precedes me as an individual. That evaluative space is the history of the normative practices of my culture, that is itself realized and clarified in the act of expression. This communal notion of expression weaves together an intimacy between individuality and sociality, and creates an entry-point for psychological understanding. Finding the "right word" to express my situation not only involves clarifying my experience, but also reminds us that spatial expressions like "home" are powerfully normative.

## What is an Expressivist Psychology of Space?

What values does articulating the implicit spatiality of human experience bring out from an already rich expressivist view? As I demonstrate throughout the thesis, human beings primarily experience the world in terms of places and spaces, and spaces set the stage for expression, just as expressions give spaces certain experiential possibilities. Living rooms, bedrooms, public parks, Internet forums,

books, schools, word processors, video games, television shows, movie theatres, art galleries, churches and other opportunities for gathering are all spaces that we inhabit in our everyday lives. All of these spaces are weaved together through social practices into a total cultural milieu, by people who inhabit these spaces. An expressivist view allows me to examine how our current spatial metaphors are expressive of the kinds of cultural spaces we live in.

Inhabited spaces call for particular practices geared to those spaces: one does not usually eat in the bathtub or defecate in the kitchen. In each space, certain kinds of social and cultural practices become normative for the inhabitant as this person participates in the space with others over time. The kitchen becomes a center for conversation because this is where the family gathers as the parents cook, eat together, tell stories, and reflect on the day together. The child's bedroom is a space for playing with siblings during the day, and a space for storytelling at night with caregivers.

From this expressivist perspective, we are always caught up in some kind of historically inhabited space that powerfully shapes who we are as expressive creatures. Although I can only allude to the process here and clarify it later, as a space emerges from regularized social and cultural practices, the selves who inhabit those spaces acquire *habitudes*. The word "habitude" (from *Fr.* 'customs' or 'usually') means to describe the process of acquiring cultural dispositions as one comes to inhabit a cultural space.[5]

[5] Writer Noël Arnaud, whom Gaston Bachelard draws many examples from in his expressivist work, puts this point even more strongly: "Je suis l'espace où je suis." (*I am the space where I am.*)

If it is true that people are always caught up in some kind of inhabited space that demands irreducibly normative practices from them, then a central problem for an expressivist psychology involves articulating aspects of inhabited space that pertain to the development of the self.

Expressivist psychology makes spatiality the central metaphor for understanding and clarifying how individuals inhabit their cultures, and simultaneously how cultural practices inhabit individuals. I make new psychological distinctions that show how human beings are always situated in cultural locales, and show how certain manners of inhabiting spaces – modes of dress and address, myths and stories, modes of gesture and expression, spiritual rites – lead to different habitudes. In other words, my expressivist approach takes a person's psychological life as expression of a habitude that is situated in a certain time and space, in a certain personal and cultural history, in a certain culture, with certain meanings for events and actions. It denies anything essential to the human psyche and instead places the burden of interpretation upon how certain modes of inhabiting spaces offer people certain expressive habitudes. In the chapters that follow, I show how inhabited space consists of at least three aspects drawn from expressivism: common space, moral space and poetic space.

To begin, I demonstrate how expressivist psychology is radically different from a naturalistic psychology. Working by example, I show how Eva Simms – a developmental psychologist versed in expressivist thought – and Michael Tomasello – a developmental psychologist who struggles to escape the assumptions of Enlightenment naturalism – differ in their understanding of the same psychological

phenomena. This short analysis reveals two competing psychological accounts of space and language; one account is steeped in expressivism and the other retains naturalist assumptions.

Contrasting Expressivism with Naturalism in Psychology: An Example.

In his book *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition*, Michael Tomasello (1999) argues that human beings are unique in their ability to acquire and pass on knowledge to their children by using language. For Tomasello, cognitive identification is the key skill that makes cultural knowledge transmission possible in human beings, and not possible in nonhuman primates such as chimpanzees and bonobos. Tomasello (1999, p. 76) writes, "… the child simply sees or imagines the goal-state the other person is intending to achieve in much the same way that she would imagine it for herself, and she then just sees the other person's behaviour as directed toward that goal in much the same way that she sees her own." Identifying another human being as an intentional being like oneself, writes Tomasello (1999, pp. 73-75), is the crucial precondition for jointly attending to something and being together in a shared space.

When an infant and an adult jointly attend to a third thing for an extended period of time, writes Tomasello (1999, p. 97), they create a *joint attentional scene.* In order to act in an orchestrated manner you and I must attend to the same thing at the same time, as well as be aware that our situation involves *both* of us. The infant must be sensitive to not only the adult and the object of attention simultaneously,

but also *the adult's intentions towards that object*.[6] If an infant cannot identify the adult as an intentional other, there can be no joint attentional scene. Tomasello's cultural theory of cognitive developmental in human beings makes identification with the intentional other the lynchpin for their leap into cultural life. From there, the child can take up cultural tools like language. Without joint attention and cognitive identification, an infant or animal cannot acquire language. Tomasello sees this as a cultural understanding of human psychological development.

What does Tomasello's view of human development presuppose about human sociality, if we accept his proposal that joint attention is a crucial step in human development? Early childhood developmental psychologist and phenomenologist Eva Simms proposes a different interpretation of infant development that she draws from expressivists such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Martin Heidegger and Gaston Bachelard. Where Tomasello interprets Piaget's experiments in child development as evidence for a cognitive basis for the acquisition of language, Simms interprets Piaget's experiments as evidence of an emerging emotional, familial and bodily world for the child. Where Tomasello envisions the infant prior to the "nine month revolution" as an individual creature much like other nonhuman primates incapable of the cognitive skills necessary for language and cultural learning, Simms sees the infant as a cultural and social being from the beginning. For Simms, the infant-and-mother dyad *already* enjoys a form of consensuality through the rhythms of breastfeeding and sleeping, prior to any cognitive work. The infant's rooting reflex and suckling mouth are already

[6] Joint attention usually emerges in infants around the nine month period.

prefigured to meet the shape of the breast and nipple, and call forth nourishment from the responsive mother (Simms, 2008, p. 14). In other words, the mother-infant nursing dyad is not the temporary meeting of two individual bodies, but is rather a proto-social entanglement in which mother and infant complement and complete one another's expressions. According to Simms (2008, p. 23) the space held between mother and infant has a triadic structure similar to the one Tomasello imagines: "Both mother and infant are turned to and tuned into the sensory properties of a shared world, and express the assumption that this world is the same for both of them." In other words, for the newborn infant whose world is defined by the maternal space, *all of its inhabited space is constituted in the common space she holds with her mother.* The mother and child do not build their way toward a joint attentional scene as we see in Tomasello's view – they already belong to one that emerges into a common space.

Infant "intentionality" in Simms's expressivist reading is not a cognitive skill or capacity, but is rather a directedness of action that is prefigured by the maternal space in which it appears. The visual contrast of the mother's face provides the initial contours that guide looking and seeing for the infant, and these contours shape how the infant perceives. The infant sticks out her tongue and matches the expression on her mother's face, not because there is a moment of identification with a conspecific as we see in Tomasello's cognitive account, but rather because *she cannot yet distinguish between her own actions and the world around her*. The maternal space defines the infant's perceptual world, and this forms a consensuality

that is not cognitive but rather carried in the continual responsivity of mother and infant.

Where Tomasello pushes towards a social and cultural account of linguistic development in children, the condition for language ultimately rests upon *individual* cognition that *eventually* becomes social and cultural. Prior to enculturation, Tomasello's infant is born into an acultural world. In Tomasello's account, the pre-intentional infant cannot acquire culture because she lacks the ability to recognize the mental state of the other (i.e. the other's goal-directed behaviour)… the acquisition of cultural language is predicated upon a cognitive foundation. Simms – through the expressivist scholars that she draws upon - argues that the infant, even prior to its birth, is already situated in a culturally specific lived space and time. Nursing is an early form of embodied socialization that opens up the infant to later, more elaborate social practices. While Tomasello's view may be concordant with Simms's view after joint attention has developed, his pre-intentional infant does not really live in a social-cultural space. Tomasello's account misses the strong social practices that inaugurate the infant into a social and cultural world. The liaison of the nursing mother and her infant shape a consensual reality and common space that both beings are attuned to, and make possible later elaborations of that inhabited space.

The distinction between Simms's expressivism and the naturalist assumptions implied in Tomasello's account of linguistic development g opens us up to larger questions regarding the expressive qualities of inhabited space. How do inhabited spaces shape the field of possible expressions of those who inhabit them?

What does it mean to dwell in or inhabit a space over time, and how do individuals experience change in their expressive habitudes as their spaces change? How do local spaces like the household take on certain expressive qualities through much larger (and usually more distant) cultural and institutional practices that are not apparent to the infant?

In this reading, the expressive qualities of particular cultural spaces are crucial for understanding how human beings develop into selves that can speak, be addressed, be held responsible for their actions, and so on. An expressivist psychology is an interpretive enterprise that investigates how individuals are always situated within specific common spaces at a specific time, and conversely how larger social spaces such as political institutions radiate into an individual's experiences of inhabited spaces. In other words, our experience both spirals inwards from cultural norms and history to individual experience and spirals outwards from an individual's history of inhabiting spaces to larger cultural spaces. This way of interpreting cultural and personal practices is an expressivistic approach.

In this thesis, I explore three related but distinct aspects of inhabited space and introduce ways of thinking about those spaces in terms of human experience. I consider how inhabited spaces can be understood as "moral spaces", "common spaces" and "poetic spaces". These three aspects bring into focus the moral, social, and poetic practices expressed in inhabited spaces. In the following section, I take up the three aspects of inhabited spaces central to the thesis - moral spaces,

common spaces, and poetic spaces – and use the terms to give a brief sketch of the expressivist approach I pursue throughout the rest of the thesis.

Bedsharing as a Cultural Expression of Common, Moral and Poetic Spaces

I often think of my friend who drives around for hours each day with his one-year-old daughter in the back seat of his car, so that she can fall asleep. When his daughter finally falls asleep, she is carefully transported to the crib that lies across the hallway from the master bedroom. The parents nervously watch the baby monitor for the rest of the evening, and baby toys are readied to soothe her back to sleep when she awakens alone in her crib. If she wakes up, she is carried downstairs to watch children's television shows until she falls asleep again. At least one-third of the family's day is occupied with readying the child to sleep independently. I suspect that his experience is fairly widespread among new parents; and yet what a strange expression of North American life! How can we understand his experience of infant sleep patterns through an expressivist view that interprets his experience as a meaningful cultural practice particular to his family's inhabited spaces?

While bedsharing (an infant sleeping in close proximity to the caregiver) has historically been the norm for the vast majority of cultures, bedsharing within American households is extremely rare (Morelli, Rogoff, Oppenheim & Goldsmith, 1992, p. 604). In Canada, the federal government explicitly mandates against bedsharing, instead suggesting that, "The safest place for an infant to sleep is alone in a crib." (Health Canada, 2008, para. 1) While the medical and moral status of bedsharing is debated at the highest levels of Canadian social institutions, direct

consequences of this are experienced in the locality of the domestic space such as my friend's home. In agreement with Morelli et al. who problematize North American bedsharing practices, Simms (2008, p. 8) writes,

> When children sleep apart from their parents, a whole host of soothing practices becomes necessary to make the transition from waking to sleeping and from daylight to dark bearable for the young child: night-lights, soothing toys, bedtime stories, carrying or even driving the baby around till it falls asleep.

In other words, national anxiety over bedsharing is reflected in the lives of caregivers and children, making bed time a constant source of tension.[7] But how can childrearing advice enshrined at the federal level make its way into the domestic spaces that parents and children inhabit? Or does the moral expression originate in the family home and spiral its way up to national institutions?

In other words, bedsharing is less of a problem of safety and more of a moral directive. To not bedshare, according to Morelli et al. (1992, p. 604) implies a common North American moral notion: parents desire to foster independence and autonomy in the child as early as possible. While these soothing practices and the manner in which they are done (e.g. driving around for hours with the infant, readying toys for the crib) are particular to my friend's household, it gives us a brief glimpse into the "moral spaces" that are embedded in Canadian social and political life. If I ask him if he is aware of Health Canada's policy on bedsharing, he says that he does not know it, but feels that bedsharing is somehow "inappropriate" for his household. In that way, moral spaces express the moral values implicit in the

[7] A cursory search of Internet discussion forums reveals thousands of conversations about the moral, legal and medical questions surrounding bedsharing in North America.

domestic space: some things are appropriate while others are not. Morelli et al. (1992, p. 607) describe the representative feeling among American parents that, "It was time to give him his own space, his own territory." The infant appropriates the Canadian social imaginary through mom and dad, who are themselves participating within the cultural practices and norms of their families and friends.

In that way, institutionalized warnings against bedsharing emerge from cultural practices implicitly shared within a nation. My friend his wife do not bedshare with their child because they themselves live in moral spaces that perceive bedsharing as morally questionable, physically dangerous and an impairment of normal child development. The child is raised in moral spaces that, both at the institutional and domestic levels, preclude the possibility of bedsharing; in that way *inhabited space describes a field of possibilities for expression*.

Moreover, the infant experiences the *particular* manner in which her parents struggle to maintain this normative sleeping arrangement. They set up her sleeping space in a way particular to their family traditions and aesthetic sense; the family has its own manner of enacting the home as a moral space and do not play out a pre-made script. The family's manner of inhabiting the domestic space enlarges and changes to include the new infant, just as the infant acquires the family's particular manners of sleeping and eating and speaking as a habitude. The normativity of the familial moral space is appropriated poetically, always undergoing transformation as it is expressed. In other words, the home is a "poetic space" for at least two reasons: (1) the family has a mode of inhabiting the home in a way that expresses moral values particular to them – they are interpreters of a cultural language, and

(2) the infant reshapes moral and common spaces of the home as she develops within it.

## Common Spaces, Moral Spaces and Poetic Spaces: A Synopsis of this Thesis

Throughout the chapters that follow, I introduce three seemingly unconnected case studies drawn from three totally different cultures. I show that in order to understand how these case studies are connected, one must take an expressivist view that prioritizes spatial language. That is, each of the case studies points towards the same kind of understanding of the spatial. This process resembles the act of viewing a sculpture: I stand in one place and make some observations, and then moving to the other side of the sculpture I see a different aspect of it. By working my way around the sculpture I begin to perceive its many aspects, each bearing upon the same work of art.

I argue that the primary image expressed in each case study is the image of *home*: the domestic space that people can be *themselves* in. I demonstrate how an individual's expressive capacity is powerfully reshaped as their home space undergoes change. When the home space is maligned or destroyed, the individual and even their culture face trauma; similarly when the individual experiences growth in the home space their capacity for expression widens. I conclude with considerations of how the notion of home is central to an expressivist psychology.

## Chapter Two: Common Spaces

In the second chapter, I draw from Charles Taylor's articulation of expressivist anthropology and the expressivist view of language to articulate the notion of common space. Common spaces involve how people experience a space *together* and not just as a collective of individuals.

I borrow Taylor's distinction between two forms of modern common space – topical (local) and metatopical (non-local) space – to show how common spaces are historically situated. In modernity our experience of communality now extends outwards from the locus of interpersonal talk to how we imagine ourselves in relation to a larger social body.

To elaborate upon the distinction between topical and metatopical common spaces, I interpret the stories of John M. Hull, a man who goes blind over several years and documents and interprets his experience of blindness. I consider how John Hull's experiences must be understood in terms of radical changes to his common spaces, both topical and metatopical. His ability to see, feel and act are profoundly disrupted. By interpreting his stories and dreams through my spatial-expressive approach, I show that blindness is first and foremost a transformation of one's common spaces. Blindness changes how one can relate to other people, and it is not simply a change in perceptual modalities.

Chapter Three: Moral Spaces

In the third chapter, I draw upon Taylor's notion of the self and its constitution in moral spaces. From an expressivist view, all inhabited spaces involve evaluations of what is good or better or right or wrong or worthy or unworthy.

Moral spaces, according to Taylor, are comprised of landmarks of the good that help to clarify what is worthy of individual and communal desire. Moral spaces belong to a specific culture with a specific history. To elaborate upon the notion of moral space, I take up two anthropological case examples. In one case example I consider how the Crow tribe experiences the gradual collapse of their moral spaces in the late 19th century, and consider how this collapse spirals into the lives of individual Crow people. In a second case example, I show how a West African tribesman is banished from his community and how banishment eradicates his moral spaces such that he is rendered blind in the process. In both cases I demonstrate that moral spaces are simultaneously cultural and individual, and that effects at one social-cultural level spiral upwards or downwards to other levels.

Chapter Four: Poetic Spaces

In the fourth chapter, I take up the later work of philosopher and literary critic Gaston Bachelard concerning poetics and space.[8] Bachelard's vision of an involved, active reader of poetry – the imaginer – is one who shapes their space in the act of interpreting another person's poetic expressions. Bachelard presents "topoanalysis" as a phenomenological method for interpreting poetic expression spatially. In this expressivist formulation of *poiesis* (*Gr*. 'to make'), Bachelard sees *something new being shaped in expression that reshapes the imaginer*. In this

[8] While Taylor and Berlin do not mention Bachelard as an expressivist, he does in fact draw upon the same kinds of expressivist scholars I mentioned earlier.

phrasing, Bachelard's understanding of imaginary spaces fully instantiates expressivist psychology as a poetic enterprise.

I borrow Bachelard's topoanalysis to understand spatial expressions and images poetically, just as I interpret poetic expressions and images spatially. I return to two earlier case examples to explicate the power that topoanalysis brings to interpreting poetic expression. I consider the life of Plenty Coups – the last great chief of the Crow tribe – and a medicine dream he has that radically reshapes the Crow imaginary and his self-understandings. In the second case example, I consider a poetic experience John Hull has that allows him to come to terms with his blindness. I show how Hull articulates something new from his experience, thus opening him up to a new relation with his world and his blindness. In both examples I highlight how these people draw upon poetic images in order to express their new experiences in inhabited spaces. Both Hull and Plenty-Coups are confronted with a new understanding of what it means to be at-home in their changing spaces… both come to reshape their uninhabitable spaces into poetic spaces.

# Chapter Two: Common Space as a Language for Understanding Changes in Communal Experiences

## Common Space is a Cultural Good

Months after listening to my friend recount her experience of the fire that destroyed her home, I found myself reading a collection of stories by John M. Hull – a man who had gone progressively blind until he lost his visual sight completely. Reflecting on his first year of blindness, Hull (1997, p. 47) writes,

> Blindness takes away one's territorial rights. One loses territory. The span of attention, of knowledge, retracts so that one lives in a little world. Almost all territory becomes potentially hostile. Only the area which can be touched with the body or tapped with the stick becomes a space in which one can live. The rest is unknown.

Again, I had come across an experience of loss and grieving expressed in spatial language. How could it be that John Hull does not perceive a territory as *his*, and in so doing renders the territory as uninhabitable, when his perceptual reach shrinks? Would it be equally true that one's perceptual reach would shrink and expand as one's physical territory shrinks and expands? I intuited a relationship between John Hull's blindness and my friend's house fire. I suspected that their territorial boundaries grew and shrank according to the degree to which they inhabited these territories with others. This intuition demanded an expressivist approach using spatial language that could account for the relationship between inhabitation, communality and expression. Charles Taylor's notion of "common space", grounded in expressivism, is useful for understanding communal spatial change.

Following Taylor's use of the term common space, I propose a spatial understanding of sociality that makes new connections between an individual's experience and the quality of the common spaces they inhabit. I take up Charles Taylor's distinction between topical and metatopical spaces to demonstrate how modernity changes our understanding of common spaces. I consider how we experience the private and the public in common spaces. I use this spatial language – topical, metatopical, private and public – to interpret John Hull's stories about going blind. The expressivist psychology of inhabited space I take up interprets John Hull's experiences in terms of the quality of the common spaces that he inhabits with others, how his common spaces change as he loses his sight, and how his capacity for perception and self-expression is reshaped.

From an expressivist psychological perspective, common space can be understood as the distance and quality of intimacy people experience between themselves and others. For some, their common spaces are defined by extreme distance from others to the point of dissociation; for others the distance is so intimate that they cannot easily distinguish themselves from others. Our experience of communality takes place within even larger common spaces as we enlarge the space of interpretation: institutional and political orders spiral down into personal experience. The crucial point is that all personal experience must be understood from within a matrix of common language, rituals, institutions, meanings, and other cultural practices that the individual is a part of.

## A Communal Understanding of Common Spaces

Taylor begins his articulation of common spaces[9] phenomenologically. Taylor gives a definitive example: a man on a train clears his throat, ostentatiously wipes his brow and says 'Whew!' Presumably, a neighboring passenger hears him, and all of a sudden notices both the man and the sweltering heat of the train. Where previously both passengers experienced the sweltering heat of the train ride singly, the expressed 'Whew!' creates a "common vantage point" from which they can experience their misery *together* (Taylor, 1985, p. 259 and p. 264). The common space that is shaped in this moment is owed partly to the man's ostentatious expression, his neighbor's understanding of the expression, and the train in which they reside. Although this example does not tell us much about the larger cultural world in which this particular common space appears, it at least gives us an idea of how common space is different from say, a joint attentional scene.

Taylor juxtaposes his communal understanding of expression and common spaces to the Enlightenment picture of the rational individual characterized by her or his natural rights and property. Charles Taylor's communal view of persons makes values and beliefs the outcome of a person's participation within common spaces and traditions. Participating in cultural traditions and common spaces are an inescapable part of becoming a person (Taylor, 1989, p. 29). Before people can articulate their experience for others they are already situated in common spaces. There is a strong claim about the constitutive relationship between community and person underlying the idea that common spaces precede individual experiences.

[9] Taylor uses the terms "public space" and "common space" interchangeably. I use common space through this thesis.

Taylor (1971, p. 32) writes, "… we are aware of the world through a 'we' before we are through an 'I'." Expressivism, in that way, turns individualism on its head by making community and history prior to the person's sense of self. This is the communal understanding of expression that both Taylor and Berlin articulate from Herder (see "Herder's Expressivism" in the first chapter for an expanded discussion on this topic).

Two relationships between common spaces and the development of the self are crucial for an expressivist understanding of language according to Taylor (1985, p. 35): (1) I am a self because I am inaugurated as a speaker in a speech community, and (2) I can come to understand myself through the interlocutors whom I speak with. The first aspect stresses the importance of becoming a self in one's upbringing within a common space. The communities of my upbringing are the first inhabited spaces within which I am inaugurated as a self of some kind, where I am responsible for my own utterances and actions, and/or a person who can be addressed as an interlocutor. The second aspect stresses that my self-understanding originates from the specific people whom I inhabit spaces with. Taylor writes, "Even as the most independent adult, there are moments when I cannot clarify what I feel until I talk about it with certain special partner(s), who know me, or have wisdom, or with whom I have an affinity." (Taylor, 1989, p. 36) If it is true that certain people are crucial for my constitution as a self, then one can only understand oneself and *be* oneself in the company of interlocutors who matter.

But again, moments of self-expression shared among intimate friends depend upon common spaces. The common spaces of intimate friendships, not the friend per se, makes my self-expression possible. We take up a common language and common practice – like sitting down in the corner of a coffee shop and confiding in one another in whispers – and these practices are made meaningful in the common space of a friendship. And the particular manners of inhabiting a space we take up, such as practices of intimacy and trust through sharing secrets and private experiences, are acquired through our participation in common spaces that precede our particular friendship. Communities set up the spaces in which our particular friendship and self-disclosure can happen at all.

A strong developmental question emerges: how are a person's common spaces intrinsically bound up with the sites in which they became interlocutors? Kirsten Jacobson, a philosopher who draws upon expressivists like Merleau-Ponty and Bachelard, ties together common spaces and the "home". Jacobson (2009, p. 363) writes that our first home, "… is also the place where we learn to speak, to communicate with others, to share (or conceal) joys and pains, to make plans with others, to simply be around people, and in doing so to be involved with them…" The home space – in all of its different cultural manifestations – is one of the most important places in which people become addressable selves who can articulate their experiences for others. From an expressivist view, common spaces emerge from the home. All common spaces must therefore bear the mark of feeling

"at-home" with another person. I return to the notion of being-at-home later in the chapter, where I use it to interpret John Hull's experience of blindness in the family home.

## The Primacy of Common Spaces

Contrary to Taylor's notion of common space, social psychologists rarely perceive persons as inherently communal beings, but rather as individuals caught up in collective behavior. Psychology grew from a tradition that took the Lockean conception of an individual self with natural rights as the basis for study (see page 12 for more on the "punctual self"). Individualism in modernity, according to Taylor (1989, p. 36), denies the importance of community as a source of the self… individualism suggests that I can extract and isolate myself from the "webs of interlocution" that characterize my individuality, and in doing so, come to complete self-definition without interlocutors. The idea that one could completely divorce oneself from one's history or culture and live as a self-made identity, Taylor writes, is a major component of modern ideals of selfhood (Taylor, 1989, pp. 36-37). Taylor believes that modernity has a language of individualism that encourages the belief that interlocutors are only important in childhood upbringing and are cast off completely when one becomes a fully functional individual. In other words, just as Sir Isaac Newton's God sets the universe in motion and then disappears from the picture, for individualism family and traditions must eventually vanish from the individual's life.

In contrast to individualism, Taylor's communal view suggests that although individual solitude can afford novel experiences, there must always come a time that one's self-definitions and articulations are offered to another for contemplation or reaction. All speech/thought finds its roots in both the scenes of address that characterize my childhood (i.e. my childhood home) and the present ones that characterize my adult life.[10] Speaking and thinking emerge and are maintained by one's active participation in a speech community – this is a restatement of Herder's point that thinking is always in preparation for dialogue (see page 25).

Total estrangement from language and interlocution is not really how people inhabit spaces, even after they are inaugurated as speaking and thinking human beings. If language is understood as a social practice that happens in a social field, then the speech community primarily shapes us as speakers and thinkers. Taylor points out how modern individualism takes for granted our embedding in community. Taylor (2007, p. 211) writes,

> Modern individualism, as a moral idea, doesn't mean ceasing to belong at all – that's the individualism of anomie and break-down – but imagining oneself as belonging to ever wider and more impersonal entities: the state, the movement, the community of humankind.

From Taylor's communal view individual experiences therefore emerge from common spaces, and experiences become meaningful as they

[10] Taylor's recognition that the webs of interlocution we enjoy as adults tend to overlap with the webs of interlocution that characterize our childhood life is an important psychological distinction. Object relations theory, the work of psychoanalyst and pediatrician Donald Winnicott, appreciates how the relationships between caregiver and infant are carried forward into the infant's adult life.

are expressed in stories told within common spaces. Interpersonal disagreement, dissociation and social fragmentation come only as a *breach* of an already-established common space. And therefore, if a culture's understandings of common spaces change over time, we should expect a corresponding transformation in the individual's experiences and expressive habitudes. Taylor's communal understanding of the individual allows us to appreciate that a historical and phenomenological understanding of common spaces is necessary in psychology.

But how do expressions of individualism emerge historically? It is in modernity, sociologist Richard Sennett (1974, pp. 16-22) points out, that communal meaning becomes a problem. Sennett's book, *The Fall of Public Man*, traces changes in the meanings of 'private' and 'public' in the modernizing Europe of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Modernity hails a major transformation of European common spaces, such that taken for granted traditions, languages, religious beliefs, are all put in question; it is no longer possible to transparently relate with another person. Central to modernization is that the words "private" and "public" take on whole new meanings in modernity; common spaces become understood as private/public activities. Although Sennett's cultural-historical analysis is significant on its own, it is his argument that the historical transformation of what "public" means in modernity, that is particularly valuable for understanding the modern self. I return to Sennett's history of publics later in this chapter when I consider the modern notion of an "audience".

Social Imaginaries, Topical and Metatopical Common Spaces

Charles Taylor's historical analyses of transformations in the meaning of "public" and "common" appear in both *Modern Social Imaginaries* and *A Secular Age*. In order to understand how common space is experienced, we must understand Taylor's use of the term "social imaginary". Taylor (2007, p. 171) defines a social imaginary as the way in which people "imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations which are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images which underlie these expectations." In other words a social imaginary is a person (or culture's) inarticulate understanding, expressed in all kinds of cultural practices, of their total social situation; it is how people implicitly understand their common spaces. Expressivism offers the idea that social imaginaries are all implicitly held in social practices and not as schematic knowledge in individuals. In other words, social imaginaries emerge from common spaces. Taken for granted understandings are held together, made possible, by inhabited spaces. My participation in a funeral, for instance, implies that others will attend, that there are certain burial practices that must be respected, or that having a funeral at all is a meaningful practice for others; I imagine that the funeral takes place in a space of common understanding. Expressivism allows us to appreciate that every culture has a different kind of social imaginary, and that their social imaginaries change over time as their inhabited spaces change.

The way that I imagine being in community with others is crucial for my understanding of common space. Social imaginaries delimit the habitudes of common spaces – they are taken for granted understandings of what forms of expression fit (or do not fit) certain common spaces. For instance, the space of a grief-stricken funeral demands a solemn attitude from those who attend, where a "celebration of life" type funeral calls for a celebratory mood. In both of these kinds of funerals, people draw upon social imaginaries in order to understand how they should express themselves.

Taylor contrasts two kinds of common spaces instructive for the modern understanding of self. Taylor (2007, p. 187) terms the kind of common space that is shaped from people gathering in a physical locale, "topical" common space. (The term "topical" from *Gr. topoi* – 'place', should remind the reader that a spatial understanding of communality is at stake). In that way, any investigation of topical common space requires an understanding of how particular cultural practices of assembly or gathering express topicality. For example, consider how the somber space of a funeral gathering calls for different experiences and habitudes than the trepidatious yet joyful space of a wedding ceremony. Both involve physical assembly and communal experience, but both also involve different kinds of cultural practices and sentiments that give the topical common space its particular mood. We can even imagine that topical common space is something universal, insofar as all cultures practice some kind of gathering or assembly.

But topical common space is not the only mode of communality that the *modern* self participates in. Taylor (ibid) defines "metatopical" common space as a

mode of understanding that, "knits together a plurality of such spaces into one larger space of non-assembly". Metatopicality involves imagining oneself as a part of larger social spaces like one's neighborhood, province or nation, and in that way metatopical common spaces transcend topical common spaces. Where topical common spaces are expressed in physical gatherings like family meals and religious rituals, metatopicality is expressed in my sense that I belong to a larger social body that does not gather in the same physical space.

Modern persons take for granted that a larger social picture exists, and this social body exerts a tremendous force in everyday life. Borrowing from Jurgen Habermas's notion of the "public sphere", Taylor (2007, p. 186) argues that the modern understanding of metatopical common space is bound up with a shift in the social imaginary. Taylor (2007, pp. 186-187) notes that historically the dominant understanding of metatopicality was through the Church or State, but after the 18th century (and the development of mass media like the printing press, mass media, telephones, Internet), metatopicality becomes expressed in secular the common spaces of current events, common interests and political opinion. The public sphere redefines our social imaginaries by extending metatopical common spaces through social technologies.

Metatopicality changes the way in which we understand ourselves as participants in a social reality. Imagining myself as a part of a larger social body (e.g. that I am Métis, an Albertan, a Canadian) changes how I experience topical common

space. I not only owe my existence as a person to the domestic spaces that I grew up in, but also my participation within the metatopical common spaces of my life.

So that is why when I read a novel, for example, two complementary experiences emerge. I have the sense that the book is meaningful because I might talk about it with my friends and family and relate my experience of it; it is meaningful in terms of the topical common spaces I live in. But I also experience the novel in terms of it being read by an *anonymous* public – thousands of people whom I do not know all have *the same book* and we potentially could engage in a conversation regarding the story told in it. Central to the modern social imaginary is that metatopical common spaces are largely composed of an anonymous public of strangers who share a common interest with me.

In what follows, I further develop the notions of topical and metatopical common spaces by interpreting John Hull's experience of blindness. Hull's stories express an intense, and often touching, sense of loss and grief. I suspect that many readers see Hull's stories and reflections as expressions of grief regarding the loss of a perceptual modality, and overlook the ways in which his social reality contracts around him. What does it mean, for instance, that John "loses territory" as he goes blind? Why would unknown territory become perceived as "hostile" to him?

I show that John's participation in topical common spaces like the family home are only half of the picture; his participation in metatopical common spaces such as religion, education and careers powerfully shape his

experience of social reality. I show how becoming blind reshapes his common spaces, both topical and metatopical, just as his changing common spaces reshape his experience of blindness. I argue that what we call *seeing* is predicated upon expressive practices that people reshape – expand or contract – their common spaces through. To become blind, then, is to lose grips with the expressive practices that the visually sighted share like the subtle interplay of facial expressions in conversation. In that way, my interpretations of John's stories and reflections are refinements of the spatial language I laid out earlier in the chapter.

## A Short Biography of John Hull

Born into a devout Methodist family living in the southeastern part of Australia – his father a minister – John is raised in a strong Christian faith tradition. At the age of thirteen he is diagnosed with cataracts and within months loses much of his sight. Over the next decade, cataract surgeries correct much of his vision but unfortunately cause a detached retina in one eye, leaving a large scotoma. He pursues university education in the arts, theology, religion and education, and eventually takes up teaching positions in education and religious training in the United Kingdom. Around this time, in the late 1970s, his "good" eye begins to develop cataracts. While his sight is fading fast, he has a child, divorces, and remarries in this period. In 1980, finally acknowledging the inevitable, he registers as a blind person.

At the age of about forty-eight, three years after he is registered as a blind person, John Hull begins making an audio diary of his experiences as a new blind person. For four years, John meticulously describes his difficulties with gripping his world and reflects upon his own reactions to blindness. He writes,

> In 1983 the last light sensations faded and the dark discs had finally overwhelmed me. I had fought them bravely, as it seemed to me, for thirty-six years, but all to no avail. It was then I began to sink into the deep ocean, and finally learned how to touch the rock on the far side of despair. (Hull, 1990, pp. 1-9)

In his book *Touching the Rock: An Experience of Blindness,* the theologian and religious educator shows how there is no part of a sighted person's life that goes untouched by the fall – and rise – into blindness. I situate John Hull's experiences of blindness – recorded between 1983 and 1986 – within an expressivist interpretation of common space in order to understand the shrinking psychological world he inhabits.

## The Case for an Expressivist Interpretation of Blindness

In order to enter into John Hull's strange world, we can begin by asking ourselves what blindness means to us as sighted people. What are the implications of going blind? What is its significance? Does it mean that one is "handicapped" or "disabled" in relation to other people who possess a perceptual modality that one no longer does? Is blindness a *lack of* or "deprivation" of visual sight (Merabet et al., 2005)? Are touch and hearing

just other ways of *seeing* things in basically the "same way" as the visually sighted? What does it mean for the person that goes blind – is this just a change in the way they accomplish their day-to-day tasks? Does it mean that, following a neurological account, that other sensory modalities such as touch and hearing unproblematically jump in and retrain the visual cortex for perception (Thaler, Arnott & Goodale, 2011)?

Or is becoming blind, perhaps, a change in being to a sighted person's social and emotional world, such that what made sense as a visually sighted person yesterday no longer bears much relation to how they live today? If that is true, then the experiences of a person born into blindness, and the one who becomes blind as an adult, are incomparable. In the former case inhabited space does not "shrink". The spaces of those born without visual sight are not originally apprehended in a visual manner. As I show later, in the latter case inhabited space contracts around the visually sighted person who goes blind; the newly blind begin to grow *distant* from the sighted people they once enjoyed common spaces with.

The expressivist view that I advance here is that a perceptual psychology that would treat blindness as a modular change, as a *mere* change of perceptual modality or *merely* a change in the way blind person accommodates to social contexts or *merely* a different way of getting geospatial information about one's physical spaces, renders blindness into (at best) an inconvenience and (at worst) a deterministic perceptual deficiency.

Thinking of blindness as a perceptual deficiency loses touch with the social and cultural psychology of blindness. An expressivist interpretation sees Hull's experiences in terms of traumatic changes to his inhabited spaces. *Losing one's sight*, in Hull's case, is the gradual "shrinking" of the spaces formed by his prior participation in a visually sighted world.[11] Hull remains emotionally tied to his visual sight, mourning its loss as one mourns the loss of an entire world. Making the transition into a world of blindness means relinquishing the forty-five years of memories and habitudes Hull has acquired as a visually sighted person.

The interpretations I make are intended as exemplifications of an expressivist interpretation. If I were charged with providing psychological counsel to John, I would do it on the basis of interpreting his stories about *seeing* (or failing to see), as expressions of the common spaces in which he lives. His psyche and his understanding of reality are expressed in his stories, which are themselves attempts at articulating his experiences for others. Through this expressivist approach I try to understand Hull's articulations of blindness even though I am not blind myself, by interpreting his stories as transformations of his inhabited spaces over time.

[11] Because Hull lives in a different social and cultural milieu than the example I take up in the next chapter, I distinguish between shrinking common space and collapsing moral space.

Hull's journey into "deep blindness"[12] reveals the constitutive relationship that sight has with social reality. When the common spaces Hull holds with others begins to contract, he begins to lose his capacity to *see* and act and express himself confidently in the world. Hull begins to live in an inner psychological space shaped by his isolation from outer common spaces.

In that guise, while blindness changes all of the inhabited spaces that comprise one's life, in this chapter I am primarily concerned with transformations in John Hull's common spaces. A vast number of stories in his book are concerned with how his experience of reality is bound up with the common spaces he lives in with the people of his life – his family, his intimate friendships, his workplace, his neighborhood, his church, strangers on the street, and other people whom he imagines to carry weight in his life. The daily moral questions he faces of what is real and motivating and worthy of his love and desire, all involve the widening *distance* he experiences from other people. In other words, changes in Hull's common spaces are echoed in his moral spaces as well.

## Trust and Love in Topical Common Space

Much of this interpretation reflects upon the ways in which Hull comes to inhabit his home with his wife and several children. Hull's

[12] Deep blindness is the experience in which Hull no longer senses or remembers the visual world. He gives the example of a moment in which he does not know whether the number "3" faces backwards or forwards.

participation in the home especially his struggle to maintain a common space with his oldest son Thomas, gives us insight into his shrinking territory.

Thomas is born in the year that John begins to progress into deep blindness; John's relationship with Thomas develops on the basis of his blindness and Thomas's visual sight. Thomas is raised in a domestic space that is geared to his father's experiences, and makes for fairly unproblematic (or rarely contested) practices that characterize the Hull family's domestic space. For instance, the expression 'Show daddy' creates and maintains a common space for John and Thomas. Hull (1990, p. 35) writes,

> Ever since [Thomas] was tiny I have trained him in the expression 'Show Daddy'… 'Show Daddy' means 'Put whatever you've got in your hand into my hand and you will get it straight back.' From the earliest days, I trained him, so that, if I lightly tapped him on the back of the hand, he would immediately put into my hand what he was holding, and I would return it.

When Thomas is asked to 'Show daddy' what he is holding, Thomas understands that he must put the object into John's hand rather than holding it up for him to see it (as he might with visually sighted adults). John and Thomas are able to attend to the same object (i.e. a toy car or a picture in a book) by inaugurating a social practice that draws both John's tactile and Thomas's visual sight into a topical common space. They can *see together* through touching and speaking.

The 'Show Daddy' game in many ways resembles the "joint attentional scene" articulated by Tomasello (1999, pp. 62-66), because both John and Thomas are able to jointly attend to the same object. But what more is there

to the topical common space that John and Thomas enjoy, than joint attention? After all, this is a father and his son who already live in a shared history, and not just two strangers forced to interact in the same space with one another.

What seems to be crucial for their relationship is that Thomas and John grow together and *grow emotionally closer* as they play the 'Show Daddy' game. The game shapes a sense of intimacy for them. This is a special kind of social practice particular to John and Thomas – no one else inside or outside of the home can say 'Show *Daddy*'. The showing ritual is unique to their father-son relationship and expresses the distance and intimate quality of their common space. What is crucial is not that they "construct" a shared experience together, but rather than they come to trust one another while participating in a social ritual that is common to both of them. John has to trust that Thomas will put the object in his hand, just as Thomas must trust John to return the object.

Thomas and John are continually reshaping their topical common space through expressions of surprise, joy, love, frustration, trust and safety as they play the Show Daddy game. As they play together, John and Thomas reshape the meanings of "seeing" and "showing" through a regular practice, thereby transforming the kinds of emotions appropriate for the space. This is the interpretive power that spatial-expressivism brings to the table: the history of their relations prepares a common space, just as their relational practices reshape the qualities of expression possible within that space.

"Showing" becomes a practice common to both blind and visually sighted. Play allows them to grow closer in the intimate common space they share, because John and Thomas both need each other to realize the ritual. When Thomas is a toddler, there is no unbridgeable social or perceptual gap between John and Thomas because their play happens in a topical common space. But what happens when a fissure develops in their topical common space? How do John and Thomas deal with differences of experience?

Hull (1990, p. 36) writes that a few months later, Thomas recognizes that there are certain things that Daddy can read but Thomas cannot, "… pointing to one of his own books he remarked 'Daddy can't read this' and then, pointing to the braille label in a picture book, 'Thomas can't read that'." Thomas thus understands implicitly that there is a difference between what he and his father can read, and by extension 'see' individually. In other words, fissures in their common space begin to emerge that, for Thomas, help to distinguish between his own experience and his father's. The domestic space they cohabit maintains their experiential difference in a fairly unproblematic fashion, because the distinction of 'who can read what' becomes part of the ritual of reading time. The reading game, as a common practice, is what makes differences in perception coherent for both John and Thomas. The 'Show Daddy' game, the reading game, and other domestic practices held in common, maintains a common space that contains their experiential differences. Within this common space, Thomas becomes able to distinguish between his own experience of the world and his father's

experience of the world, just as John becomes sensitive to his son's developing inner life. The intimacy of their common space is reshaped, but not lost, through the widening fissure in experience. But John and Thomas had to live in a trusting and loving common space before a meaningful experiential fissure could develop.

More generally the expressivist interpretation I advance shows how common spaces are prior to their individual experiences. If the common space is primary in experience, then any psychological theory that attempts to ground sociality in joint attention, shared beliefs or common knowledge, misses the spatial *togetherness* that precedes individual experience. Moreover, the bond of trust between John and Thomas allows for individual experience of the same space to emerge without threatening the communal reality of the space.

## The Anxiety of Becoming Blind in Common Space

A few weeks after Thomas begins to intuit a difference between his father's seeing and his own, John has a nightmare. In the nightmare, he is in a symphony orchestra that is performing for a large audience in his city. In the dream, John sits before his music stand and begins to panic. He writes,

> I was in a terrible state because I could not read the music. I was blind. I had no idea what I should play. There was a part for the Solo Recorder, and I was very nervous about what I would do when it came to this part. I got as far as telling somebody else in the orchestra about my problem. We were just beginning to discuss what I would do, whether I would be

> able to bluff my way through, when the dream ended. (Hull, 1990, p. 43)

Hull interprets the dream as a sign that he is beginning to acknowledge that he is living in crisis, and the crisis is precipitated by his blindness. He describes his experience of the dream, "It was a social situation; it was a question of competence; the fear was of a public disgrace and of letting one's colleagues down, and I had a terrible panicky feeling of helplessness. Is this a phallic dream?" (ibid.) With his self-interpretation in mind, how does this dream express something about the social reality that John inhabits? What does an expressivist interpretation reveal about his experience of common space?

I proceed by taking the space of the dream as its focus. In the dream, Hull is in his own city, but the members of the orchestra and the people in the audience of the large amphitheater are all *strangers* to him. He is put on stage as a soloist, and is made the focus of the audience's attention. People depend upon him to do his job and play his role well. He becomes anxious. He fears that his blindness precludes him from participating, and he is bound to disgrace himself in front of the crowd and his colleagues. He wishes to bluff his way through. In other words, Hull is exposed in front of an anonymous public that he fears will judge and condemn him for his impotent performance. The dream seems to be a powerful expression of fear of public exposure and performance anxiety. In this connection, Hull fears judgment

from this anonymous public; and he imagines that he belongs to a common space in which blindness is deemed a failure of normal human functioning.

So how does an expressivist interpretation situate the meaning of his dream? First, we must appreciate the quality of the common space in the auditorium. The people in the audience are not his friends and family, they are nameless strangers. The audience, especially one that is essentially unknown or alien to the performer, is central to the dream.

In his book *The Fall of Public Man*, Richard Sennett traces the changing meanings of the word "audience". Sennett shows that in the modernizing London and Paris of the 18th century the norms for appropriate self-expression in public become confused. Sennett (1971, p. 51) argues that the influx of "unknown" people into these urban centers made for a gathering of *strangers*… immigrants who were cut off from their homelands and communities and bore no obvious ethnic or economic characteristics. With no unambiguous expressive signs of social rank or visible traditions, these new strangers created the "problem" of an *audience*… that is, how should one socially conduct oneself in the presence of strangers? (Sennett, 1971, p. 58) One way the people of these urban centers dealt with strangers, writes Sennett (1971, pp. 60-63), was to express a more *distant* mode of relating with one another. Where gossip had been a mainstay of court life prior to mass urbanization, it took on a peculiar form in the anonymous public spaces of 18th century London and Paris. Other people were now put at a distance, and exposing one's personal and private concerns to strangers became

inappropriate (Sennet, 1971, p. 63). Fear of self-expression even appeared in modes of dress. Sennett (1971, p. 66) writes,

> Clothing which in the late 17th Century was worn on all occasions was by the middle of the 18th Century conceived of as appropriate only on stage and in the street… There appears here the first of the terms of the divide between the public and the private realm: the private realm being more natural, the body appeared as expressive in itself.

In other words, it was no longer appropriate to express and expose *oneself* to other people… the anonymous audience became an object of fear. The private and the public aspects of common space became distinguished bodily, the former body self-expressing and the latter body costumed to facilitate social interactions with an audience.

There is something analogous to Sennett's historical interpretation happening in Hull's dream. Like the man who speaks too personally or too intimately in front of a stranger in 18th century public life, the dream shows John on the cusp of exposing his blindness to an audience. As a member of the orchestra, John feels that his personal performance matters for this common space, and that the judgments and standards of this public (as he imagines them) carry extreme normative weight in his life.[13] Hull's experience of common space is thus defined in terms of shame and embarrassment of his blindness, and the challenge it poses to his masculinity.

[13] It is interesting to note that the orchestra colleague who John confides in puts a "face" to this public. Confiding his shame and embarrassment for his blindness in another seems gestures at the possibility of getting through the performance without being noticed and shamed. In other words, the fear of judgment and shame originates in the metatopical, but confiding in a friend promises to heal his shame topically.

This interpretation not only sheds light on Hull's experience of blindness as an emasculation of his personal expressive capabilities, but also reveals how his anxiety is situated within a social imaginary. In other words, the dream reveals the relationship between John's *self-expression* in the intimacy of the private space, and powerless *exposure* in the anonymity of public space. If the dream is "phallic" in nature, it is because the performance anxiety he experiences clarifies what the phallic means for John: it is connected with his inability to express for others, in an intimate way, the nature of his experience as a blind man. He fears that others expect him to perform and satisfy the standards of visual sight, when that is precisely the thing he cannot do; in that situation he is totally exposed.

In this expressivist interpretation we can intuit that as John's distance between himself and the audience increases so does his fear of exposure. As John's distance between himself and others decreases - for instance, in the intimacy of his home where there is no "audience" - he feels more capable of expressing himself.

The same night, Hull has a second dream. This one is much shorter. He writes, "I was getting Thomas ready for an outing. I was combing his hair, and had the most vivid impressions of his features. I saw his face with the utmost clarity." (1990, p. 43)

At least two aspects of the dream are relevant for understanding Hull's experience of blindness. Whereas the people in the musical dream were effectively faceless, this one dwells on Hull's impression of his son's

face. Where the musical dream took place in a public space, in this dream Hull is preparing Thomas to leave the home.

Both of these details, when taken in connection with my interpretation of his common spaces, reveal something new. The topical common space that John has developed over time with Thomas, evoked by his intimate recollection of the details of his son's face, is about to undergo a change. In this connection combing his son's hair is significant. Most people can remember being groomed by their parents before leaving the home and being seen in public. The parents worry that their child will appear unkempt in front of strangers. The safety and comfort of his relationship with Thomas, taking place within the domestic space, is about to open up to a public space that Thomas will become a part of. The topical space of the family home is growing for Thomas, anticipating a time where he will join a public space that does not understand John's blindness. Above all else, the dream is evidence that Thomas's changing common spaces are a point of anxiety for John.

When the two dreams are juxtaposed, the anxiety of the musical dream – fear of public exposure – extends to his son. Until now, John has enjoyed a relatively unproblematic relationship with Thomas whose topical common space is defined by the domestic space. John's dream prepares him for, or at least expresses an anxiety of, Thomas' enlarging common spaces.

In the privacy of the home, John can express himself without fear of judgment or reprisal – he shares a topical common space of trust and

understanding with his family and friends. But outside of the home, in public, he faces an anonymous audience of strangers whom he fears will not understand him. The schism between John's private modes of expression and his public modes of expression has become a site of anxiety for him. Will Thomas become part of the public that John fears, or will Thomas remain at-home with him?

Daddy, are you blind?

What will happen to John and Thomas' common spaces when Thomas grows older and becomes, presumably, exposed to a world dominated by visual sight outside of the home? When Thomas is three-and-a-half years old, Hull and his wife take him to an exhibition at a cathedral. Thomas overhears his mother asking the ticket salesperson if there is a discount for disabled people. She says, "My husband is blind," and something in the exchange, perhaps his mother's tone, catches Thomas's attention. A few minutes later Thomas approaches his father and says, "Daddy, are you blind?" Hull is taken aback by the question, feels ashamed, and responds evasively, "Who's been telling you that?" (Hull, 1990, p. 58)

For the first time, Thomas begins to perceive an experiential distance between his father and *other people*. Prior to this moment, the problem of experiential difference is understood in terms of his relationship with his father and the family home. Thomas, who is growing in a predominantly visual world dominated by a visual language, is beginning to appreciate that

his father does not see things the same way *as strangers do*. Thomas evidently does not 'know' what blindness *is*, but he – as a three-and-a-half-year-old – has picked up from a short exchange between his mother and a stranger that being "blind" is an exceptional kind of experience, one that most people do not share in. In other words, visual sight is the norm in metatopical common space, and blindness is an exception to this normativity.

Thomas perceives that his father lives differently than he does, and this has something to do with the word "blind". When Hull responds evasively, "Who's been telling you that?" – as if Thomas had been told an egregious lie by a stranger. Hull is effectively trying to deny that there is any fissure in their common space at all. After the exchange, Hull (ibid.) reflects, "I was fearful that some change in my relationship with him might take place." What kind of change in their relationship does Hull fear will take place? How is this fear expressed in terms of a transformation of common space?

Prior to this moment, John's blindness and Thomas's visual sight are both contained in the home's topical common spaces. Thomas is beginning to experience the world outside of the home, and begins to see himself in terms of other visually sighted people. He is becoming a part of the wider public spaces where blindness is treated as a dysfunction and disability. The topical common space that Thomas and John share is beginning to revolve around these new normativities and languages for his father's experience.

John's reluctance to acknowledge that he is blind to his son, from an expressivist perspective, can be interpreted as a bid at containing his son's experience within the space of the home. He is trying to protect their common space. John does not wish to lose the closeness he has with his son, but he also desires to safeguard his son - and himself - from the shame and public exposure he implicitly connects to his blindness. Being "outed" as a blind man who requires special care, by a short and seemingly innocuous exchange between John's wife and a stranger, brings Thomas into new public spaces where blindness takes on new meanings that are avoided or meaningless at home. John is a father at home, but will his son still see him as a father figure when compared to visually sighted men?

In a couple of years, Thomas will presumably enter the public world of newspapers and television and school, and he will undoubtedly encounter new formulations of blindness that pathologize and infantilize his father. In connection with the music and hair-brushing dreams that John Hull has two months prior, Thomas's innocent question anticipates his realization that his father is blind, and that a silent majority of people see blindness as a dysfunction or deficiency.

In other words, the topical common space that Thomas and John previously enjoyed within the home is beginning to overlap with the metatopical common spaces of an anonymous public. John experiences the overlap of these spaces as a threat to his fatherhood and his manhood – he desperately wants to prevent Thomas from participating in the public spaces

that infantilize the blind. From this experience, John implicitly understands that Thomas is beginning to acquire the language of blindness from strangers.

These new normativities transform their common space and begin to reveal the pains that John goes through in order to maintain his sense of masculinity and power within the family home.[14] If Thomas begins to perceive his father in terms of the language of deficiency normative to the visually sighted, the common space he enjoys with his father will begin to shrink and their relational distance will increase.

## Increasing Interpersonal Distance, Contracting Common Space, and Diminishing Expressivity

Geometric definitions of space imply that as the volume of a physical space decreases, the objects contained within it are pulled in closer together; the space grows denser. Like watching the walls close in on a room full of toys. The opposite is true for common space. As one's experiences come to have less and less in common with others - as one's common spaces contract - one feels *increasingly* distant from other people.

Many of Hull's journal entries are concerned with how distant he feels from his family, especially when he cannot express himself in a way that

[14] Perhaps owing to John's self-interpretation that the music dream is "phallic", this may mean that John worries that Thomas will see his father's blindness as weakness or dependency, meaning that Thomas becomes a threat to his power and masculinity in the home.

recognizes a common space with his children. In one entry only a few weeks after his music dream, he reflects on the experience of trying to play with his children in a noisy, chaotic living room. He writes, "I feel as if I have become nothing, unable to act as a father, impotent, unable to survey, to admire, or to exercise jurisdiction or discrimination. I have a strange feeling of being dead." (Hull, 1990, p. 62) One can imagine a roomful of children playing, showing one another their toys, and laughing at the faces they make to one another. Off to the side of this room sits Hull, who is trying to make sense of the noisy chaos and cannot connect the vocal expressions of joy or laughter or frustration to the play situation that they are a part of. While his visually sighted children play together unproblematically, the play space becomes increasingly inchoate for Hull. He is not a part of their game, yet, as a father he expects himself to be. He writes, "Each voice comes, as it were, from an increasingly remote distance, and is heard with increasing reluctance. I build up inner tension. There is a tightness in my forehead, a feeling that I will not be able to go on much longer." (Hull, 1990, p. 63) As his distance increases from his children, common space contracts around him. His pain becomes acute, his head caught in a closing vise. His only escape, he writes, is to sink into a coma-like sleep in which he feels nothing but the beating of his heart.

How do changes in John's common space with his children come to reshape his capacity for expression? How does his experience reflect a space that is no longer common? John is excluded from his children's play-space because his blindness renders him unable to grasp the meaning of their play.

One imagines a child screaming – was it an expression of surprise? Fright? Or anger? How did the other children respond? For John, it is a room full of voices disconnected from gestures and activity. The voices become distant to him; in an interview years later he characterizes this as feeling like, "someone always listening to the radio. As if I'm always slightly removed… as if it's not really happening." (Kirchner, 1993) As this distance grows, the common space that once enveloped Hull and his children together, begins to contract and divide. The children remain within the common space they are shaping through their expressive play – the space offers new opportunities for laughter and joyfulness and confrontation. But for Hull, who cannot act into or give shape to the chaotic space around him, his space of expressivity diminishes substantially. Where playfulness creates a broad array of expressive possibilities for the children, the confusion of the scene mutes him and renders him helpless. Worse, because he expects himself to fulfill the duties of a traditional father, his failure to act within the space reduces him to feeling impotent.

Kirsten Jacobson observes the same kinds of phenomena in her spatial interpretation of hypochrondia and agoraphobia. Jacobson (2004, p. 31) notes how, "… [those living with agoraphobia] experience a sense of spatial contraction that mirrors the contraction in their abilities to engage with the people, the environment, and the situations that surround them." As the person's space contracts around them, Jacobson (2004, p. 41) interprets this to mean that "… she has effectively reduced the range of her responsibilities

and possibilities; she has shrunk the space in which she can dwell."

Something analogous happens for John Hull. John cannot meaningfully deal with the enlarged space of the noisy room. But when the space shrinks to the confines of his body, it becomes more manageable. Common space contracts around him, choking him, and the space can barely contain his body. The space no longer demands expression and understanding from him, and shrinks to the confines of his head. He loses consciousness.

Suffocation in Shrinking Common Space: A Panic Attack in the Home

Shrinking common space can be expressed in different ways. At Christmas, John becomes particularly conscious of how a noisy, chaotic and cluttered home full of children and relatives and unfamiliar objects makes his home feel like it is "an environment which is slipping out of control." (Hull, 1990, p. 46). Giving up his study for sleeping space, which usually functions as a sanctuary in his moments of distress, further compounds the situation. Hull (1990, p. 41) writes,

> A day or two before Christmas I had been a little short of breath for an hour or so during the evening. I went upstairs about eleven o'clock at night and this gave me a slight wheeze. Reaching the bedroom, I sat on the edge of the bed. I was suddenly aware that my hands, my forehead and, indeed, my whole body were perspiring. I had an intense feeling of being enclosed. I desperately needed to get out. I must get out. I felt that I was banging my head, my whole body, against a wall of blindness. I had to break through this black curtain, this dark veil which surrounded me… At the same time, I had a sense of outrage… Who had the right to deprive me of the sight of my own children at Christmas time?

The home, normally a place of predictability and comfort for John, suddenly becomes threatening. He begins to breathe asthmatically, the room collapses in around him, he feels claustrophobic. He chokes, wheezes, feeling the entire home smother him. The imploding home gives his rapid breathing its asthmatic quality. When the home – normally the center of all our lived practices – is no longer a sanctuary, one experiences a kind of personal siege… as if the castle that is supposed to protect us from invaders is no longer a place of safety. Jacobson's spatial interpretation of agoraphobia helps to clarify John's experience. Jacobson (2004, p. 34) writes that the agoraphobic, "… has certain places in which he feels comfortable and able to function; these are his home and places he might call *home bases*." One can see how Hull experiences the home, especially his study, as a home base. When his home base is disrupted or taken over by others, his home contracts around him. This is because the predictable layout of the home has been disrupted – toys and suitcases strewn everywhere – and it turns a familiar space into an unknown space. Because John cannot perceive the unfamiliar space, the home space contracts to what he can imagine – his body.

When one no longer can meaningfully participate in the social rituals that comprise Christmastime with family… when the domestic spaces that one retreats to disappear… when there are no inner emotional or imaginary resources to draw upon… when one has no where else left to go… space begins to collapse upon the body itself. The house is literally choking him to death.

Becoming Blind to Our Selves

Based on the expressivist interpretations I have made, what conclusions about the relationships between common space and expression can we draw from Hull's stories? First, common space is that what Hull can hold *in common* with others - things of concern that take place in the lives of Hull and the people he knows. Or, expressed in spatially, common space is the distance and quality of intimacy we experience between our selves and others. When Hull begins to hold less and less in common with others, the distance he perceives between his own experiences and other people's experiences grows, and this erodes his sense of reality. He cannot see what appears to be obvious to everyone else – the smiles on other faces, the toys in his son's hands – he is not part of the communal experiences that most of us take for granted in our lives.

His world, quite literally, becomes *less real to him as it bears less and less resemblance to the visually sighted world that he grew up in and bears no resemblance to the visually sighted spaces that his friends and family live in*. In that way, Hull's inhabited spaces – even physical ones like streets and living rooms and hallways – become increasingly foreign to him. The intimate territory of his youth gradually becomes hostile, foreign territory.

Our sense of reality is not the only thing shaped by our participation in common spaces. Hull's experience points us back to Taylor's communal understanding of expression: we depend upon a community of speakers who

understand us and if we become distant from this community we lose our capacity for meaningful expression. From this spatial-expressivist perspective, the meaning of expression intended here is meant to be broad, because it includes the idea that *seeing* is an expressive activity that extends beyond the visual modality. Seeing involves making distinctions of value in concert with others, and it is predicated upon belonging to some kind of common space. To stand outside of a common space is to lose grips with the meaningful distinctions that others make, and subsequently to become blind to the meanings of the world: of one's own expressions and the expressions of others.[15] In the moments that John Hull cannot see-in-concert with his playing children, those are the moments that he is truly made blind.

In the prior interpretation, the spatial aspect is made focal, for the common space circumscribes a person's possibilities for seeing (expressing). But the expressive and habitudinal aspects of seeing can be made focal instead. When one has developed an ingrained repertoire of habits – say, the way one eats at the dinner table – one becomes blind to one's own practices and the feelings associated with those practices. The way that I chew my food or stab things with my fork or saw through things with my knife or look at other people as I talk, all become 'unconscious' such that I no longer can either *see* my own expressions nor the feelings associated with them. When

[15] There is a third form of expression associated with blindness not introduced in this expressivist thesis: symptomatic expressions such as fainting, conversion and somatization, delusion, and hallucination all point to an individual suffering in social isolation. See van den Berg (1972) for in-depth descriptions and interpretations of patients whose psychiatric illnesses are all symptomatic of social isolation.

these habits are invisible to me and I act them out automatically, I am "at-home" in a space (Jacobson, 2009, p. 366). On the other hand, when I enter into foreign territory, like when I eat dinner with a new acquaintance, such habits become *visible* to others and myself. I become self-conscious of my eating habits, for my habits are no longer geared to the space in which they appear. If I am used to eating silently on the couch as I watch television, but the space of my acquaintance's dining room now demands polite conversation, I may be at a loss for words. In other words, self-expressing habitudes are unproblematic when I am at-home in a space, but when these habitudes become visible, the space becomes foreign to me. After he goes blind, John Hull is only able to "be himself" as a blind man at home with family and amongst friends. He is at-home in only a few spaces: his home, his study, and his workplace. What makes Hull's situation different from those with visual sight is that he is unable to evaluate his own self-expressions in the faces of strangers: he has no visual cues like facial expressions, posture and eye movement to judge how a stranger reacts to his presence. The visually sighted person who finds that their habits are not geared for a social situation experiences it as foreign territory, and picks up on the stranger's bodily clues for a sign of how to express themselves appropriately. But for John Hull, who has no such cues to depend upon, foreign territory becomes "hostile territory". He risks exposure in any space outside of the home base; he is rendered naked for others yet cannot see their responses in order to make sense of his own expressions.

Blindness appears in the individual who can no longer "see" what others take for granted as true or known. This personal blindness is *not* because the percipient lacks some perceptual fact that, if s/he were to claim it, would now 'be in the know' with everyone else, but rather because this person's entire space of distinctions stands outside of the common space that others unproblematically live in. Psychiatrists like van den Berg (1972, Chapter 3) often note that in cases where the therapist confronts the patient with the 'truth' of their own psychiatric illness, the patient cannot accept the therapist's statement as true. Following the expressivist argument, the client cannot accept the truth of their own illness because the therapist's truth lies in a different space than the one the patient lives in. Psychological healing, in this guise, involves drawing the patient back into the common spaces of the client's normative community.

This expressivist account of sight brings up a few important psychological questions that could not be asked before. If all space is inhabited in some way, is *inhabitation* the same practice as *habituation*; does inhabiting a space with others always mean that we fall into the blindness of rituals and habits? If a constantly transforming social world makes certain places uninhabitable for us, how can we come to reclaim an uninhabitable space? Is re-inhabitation a case of "coping" with change, or can one come to live in a space differently such that one transcends mere coping? In the fourth chapter I argue that the notion of "poetic space" addresses these questions.

## Chapter Three: Moral Space as a Language for Understanding Moral and Spiritual Change

### Moral Expressions Demand an Expressivist Psychology

In his book *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*, Jonathan Lear[16] accounts for how the Crow (an aboriginal tribe that lives in the northwestern part of the United States) inhabited spaces undergo serious collapse after cultural devastation in the late 19th and early 20th century. Plenty-Coups, the "last great chief of the Crow nation" is the central figure in Lear's account, and is the basis for Lear's interpretation of a Crow moral ontology. In the book, Lear describes how Plenty-Coups, shortly before he passes away, tells his friend and biographer Frank B. Linderman (an American ethnographer and ally of the Crow) of his life and the times in which he lived. A short biographical note that Linderman makes at the end of the book strikes Lear. Linderman observes that, despite his efforts, Plenty-Coups will not talk about anything that happened after the Crow moved to a reservation. Linderman writes,

> Plenty Coups refused to speak of his life after the passing of the buffalo, so that his story seems to have been broken off, leaving many years unaccounted for. "I have not told you half of what happened when I was young," he said, when urged to go on. "I can think back and tell you much more of war and horse-stealing. But when the buffalo went away the hearts of my people fell to the ground, and they could not lift them up again. After this nothing happened. There was little singing

[16] Lear is a trained psychoanalyst and philosopher who is one of Charles Taylor's colleagues and commenters. Lear's mode of understanding and interpretation is, like the other scholars I rely upon in this thesis, expressivistic.

> anywhere. Besides," he added sorrowfully, "you know that part of my life as well as I do. You saw what happened to us when the buffalo went away."
>
> (Linderman, 1962, p. 311, quoted in Lear, 2006, p. 2)

I am seized by the spatial images that Plenty Coups takes up in his sorrowful words. What does it mean to say that the hearts of one's people "fell to the ground", that they "could not lift them up again", and that after the buffalo went away, "nothing happened"? Following the expressivist interpretive method I lay out in this thesis, the spatial language that Plenty-Coups takes up does more than offer vivid descriptions of his people's dire straits. In my view, there is something inherently spatial about Plenty-Coups's experience that he is trying to express through his metaphors and images.

In this chapter, I introduce an expressive language for understanding a culture's moral and spiritual realities based on Charles Taylor's notion of "moral space". I propose an expressivist understanding of cultural realities by showing how the expressive individual is always constituted within moral spaces. I demonstrate how moral spaces are constituted in cultural practices that discern between expressions of moral rightness, and that the language of moral space has *horizontal* and *vertical* dimensions. Because practices of moral discernment are culturally specific in an expressivist view, I interpret two case studies and show how one culture's moral spaces are inhabited differently than another. I consider how the Crow tribe of the late 19th century undergoes a catastrophic transformation of their moral spaces as their cultural practices disappear. I demonstrate how changes to or disfigurement of a culture's moral practices become expressed in the lives of

individuals, while showing how individual experiences and strong evaluations shape a culture's moral spaces. I contrast the case of the Crow tribe with the case of a Dagara (West African) tribesman who is banished from the moral and spiritual space of his tribe, to show how different kinds of moral spaces provide different expressive possibilities for individuals. I close the chapter by considering how a spatial language of moral expression breaks away from self-contained individualism and situates expressions of individuality within a moral community.

I rely upon expressivist anthropology as a total replacement for anthropologies that grew from Enlightenment traditions, in order to reveal the moral spaces implicit in a culture's practices. I show how transformations in moral expression are expressed spatially: as *contraction*, *collapse*, *rise*, and *expansion*. When moral spaces collapse for an entire community, it becomes increasingly difficult for people to make moral discernments and expressions of moral worthiness. On the other hand, when a community's moral spaces contract, individuals become banished or isolated from the community.

## Understanding Inhabited Spaces Anthropologically

Isaiah Berlin (cf. 1976, 2000) identifies an anthropological view common to expressivists like Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) and Giambattista Vico (1668-1744). Expressivist anthropologies interpret cultural practices and expressions in terms of how a culture makes sense of its own meanings at a certain point in their history. In other words, an expressivist anthropology is vitally interested in a culture's social imaginary. Central to the approach is the idea that

other cultures or other people necessarily live in a manner that shapes certain experiences of the world that are not reducible to any universal theory or essential human task. In other words, one must enter into the practices of a culture before one can understand the particular manner in which they inhabit spaces. Joas (1996, p. 82), a Herder scholar, reminds us that, "Herder did not only see collectives and cultures as the preconditions that make individual self-development possible, but conceived of cultural forms [expressions] in terms of collective self-realization." The myths, symbols, images, dances, paintings, songs, manners of speaking and stories expressed in a society are both expressions of individuals and expressions of the society's unfolding manner of inhabitation.

Describing or characterizing inhabited spaces, for expressivists, involves pointing out how participation in social conventions, rituals, works of art, language, and other cultural practices – taken all together as a culture's way of life – shape and are expressive of a space of selves and individuals. Each culture, and each individual within that culture, "has its own way of being human, which it cannot exchange with that of any other except at the cost of distortion and self mutilation."[17] (Taylor, 1977, p. 15) Taylor's interpretation of Herder's notion of self-realization means that I cannot drop my cultural traditions and language without losing who I am, without losing a sense for what is right or good or worthy in my culture, without having to learn a new way of being a person. To me, his point is vital for anyone doing cultural investigation, because it shows that interpreting cultural meanings risks mutilating those meanings when the interpreter takes for granted his/her own culture's

[17] See "Herder's Expressivism" in chapter one for an elaboration of this point.

languages of moral discernment. In other words, a cultural psychology requires an interpretive method that remains faithful to the moral spaces of other cultures, and does not fall into ethnocentrism. Expressivist anthropology, in my view, offers a culturally sensitive approach to interpreting cultural meaning.

The expressivist anthropological view nascent in Vico and brought to fruition by Herder, according to Berlin (2000) and Taylor (1975), explores methods of a human science that enable one to imaginatively grasp how other cultures might have lived and emerged sociohistorically by characterizing their particular cultural experiences and values. The expressivist anthropology of Herder contrasts with naturalistic Enlightenment anthropologies. According to Taylor (1975, p. 13), Herder "reacts against… the 'objectification' of human nature, against the analysis of the human mind into different faculties, of man into body and soul, against a calculative notion of reason, divorced from feeling and will", and above all against the notion of a universal human subject who obeys timeless moral or social laws. For Herder, another culture must be understood *in situ*, not by the principles and methods that try to distance the interpreter from the object of study.

But how is the naturalism of Enlightenment thinking expressed in anthropology, and what kinds of assumptions about human nature and morality does it make? An example of the Enlightenment anthropology that expressivists such as Vico and Herder would reject is found in J.G. Frazer's comparative analysis of religions and religious practices called *The Golden Bough*. Frazer's interpretation centers his analysis on the ritual murder of the priest-King at Nemi (a pre-Roman settlement) by his successor. Frazer takes a dispassionate and objective approach to

religious practices, arguing that the murder of the priest-King can be explained as a representation of a universal mythology in which a sacred king must be killed as part of a fertility rite. Decades after it was published, Wittgenstein was incensed by Frazer's explanation and wrote several responses to it that were collected in a book titled *Wittgenstein's Remarks on Frazer's 'The Golden Bough'*.[18] Shotter (2005, p. 14) recounts Wittgenstein's critique of Frazer's account, paying particular attention to how Wittgenstein recognizes that a disengaged or intellectualistic anthropology cannot lead to an adequate understanding of other cultures, and ironically, conceals the moral and social directives of Frazer's own time:

> "Frazer's account of the magical and religious views of mankind is unsatisfactory," [Wittgenstein] says, "[because] it makes these views look like *errors*" (p. 119). And he continues: "The very idea of wanting to *explain* a practice – for example, the killing of the priest-king – seems wrong to me. All that Frazer does is to make them plausible to people *who think as he does*... But it will never been plausible to say that mankind does all that out of sheer stupidity" (p. 119, my emphases).

For Frazer, whose anthropology was influenced by Darwinian evolution, the magic of "primitive" cultures functioned to ensure their survival in nature; religion ensures cultural survival. Frazer is not interested in what the religious practices *mean*; he is interested in how they can be explained. Wittgenstein's critique exposes how Frazer's modern interpretation does not *enter into* the practices, beliefs and experiences of the primitive cultures he studies; Frazer stays safely outside of the spiritual meanings that are expressed in religious rituals. As Rudich and Stassen (1971, p. 87) put it, "Wittgenstein criticizes Frazer for making rituals spring from

[18] Taylor recognizes Wittgenstein as an important heritor of the expressivist tradition.

false beliefs, opinions, and interpretations of nature." Shotter (2005, p. 14) interprets Wittgenstein's to mean that,

> If we are to grasp what is going on here, what it is that is organizing the practice, we need another approach: we need a sense of the original feelings shaping the experience of the people in question. Mere cognitively held ideas, beliefs, or opinions do not possess sufficient compellent weight to account for the compulsive power of the religious ceremonies in all their strange detail.

In other words, the moral and religious realities of the people of Nemi are subsumed within the scientific story that Frazer tells of them, rather than in terms of the culture's own social imaginaries. Frazer remains outside of the practice, *observing* yet not participating or dwelling within the rich expressions that constitute their social and spiritual realities. Missing in Frazer's anthropological account, and central to the kind of expressivist anthropology that Herder seems to be interested in, is a compelling articulation of the moral space within which those religious practices could be carried out *without* recourse to anachronistic social and moral judgments. Frazer – from an expressivist critique - makes the mistake of rendering a story that treats magic as barbarism, religious ritual as folly; in other words Frazer does not "enter into" or dwell in the culture in a manner that would provide an account of how this could be a compelling reality and moral space for the people of Nemi.

An expressivist anthropology would instead begin by considering how another culture's moral spaces make certain moral values possible. When we enter into the moral spaces of another culture, we reveal how *our own* moral spaces constitute a different sense of what is compelling or worthy of human desire. We must be struck or surprised by cultural and spiritual differences of some kind before

the interpretive work can even begin. Going further, if interpreted in terms of the spiritual, moral, affective and bodily aspects of inhabited spaces, the ritual murder of the priest-King at Nemi would become a moving, compelling and imaginable world *for us now*.[19]

So what kind of thinking and writing would be necessary in order to express the *moral rightness* and *compelling nature* of the destruction of the priest-king at Nemi? How would one express the original thoughts and feelings of those who lived in that time and place, and in doing so, render a story that reveals how those people experienced their spaces? How does our confrontration with another culture's manners of inhabitation reveal something about the kinds of moral and common spaces we live in today? What would being a "self", "person" or "agent" mean for other cultures than our own? To answer these kinds of questions, we must turn towards an expressivist anthropological view.

An expressivist anthropological view is implied in Charles Taylor's term "moral space". Moral space expands upon the expressivist language of inhabited space I am working out, and allows us to interpret how a culture makes sense of its own moral expressions. I show how certain kinds of moral spaces and the selves that emerge in these spaces must be understood in terms of the specific historical and social circumstances of which they are a part. Moral space are an aspect of inhabited spaces, and are reflected in the common spaces of a community; common spaces and moral spaces cannot be separated. When moral spaces change (shrink or

[19] The idea that embracing and inhabiting the images and myths and symbols of other cultures can transform one's sensitivities and ways of being is a poetic view. This poetic understanding is outlined in the following chapter on "poetic space".

collapse, expand or rise), the persons living within them face serious psychological change. Cultural and personal collapse must be understood in terms of the dynamics of moral space and moral expression.

## Moral Spaces and Strong Evaluation

A culture's moral and spiritual ontology is the subject of Charles Taylor's investigation into how certain moral evaluations of the world become possible at all or appear in a certain way for some but not others. According to Taylor, the modern human agent experiences life as a constantly changing, yet navigable, moral landscape. Not only do I want to follow Taylor (1989, p. 41) in using spatial language to understand moral-spiritual realities, but I make an even stronger expressivist claim to the spatial nature of human inhabitation: the very manner in which we experience moral life *is spatial,* just as moral spaces predispose us towards certain experiences. Spatial language is the primary means by which we understand our situation as people who make moral distinctions of higher and lower, worthy and unworthy. When our moral spaces undergo change, landmarks begin to shift and rise or collapse altogether, and the moral and spiritual discernments that can be expressed in an individual parallel that change. I begin by laying out Taylor's conception of moral spaces and their evidence in moral reactions.

Taylor (1989, p. 5) argues that our "moral reactions" to the world express our lived understanding for things that matter to us, and in doing so express our moral spaces. Following Taylor, Sugarman (2005, p. 795) points out that we express

a moral awareness in our moral reactions: we don't just become angry when we are violated by someone else – we feel indignant or feel that the transgressor was unjust in their behavior. Moral reactions and evaluations constitute us as expressive persons. Taylor (1989, p. 8) writes that moral reactions give us a "mode of access to the world in which ontological claims are discernible and can be rationally argued about and sifted." In other words, if we can discern the moral space of a culture through the moral reactions of individuals, we gain insight into its moral and spiritual reality.

Moral spaces are expressed in the "strong evaluations" that characterize for me what forms of life I see as fuller or deeper or admirable and more worthy of my desire than forms that are superficial, shameful or unworthy of desire (Taylor, 1985, p. 19; Taylor, 1989, p. 20). For example, for many people taking the "easy way out" is not just an unpreferred way of doing things, but it is judged to be weak or debased compared to taking the effort to doing things "the hard way". The moral space in which I live sets up a landscape of distinctions of worth, and this landscape comprises the moral understandings that I can have. Moral spaces dispose us towards distinctions of moral value drawn from a communal history and its traditions of strong evaluation. Moral spaces constitute selves that can discern how some desires are standards for other desires, and reason about the relations between desires, motivations, actions and ideals.

There is a second aspect of moral space at play here too. Taylor (1989, pp. 30-32) argues that moral spaces are also *spaces of questions concerning the good*. Who am I? What is worthy of love? How should I live? I make discernments of

goodness – of whether this or that desire, motivation, action or ideal is *more or less* worthy than another – I learn to navigate this space by addressing these questions in daily life.

But that does not mean that this space of moral questions is altogether obvious or clear to those inhabiting their moral spaces. That is, we can live in a spiritual-moral reality without being able to articulate, make explicit, the strong evaluations that it turns on. This is because inhabiting moral spaces by making distinctions of moral value does not require one to 'step back' and reflect upon the nature of one's choices; only strong evaluation allows one to reason about the nature of one's moral spaces. I am often unable to articulate the particular "landmarks" or moral ideals that my strong evaluations revolve around. So, for Taylor, being unable to articulate one's moral landmarks is a qualitatively different experience than being unable to navigate one's moral spaces. Moral reactions also happen in those who "weakly evaluate" their spaces. Weak evaluations revolve around preferences or desires that are themselves not judged. For example, the "easy way out" is preferable to the "doing things the hard way", because it is desirable to save time or effort, and not because one act is more courageous than the other for this person. In that way, weak evaluators can navigate moral spaces, while strong evaluators can *reshape* moral spaces by articulating its landmarks and values.

Moral understandings of the good are not necessarily conscious, but are more often expressed tacitly in the way that people make moral evaluations and thereby navigate their common spaces. Moral evaluations are implied in

expressions of shame, honor, dignity, pride, etc., that make moral discernments of situations that carry affective weight. While I may have a sense for what the right thing to do is in a situation, I do not possess a conscious "map" of the social or moral landscape that guides me. This is why weak evaluation only *implies* a moral space, yet weak evaluation cannot make the moral spaces' landmarks explicit like strong evaluation can. Strong evaluations allow one to reshape moral spaces through articulation; strong evaluators reconstitute moral spaces by articulating its landmarks.

An expressivist approach allows us to imagine a culture's moral ontology as a *horizontal* space of moral questions that is set up by moral evaluations of *verticality*. By horizontal I mean that there are landmark distinctions made that comprise a layout of possibilities for expression; by vertical I mean that some expressions and actions are more worthy than others. But, again, moral spaces are expressed in particular cultures at particular times in history. If I am to avoid Frazer's error of framing another culture's spiritual-moral reality within his own, I must situate the selves and self-expressions of another culture within their own spiritual-moral spaces.

In what follows, I borrow Charles Taylor's distinction between the porous self of the pre-modern world and the buffered self of secular modernity and use the distinction to interpret a pre-modern culture's secularization and move into modernity. I advance the idea that while weak evaluation may be the norm for most inhabitants of a space, this has serious consequences for a culture when the moral

space itself collapses. A weak evaluator is caught within collapsing moral spaces while a strong evaluator can reshape (or perhaps even renew) the moral spaces.

Porous and Buffered Selves

Taylor argues that prior to the 17th century, before secularity becomes widespread, the pre-modern person is a "porous self". The porous selves of the pre-modern world, according to Taylor (2007, p. 35), live in an enchanted world where all meanings in the world carry some kind of spiritual or divine influence. Porousness is the idea that people can be suffused with spirits or demons. This made demonic or divine possession commonplace in pre-modern cultures because, "the clear boundary between mind and world which we [take as a central assumption in modernity] was much hazier in this earlier understanding." (ibid.) For the porous self, meanings are not located in mind that is radically separate from the spiritual space, but are a part of an unfolding of a spiritual space.

Frank Linderman's biography of Plenty-Coups is replete with stories of spirits permeating Crow life. In several stories, Plenty-Coups reflects upon the training he receives from his elders as a young warrior. Plenty-Coups's grandfather tells him to chase a yellow butterfly as it flits around the landscape. His grandfather whispers to him, "Rub its wing over your heart, my son, and ask the butterflies to lend you their grace and swiftness." (Linderman, 1930, p. 11) Later, the boys slap their bodies with the tail of a beaver and cry, "Teach us your power in the water, O Beaver!" (Linderman, 1930, p. 13) Warriors paint their bodies with river mud to become "wolves" (scouts). In each case, there is a practice involved in allowing a spirit to enter one's soul, such that the Crow warrior might embody the virtue of the

animal. There is no separation between the Crow warrior and animal spirits, and the souls of each cross the boundary through an animistic practice. The grace and swiftness of the butterfly, for the Crow warrior, is not only a way of excelling in warfare, but it allows the warrior to embody its moral virtue. In that way, there is moral discernment implied in embodying the spirit of an animal, for the spirit can lift the warrior up into a higher form of moral and physical existence. Beneficial spirits inhabit the Crow warriors' inner spaces, just as these spirits exist in the tribe's natural surroundings. Inside and outside – the body and the world – are demarcated in the porous self, but are not radically separate entities. In that way, Taylor's notion of porousness is spatial in nature, for it suggests that the pre-modern self has a spiritual boundary that can be crossed back and forth. In this expressivist anthropology one does not (compared to Frazer) dismiss Crow experience as error or naïve magic, but instead interprets these acts as expressions of a spiritual-moral reality different from our own.

For moderns, an enchanted world where animal spirits enter into a person is almost unimaginable. Many of us experience our inner lives as something radically separated from the outer world. Contrasted with the porous self, the "buffered self" that emerges in modernity has a self-understanding of inner and outer that is sharply bifurcated. Taylor (2007, p. 37) illustrates the distinction with an example of a man who is feeling depressed:

> He is told: it's just your body chemistry, you're hungry, or there is a hormone malfunction, or whatever. Straightaway, he feels relieved. He can take a distance from this feeling, which is ipso facto declared not justified. Things don't really have this meaning; it just feels this way, which is the result of a causal action utterly unrelated to the meanings of things.

"Buffered" is, once again, a spatial expression meant to express the shielded or even distant nature of the modern self. The buffered self *can* experience a clear separation of person and space, and *can* disengage from spiritual meanings, where the porous self cannot. In cases where emotions are understood as subjective properties of the mind, suffering is attributed to physiological breakdowns with psychological outcomes. Where the porous self is vulnerable to the solicitations of the spiritual world like spiritual possession and divine intervention, the buffered self is removed from a world of influence. The buffered self, according to Taylor (2007, pp. 38-39), can see itself as a master of its own meanings, exercising jurisdiction over itself and its responsibilities through self-control and self-direction. If I am depressed, it is because there is subtle neurochemistry that causes my depression; if I have any responsibility in the matter it is to take my anti-depressants and relieve the suffering. On the other hand, I may also disengage from my depression through psychological reasoning: I am depressed because I am the product of an abusive family that caused me to project my unhappiness upon the world. In both cases I locate my depression purely externally, inside or outside of my body. A buffered self can make distinctions of moral worth without reference to some kind of spiritual space, or at least the spiritual is understood as something optional to moral discernment. Contrastingly, the porous pre-modern self makes moral discernments through its embedding in a spiritual space. The spiritual space demands moral reactions and expressions from the pre-modern. The pre-modern Crow warrior is caught up in the spiritual world and cannot disengage from it.

It is in modernity, according to Taylor (1989, pp. 15-18), that the landscape of our moral goods has the possibility of *flattening.* Conceivably, prior to modernity, there were spiritual communities that were caught up in a total cosmological or divine order. The divine maintained a daily presence in cultural life and played a pivotal role in communal religious rituals like the sowing of seeds and autumn harvests. The porous self cannot step outside of the spiritual existence, for meanings spring from spiritual sources and not from individuals.

But we can imagine how these spiritual communities experience social and cultural tension when the very social and religious practices that make such a community coherent become questionable or optional; this is the process of secularization. In the case where social practices that undergird one's moral spaces disappear (or become meaningless), the moral space of that community begins to collapse.

The porous self and the buffered self experience changing moral spaces much differently. I think of my friend whose childhood home was destroyed in a fire. Her home was a moral space – it constituted a landscape of moral distinctions for her and her family. When her home was destroyed, *the evaluative basis for her making a choice or commitment to anything at all collapsed*. The fire destroyed her domestic space, and the memories and the family rituals that made this a moral space for her become impracticable. Her domestic space is destroyed, and so the memories and family rituals that made her moral discernments meaningful can no longer be practiced. Choosing a career path in life or doing well academically became meaningless tasks, because there was no moral space in which those commitments

make sense. She could no longer morally evaluate either weakly or strongly and her expressive possibilities collapsed. Her loss of desire and motivation, and her withdrawal from enjoyable activities, are symptomatic of a much larger spiritual collapse in her life. But, unlike the porous self, she is eventually able to step back from the catastrophe by moving into other moral spaces. She struck up new friendships with others not affected by the fire which gave her a different perspective on life. As a buffered self, she eventually found other moral spaces that made sense of her tragedy, and gave her a new sense of home.

But collapse can happen at a much larger cultural level, especially in a pre-modern community of porous selves. The collapse of a moral space, as one might expect in the case of a culture whose social fabric is destroyed or fades away in face of a different form of life (e.g. aboriginal cultures who came into contact with the way of life of 19th century colonists and missionaries), are a different order of experience. If the cultural practices that set the stage for the strong evaluations one makes as a person disappear (e.g. one can no longer participate in family rituals), the field of distinctions that once made up one's moral space disappear accordingly; one can no longer distinguish between things in terms of their moral values. If a *pre-modern* person truly loses his/her ability to make moral evaluations, it would be because the cultural and spiritual practices that characterize their moral existence have disappeared. In the following section I take up an expressivist anthropological approach and show how a drastic change in a pre-modern society's social and cultural practices foreshadows the collapse of their moral spaces.

The Collapse of Crow Moral Spaces

... *when the buffalo went away, the hearts of my people fell to the ground and they could not lift them back up again. After this, nothing happened.*

Jonathan Lear (2006, pp. 1-8) begins his interpretation of Crow life in the 19th century by wondering at Plenty Coups' haunting words. Is this simply a turn of phrase invoked to relate the depressing state of things for the Crow after the buffalo disappeared? Or an expression meant to exaggerate the truth of things so Frank Linderman might understand? Or was it that it was '*as if*' nothing had happened for the Crow?

Or, are Plenty Coup's words, expanding upon Lear's interpretation, all expressions of a changing Crow moral space? The Crow participated in a spiritual space that granted *happenings* or *events* that freely entered into the lives of individuals and the tribe. According to the stories that Plenty-Coups tells Linderman of his life prior to the 19th century, there is every reason to believe that the Crow lived as porous selves. Boys go into the mountains to medicine dream, animals possess the spirits of persons and act with their own agency, just as medicine men and warriors take on the spirits of animals. A warrior's "Helpers" – the spirits that are tied to an individual and help them through life – seize upon and speak to the warrior in times of need. Prior to the 19th century, a Crow warrior cannot disengage himself from the spiritual order that constitutes the tribe's reality.

Lear's (2006, p. 6) interpretation is that if one were a Crow living in Plenty-Coups's era, things would cease happening. The spiritual world would no longer

easily enter the life of the tribe and their pleas for divine assistance and inspiration from *Ah-badt-dadt-deah* (Crow: "God") would become meaningless. Spiritual life would become optional, unnecessary, and moral life would become profane. The Crow warrior might still eat and have children and work for a living – he still *does* things – but nothing meaningful *happens* in this new life. The point I am making here is that one cannot understand Plenty-Coups' haunting words without appreciating that the porous Crow self is so thoroughly steeped in spiritual life that secularization threatens to collapse all of their moral spaces.

Lear takes Plenty-Coups's existential expression as the launching point for understanding how the destruction of a way of life – its moral, social and spiritual practices - would result in events *ceasing to happen* for an entire people. And, Lear asks, in a world facing collapse, what possibilities would there be for reclaiming a way of life and sense of self? Lear (2006, p. 6) sees Plenty-Coups as a witness of his own culture's breakdown and the collapse of its moral and common spaces. Not only is Plenty-Coups bearing witness to the disintegration of his moral community after the buffalo are slaughtered by white hunters in staggering numbers, but according to Lear, he is giving expression to the central problem that all people living in modernity face: what happens to people when their moral spaces collapse? How should we live with things "ceasing to happen?" What repercussions does cultural collapse have for self-expression and moral virtue? (Lear, 2006, p. 9)

Lear takes up an expressivist anthropology that situates Plenty Coups' mysterious words within the historical and social-cultural contexts of Crow life in the 18th and 19th centuries. Lear's interpretation demonstrates how "happenings"

could cease for *any* modernizing culture and not only the Crow. Lear shows how tribal warfare and Crow spiritual practices shape and maintain Crow inhabited space prior to secularization. The erosion or destruction of such practices, under the pressure of violent and rapid cultural change inaugurated by the mass slaughter of the buffalo as well as American federal politics, brings with it the collapse of a way of life and its moral spaces.

The Coup-Stick as an Expression of Crow Moral Space

Lear's interpretation of Crow inhabited space focuses upon two kinds of Crow warfaring practices: "planting coup-sticks" and "counting-coups". According to Linderman (1930, p. 22) the coup-stick is a staff carried by a Crow warrior that is involved in all Crow warfare. The coup-stick is decorated in the style of the particular tribe. It is a sign of great honor to carry a coup-stick, for it expresses one's prowess as a warrior.

For Lear, planting a coup-stick in war demarcates Crow territory… the warrior who plants it makes a final commitment: he must fight to his death to protect the tribe. To retreat or abandon the coup-stick would be reprehensible and would mark one as a non-Warrior (or worse) a non-Crow. Lear (2006, p. 14) remarks, "In planting the coup-stick the Crow warrior was not only risking his life; he was also in effect 'saying': *Beyond this point, penetration by a non-Crow enemy is impossible*." The Crow warrior is delimiting a Crow space: a space with boundaries that can only contract if the warrior who defends it dies. But space in this sense is not only physical territory maintained by any means necessary. Part of what makes the space *Crow* space is that it is defended with honor and bravery and skillfulness.

So the strong evaluation is bound up with the maintenance of territory. For example, if a warrior decimated enemies in a cowardly or shameful manner, one would not expect Crow territory to expand, because the *growth* of space requires the warrior to commit a brave act. In that way, the horizontal dimensions (Crow territory) and vertical dimensions (courageousness) of Crow moral spaces exist in a dynamic.

The Crow way of life, in Lear's view, was involved in and organized around the coup-stick and the social-cultural, moral and spiritual practices intertwined with it. Furthermore, writes Lear (2006, pp. 20-21), ideals of honor and bravery in Crow life were not the end goals of Crow warfare, but instead served to *create and protect Crow space* (see figure 1).

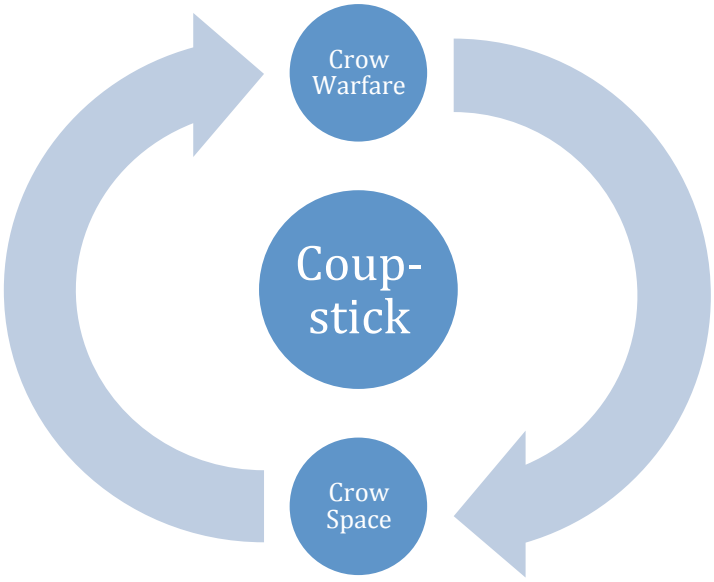


*Figure 1. Social and cultural practices involving the coup-stick constitute the background of the Crow moral and social ontology.*

Holding and planting the coup-stick is not only a symbolic practice that confers bravery and status upon the warrior, but is central to expressing strong

evaluations. The coup-stick is sacred, for it invokes an entire space of moral evaluations that demarcate things of value, admiration, and honor for a Crow warrior.

Similarly, "counting-coup" was to express bravery in warfare: striking an armed and fighting enemy with one's coup-stick, bowing before harming an enemy, striking the first enemy to fall in a battle, stealing a horse from the enemy's camp, disarming an enemy, etcetera (Lear, 2006, p. 15). Counting-coup by touching an enemy with one's coup-stick was more worthy than killing or maiming the enemy for instance. Bravery was conferred upon those who *symbolically* destroyed their enemies and in doing so re-constituted Crow space.

Counting-coup also involved recounting the story of one's coup in the presence of the community that recognizes the validity of one's coup. Upon counting coup, a warrior would gain the privilege to choose a wife. In ceremonies, writes Lear (ibid.), "The wife of a coup-counting warrior could ride proudly ahead of her husband in a procession, carrying his shield; the wife of a non-coup-carrying man had to ride behind her husband. In ceremonial processions, the men who counted coups, along with their wives, rode first." So the coup-stick is a recognizable public symbol in daily life and the constitution of families, and not just an implement limited to warfare. On the other hand, *not* counting coup was considered an aberration or moral failing, or a sign that one was not yet mature enough to become a warrior, a man with a wife and family.

Even though coup-planting and coup-counting were primarily warfaring practices, they tugged at an entire web of interconnected cultural practices that

involved the coup-stick.[20] In Lear's interpretation, all judgments of moral goodness seem to emerge from expressions of courage bound up with the coup-stick and its interconnected cultural practices. If the tribe cannot plant coup-sticks, there can be no judgments of honor or valor in battle.

Lear argues that it is precisely the destruction of coup-stick practices that leads to the collapse of Crow moral space. Lear (2006, pp. 26-27) attributes the collapse to a number of historical and political factors: political pressure from the American government, ongoing warfare with the Sioux, disease and famine, force the Crow to move to a reservation between 1882 and 1884. It is in this time that the U.S. declares tribal warfare illegal, and confines the Crow (traditionally a nomadic tribe) to their reservation. Traditional warfare and horse theft are declared illegal and buffalo hunting is no longer possible after white hunters slaughter herds en masse. The field of possibilities that constitutes Crow life begins to deteriorate.

Lear (2006, p. 31) argues that counting coups only makes sense against the background of intertribal warfare. One can only count coups – tell stories about one's brave acts among warriors in a social gathering – when one can plant coups, touch a Sioux with a coup-stick, scalp one's enemies, or steal their horses. These are all expressions of the Crow manner of inhabiting space. Because the act of planting coups and recounting one's feats in a narrative are tightly entwined practices, both practices become senseless when they are no longer significant in the context of tribal warfare. Everyday practices like meal preparation (preparing a meal such that

[20] Crow child naming practices also implied the coup-stick: "Plenty-Coups" was named in light of a dream his grandfather had of him achieving great deeds in life… that he would 'count many coups'… such a name would be the ultimate honorific for a Crow warrior (Lear, 2006, p. 20).

the warriors are healthy and ready to hunt and fight), lose their meaning when tribal warfare is denied to the Crow (Lear, 2006, p. 40). The immediate discontinuation of counting-coups conceivably endangers all other cultural practices that related to it. An entire field of moral distinctions made in relation to the coup-stick would cease to matter: acts of bravery, honor, courage, cowardice and social practices that conferred prestige upon some warriors and not others. A Crow could no longer be motivated to participate in a moral space. Because commitments in traditional Crow life originate in some relation to the coup-stick, to no longer plant coup-sticks is to lose a sense for what things are worthy of commitment. So not only does a prohibition on warfare threaten the warrior identity, but it also threatens to collapse the landscape of moral distinctions that constitute Crow moral space.

Strong Evaluation as a Precondition for Happenings

After the 1880's – when the buffalo are eradicated and the Crow cannot make war with their enemies - it is no longer clear why it would *matter* to a Crow that coups are counted, or when a particular act is brave or cowardly, or if the meal before the eve of battle has been prepared correctly. The moral space in which *things can happen,* that involves not only the cultural practices in which the Crow engage collectively but also the warrior's sense of worth and desire for individual virtuous feats, has collapsed. When the expressive practices that constitute a *worthy* Crow way of life disintegrate, *being a Crow* becomes problematic.

Now we can return to the question of what Plenty-Coups might have meant when he said, "after this, nothing happened". The buffalo "going away" is not a way of stating the obvious (that the buffalo are all dead), but the sense that what makes

the Crow *Crow* went away with the buffalo. The tribe is now away from the space that made life make sense, and because of that they now occupy a space voided of its rich spiritual-moral meanings. The possibility of *happenings* is therefore predicated upon the stories of bravery and acts of courage in warfare, both of which are constituents of the Crow moral evaluative structure. When a Crow warrior is no longer able to express strong evaluations from which (conceivably) all evaluations of desires, taste, preference and interest are drawn, the moral space collapses.

In other words, "happenings" are events predicated upon the existence of some kind of moral space that solicits from and visits spiritual meanings upon a moral-spiritual community. If "nothing happens" for the Crow after their confinement to the reservation, it is because the cultural practices that protect and enact their moral spaces have become impracticable. By implication, the strong evaluations expressed in those practices no longer make sense. Their moral space collapses.

Furthermore, when the community becomes confined to the reservation, their inhabited space physically contracts. The nomadic lifestyle that once was integral to the enactment and protection of Crow space becomes limited to a space determined not by Crow moral practices, but by largely arbitrary borders set by a distant federal government. From this we can see how spaces are not just "contexts" or "environments" to which people attach meanings. Moral spaces are the very conditions for human motivation, desires, and choices. When Plenty-Coups says that the hearts of his people have *fallen to the ground,* he is expressing a profound sense of moral and spiritual loss: the hearts that once expressed vitality and courage and

joyfulness now lie amongst the ruins of an old civilization, no longer able to live in the spiritual-moral spaces that once lifted Crow warriors up to greatness.

Understandably, in the early 20th century – after the buffalo have gone away and the hearts of the Crow have fallen – most Crow cannot commit to either fighting valiantly for their dying way of life or defiantly taking up the "white man's" technologies and make war with the Sioux or Arapahoe or Cheyenne. Neither of these responses to cultural devastation is viable to the tribe because the landscape of moral distinctions that would make these choices *desirable* has disappeared.[21] Desires and motivations crucially belong to a moral space. In a healthy moral space characterized by strong evaluations, I am drawn or compelled towards some landmarks more than others at the same time as some desires are inhibited by other desires. If these landmarks disappear, expressions lose their spatial relationships with one another, and I am no longer compelled towards or inhibited from certain desires. I cannot distinguish between the courageous and the cowardly act anymore, because the verticality that allows me to distinguish these actions is gone.

More generally, we can appreciate that distinguishing acts or motivations or desires from one another depends upon seeing these expressions in spatial relationships to one another. Some expressions lie in a horizontal relationship with one another: expressions must be evaluated contrastingly. Simultaneously, these motivations/acts/desires lie in vertical relationships with one another: some

[21] I have greatly oversimplified the Crow response to their culture's devastation for the sake of conciseness. In fact, according to Lear (2006), Crow warriors responded with many different alternatives… most of which only prolonged or hastened the collapse of their culture. There *is* in fact a Crow response to the cultural devastation, and it comes from Chief Plenty-Coups. As I argue in the next chapter, Plenty-Coups imagines a *poetic* response to moral collapse that makes a new Crow self possible.

desires set the standard for other desires, some are distinguished as more worthy than others. In that way, the "landmarks"… following Taylor's (1989, p. 48) use of the spatial metaphor… of a moral space set up both the vertical and horizontal relationships between expressions. When these landmarks crumble and fall, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between expressions. Therefore, there cannot be space without moral landmarks, just as a map cannot be a map without locations and boundaries.

The Selves of Collapsed Moral Spaces

Lear's interpretation of the cultural devastation that the Crow face in the 19th century has psychological implications for individuals living in modernity. If the Crow face moral collapse as porous selves, how does the buffered self of modernity experience moral change? We can imagine that there are contemporary counterparts to the Crow situation: a divorce or the death of a family member seems to resemble moral collapse for those who are caught up in it. Expressions like, "I do not know what to do with myself" and "I do not know who I am" are common after a person loses a loved one whom their identities revolves around. But these similarities are superficial at best. The modern buffered self can disengage from the crisis and find new meaning in profound loss by turning towards other extant spaces. The Crow warrior cannot do this: he is fully engaged in the tribe's moral-spiritual space, and losing the space means losing himself. Modern moral crisis does not happen at the cultural level in the same way that it happens for the pre-modern. In the case of losing a family member, other moral and common spaces exist (i.e. the workplace or friends) that can safeguard the person going through crisis. The

person in crisis can keep going on by distancing themselves from the spatial crisis and turning towards a more stable space. Distancing oneself from the site of crisis is, once again, not possible for the pre-modern Crow.

Strong Evaluation and Understanding in the Midst of Moral Collapse

It is only *after* the Crow way of life begins to disappear as its moral spaces collapse that it becomes possible for a Crow to stand *outside of* her/his traditional moral spaces. In my view a buffered Crow self – a person that can detach itself from the spiritual-moral reality of the tribe – becomes possible in the 20th century. How did the disembedding of Crow moral space begin to appear in the lives of individuals? Lear recounts a story that Pretty-Shield, a Crow medicine woman at the time, tells to her biographer Frank Linderman (1974, p. 8, as quoted in Lear, 2006, pp. 60-61)

> "[Before the buffalo went away]… We talked to our children, told them things they needed to know, but we never struck a child, never." ... "Lately I did strike a child," she said grimly. "There seemed to be nothing else to do. Times and children have changed so. One of my grand-daughters ran off to a dance with a bad young man after I told her she must not go. I went after her. It was a long way too, but I got her, and in time. I brought her home to my place and used a saddle-strap on her. I struck hard, Sign-talker. I hope it helped her, and yet I felt ashamed of my striking a grandchild."

Lear interprets Pretty-Shield's narrative in terms of the experience of confusion and shame one feels when put in a situation where old strong evaluations still come to bear, yet no longer can fulfill those strong evaluations in a community. In Lear's (2006, p. 61) view, Pretty-Shield

cannot situate her action within either traditional Crow moral space or within the new modern moral space that is emerging in her granddaughter's life.

Lear's interpretation points toward an implicit spatiality in Pretty-Shield's experience. The granddaughter "runs off" to a dance with a bad young man after the grandmother forbids her from going. The child runs away from the home, and Pretty-Shield goes after her. She brings back the child into the home and beats her with a saddle-strap. There are powerful moral territories implied here… the home space is associated with domestic practices, safety, tradition, and the space outside of the home (the dance) is associated with a new, dangerous life that Pretty-Shield does not understand. Pretty-Shield ventures out into the territory outside the home to retrieve her granddaughter, who is lured by desires belonging to different moral spaces than her own. Pretty-Shield beats her granddaughter in home with a *saddle-strap* – a piece of saddlery used to count-coups in the old days – as if to say 'You belong back here, in the home space, in tradition, and not out there in the modern world.'

Why does this situation happen at all, and why is Pretty-Shield's frustration so striking? From an expressivist interpretation, the granddaughter and grandmother are beginning to inhabit different moral spaces. The granddaughter inhabits a moral space where listening to an elder's wishes takes a second place to self-fulfillment (going to the dance, having a boyfriend). The grandmother inhabits a moral space of

unquestionable obedience to one's elders and tradition. In the time before the disembedding of Crow life, Crow children were "anxious to please" their elders, according to Linderman (1930, pp. 9-10)… "Even scarred warriors will listen with deep respect to the counsel of elders, so that the Indian boy, school by example, readily accepts teaching from any elder." If Linderman's characterization is true, imagine Pretty-Shield's surprise at her granddaughter's insolence! Similarly, one can imagine that her granddaughter can learn nothing from the beating. Their moral spaces do not overlap. Both of these people are trying to inhabit a collapsing moral space, yet both cannot step back from the downfall – it would take the articulation of a strong evaluation of some kind to put them back into the same moral spaces.

Pretty-Shield's disorientation as she tries to navigate between these new moral spaces becomes even clearer when she says to Linderman (1974, p. 8, quoted in Lear, 2006, p. 56), "I am trying to live a life I do not understand." This statement, taken in the context of the kind of cultural devastation Lear imagines of the Crow in the 20th century, is arresting. It is a statement that I could imagine spoken by anyone today who begins to perceive his or her own *understood* way of life is already gone and is uninhabitable. Pretty-Shield is frustrated with the new moral spaces that appear… and she *tries* to express care despite her confusion.

The beating in that regard only expresses a frustrated attempt at communication between different moral spaces. In my interpretation, Pretty-Shield feels shameful because she has debased her expression of care in order to get her point across to her granddaughter.

Based on the prior interpretations, what general kinds of conclusions can we make about the nature of moral spaces? First, collapsing moral spaces emerge both at the cultural level (the entire people's hearts fall) and at the personal level (Pretty-Shield lives in a different moral space than her granddaughter). The problem that Pretty-Shield faces is that when her tribe's moral spaces collapse they also fragment, making individualistic desires appear in the young who have little in common with their elders. Second, moral spaces have both vertical and horizontal dimensions. Verticality is constituted in the "higher" motivations/acts/desires that set the standard for other, lesser, expressions… by those who make strong evaluations. When one loses a sense of verticality in moral space, it is experienced as *crumbling* or *falling* or *lowering* ("the hearts of my people fell to the ground"). The horizontal dimension of moral space is constituted by the different kinds of options a person has for desires and motivations. Each of these expressions are landmarks by which a person can navigate their lives in terms of worthiness and goodness. When someone cannot see any landmarks in a moral landscape, they feel lost, where experiences are inchoate and choices become difficult to commit to. Losing the horizontal dimension of moral space is experienced as *contraction*, *shrinking* or *narrowing*. It is also possible

that moral spaces *fracture* or separate, such that people begin living in different moral spaces that do not overlap (i.e. Pretty-Shield and her granddaughter). Secularization makes this possible, for it is a flattening and a fracturing of traditional moral spaces.

Moral Collapse and the Inauguration of Individuality

Total ontological collapse is one way in which a culture can experience change in their moral spaces. In this section I consider a different way in which moral spaces change for a culture, in an attempt to build upon the expressivist language of the thesis. In what follows, I interpret a story about a man who commits an act of moral and spiritual violence against his community that results in his banishment. He becomes an "individual" in the negative sense: a non-person, someone without involvement in a communal moral space. He becomes an outcast.

As I discussed in the first chapter, Taylor's interpretation of expressivism is communalistic and posits that people are always steeped in some kind of communal reality. When one is recognized as a responsible interlocutor in moral space – one who can locate oneself in the moral space of the community – one is granted *personhood* by the community. One cannot be a "person" without some kind of community in which one's expressions are responded to, taken seriously, and understood as meaningful.

Banishment from a community is a situation where a person becomes a non-person. Taylor interprets moral dissociation from a community spatially (1989, p.

31, my emphasis) when he writes, "a person without a framework altogether would be outside our space of interlocution; he wouldn't have a stand in the space where the rest of us are. We would see this as *pathological*." Taylor's idea that people perceive extreme dissociation from a community as pathology is a reminder that moral and common space are two sides of the same coin. When a person is longer recognized as an interlocutor within the moral spaces of a community, say in banishment, moral and common space contracts or narrows around the individual. Spaces fracture: the community carries on in its own moral spaces while the individual is cast off into his or her own space.

I take up Taylor's idea that moral and common space depend upon one another in order to interpret a story by Malidoma Patrice Somé – a West African spiritual philosopher and anthropologist who takes up an expressivist stance to forge cultural understandings between cultures.[22] His story about a trip back to his tribal home recounts a story of what it means to be rendered an outcast by the Dagara tribe. As Somé's story is replete with Dagaran spatial spiritual-moral expressions, I quote tracts of his story in full:

> Once, on one of my trips back home, I came upon one of the men of the village wandering in the bush. He looked bewildered, his hair disheveled and his manner suspicious. Because I knew him and his family, I stopped to talk to him. His language was erratic and incongruous. To my greeting, he responded only with his eyes fixed off in the distant wilderness.
>
> "The road that leads to town must be inside one of these trees. I've been searching for many seasons. Can't seem to see it. Do you?"

[22] In an interview, Somé (2008) says that he wrote the book as an attempt to translate and express the Dagara tribe's moral and spiritual ontology to a Western audience.

> I was disoriented. I asked him what road he was talking about. "People think I have gone mad," he complained. "It is the whole world that has gone mad!" He began weeping and added, "How horrible to be the only sane person in a world gone mad."
>
> I knew I could not continue talking with him. When back in the village, I asked what was wrong with him. A village acquaintance replied laughingly that he managed to steal the shrine of the ancestors with the intention of selling it to a group of white people. And he also spoke the unspeakable [by revealing secret and sacred rites to tourists]… I realized that, to the village, this person was no longer alive, no longer existed. No one was either sad or happy about him. He was not there. In the meantime, the outcast thought that he alone was sane…
>
> … Any attempt by any participant at disclosing the content of a ritual tears the group apart. To understand this, it is important to know that a ritual is a work of unification, or oneness with the gods and with each other… In the traditional world the person who violates the secret of a ritual becomes an outcast. The outcast is a person who has spoken the unspeakable or who shows the unshowable. What the outcast is doing is saying, "I no longer want to exist among you." … [curing the outcast] would require the rest of the group to suspend its current relationship with the spirit world and descend to the lower region where the outcast resides in order to rise up slowly with him…
>
> … For a person to break the rule is not a sign of weakness or a momentary failure of the will. It is plain and irrevocable abdication or resignation from the group.
>
> … The man I met in the bush from my village was thinking that he alone was sane. In fact, he had the fantasy of sanity.
>
> (Somé, 1993, pp. 43-45)

A man in the tribe breaks an unbreakable taboo, one that threatens to collapse the spiritual space in which the tribe lives. The ritual normally unites the tribe by elevating it to a spiritual solidarity. By telling of the sacred ritual that makes this unification possible, the man effectively tries to pull out the keystone that holds the spiritual space together. He acts as an individual with profane desires – individual wealth – that stand outside of the spiritual-

moral space of the tribe. His act is not morally containable through ritualized punishment, so the tribe chooses to maintain its solidarity by ejecting the man completely. They disavow his existence.

Somé's account of the Dagara outcast underscores the importance of understanding how moral spaces enable us to be recognized as interlocutors within speech communities. Somé's outcast falls *outside of* the spiritual-moral space shaped by the tribe. He is no longer recognized as a person or an agent, precisely because if the Dagara were to acknowledge that the act of disclosing their sacred spiritual rites were a sensible (though reprehensible) act, the individual discloser would be accorded the ability to relativize the strong evaluations that characterize the Dagaran way of life. He would be able to render the sacred profane.

Disclosing the rituals to a non-Dagaran, or selling an ancestral shrine, is the equivalent of declaring that individual material wealth and desire now take precedence over the entire tribe's communal-spiritual unity. From the perspective of the tribe, making such a declaration (in the form of theft or disclosure of the sacred) falls so completely out of the space within which distinctions of value can be made that the act becomes truly senseless. To the tribe, the outcast no longer exists when his actions threaten to eradicate the strong evaluations that make *being Dagara* possible at all. The outcast steps outside of the moral space – his acts become meaningless; he effectively

ceases to exist for the tribe.[23] Among the Dagara, stealing his tribe's ancestral shrine and disclosing their sacred rituals, from our perspective, is a form of self-annihilation.[24]

Conversely, for the outcast to be reclaimed as an interlocutor or person among his tribe would require, as Somé recounts, a complete spiritual *descent* to the lower forms of existence (the profane realm) where the outcast resides. The tribe would then slowly return with him to the higher spiritual realm where the tribe maintains a relationship with the divine. As such, the spiritual ontology that the Dagara live within is not an optional dimension of their way of life that can be easily suspended when it is violated. The Dagaran moral space is maintained through the existential exclusion of those who threaten to collapse their spiritual and moral spaces by stepping outside of them.

How does spatial language help to interpret the situation? The tribe cannot "suspend its current relationship with the spirit world" in order to contain the man's actions; otherwise the verticality of the tribe will collapse. Nor does the tribe wish to descend to the base level of the moral-spiritual space in order to "rescue" him from his debased action. Excommunication serves to split the sacred tribal space from the man, such that he is pushed

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[23] Comparably, it is imaginable that among the traditional Crow, for a warrior to drop his coup-stick in the midst of a battle and lose his interest in fighting would be to annihilate himself as a person. Plenty Coups and Pretty-Shield, however, do not speak of this situation ever happening.

[24] According to Somé (2008), the tribe's ancestral connection is crucial for their experience of spirituality and community. To lose this connection would be to lose their identity as Dagara.

out beyond the tribe's boundaries. He is "cast out" of the tribe's inhabited space, both morally and physically. In that way standing outside of the village is a spatial expression of his moral situation.

How do we interpret the outcast's strange words – that he cannot find the road to home in the trees, that he is "the only sane person in a world gone mad"? From a spatial-expressivist view, the outcast is cut off from the tribe's inhabited space, and his inhabited space has contracted around his body. He has no moral landmarks from which to navigate his physical space.

The moral space that *he* lives in has collapsed… the outcast is *literally* pushed out of the tribe's spaces; he cannot find the tribe because its location is bound up with moral landmarks that he has lost. The man would normally experience his landscape in terms of the moral landmarks expressed in his participation in the religious rites and domestic habits of the tribe. But, as an outcast, stripped of the cultural practices of the tribe, he *cannot find his way home*. He is *blind* to the location of his home because he no longer has a home. He is lost in a forest that has no meaningful landmarks for him anymore; he believes the world has gone mad because it no longer makes sense.

The moral and spiritual landmarks that made sense of his life have not only crumbled, but have disappeared. If *home* symbolizes his place among the Dagara tribe and his role within that community as a responsible addressee, then he cannot find it because it now exists in a place outside of his life. The blind stare that he casts off into the forest when Somé addresses

him expresses the dissociative world the outcast lives in. The tribe cannot address the outcast just as he cannot recognize those who address him. His blindness and his erratic speech both express his new situation as a non-agent; he is a man lost without his tribe.

The preceding examples – the collapse of Crow inhabited space and the Dagara man's explusion from his tribe – both serve to show how moral space is constituted by social-cultural practices that express strong evaluations. In the case of the Crow, warfare is so central to the maintenance of Crow inhabited space that when the coup-stick can no longer be planted and warriors can no longer count-coups, the Crow moral space collapses and creates the problem of meaningful inhabitation. The entire tribe is affected; no one is excluded from the collapse of Crow space. If an entire culture can no longer participate in the practices that imply strong evaluations, the individuals living within it face a serious moral crisis. The Crow, at least as Lear interprets it, have their moral orientation threatened, and their identity as Crow becomes deeply problematic for them.

In the case of the Dagara tribe, only *one* man suffers from catastrophic moral collapse when he is banished from the community that makes his life meaningful. The tribe protects its moral space through banishment. The Dagaran outcast, presumably, has no language of individuality to draw upon in order to make things meaningful to him, and because of that expresses extreme dissociation. If the outcast were to find another space to withdraw into, for instance a neighboring tribe that would accept him as an exile, he

might reclaim his sight. I interpret his dissociation as a kind of spatial disorientation – he no longer can place himself in a meaningful relation to anything around him. He is blind and lost. Moral evaluation thus turns on participation within a moral community, and when one ceases to participate within this community, the individual can no longer make meaningful distinctions in their spaces. The individual's inhabited space collapses.

There is something analogous in the outcast's experience of losing his sight and John Hull's experience of blindness. For both men, blindness means being outside of the space of the community; both express dissociation from the common spaces they were a part of. But the outcast's blindness emerges from a powerful moral taboo that has been broken, disconnecting him from a spiritual space that totally defined him as a person. John Hull's blindness emerges in a mostly secular space that has no fixed or unquestionable cosmology that totally defines him; he is able to move between moral spaces (i.e. the workplace, home, friendships) that yield different expressive possibilities for him.[25] Hull is living in spaces of buffered selves, where the outcast lives in spaces of porous selves. In that way, unless the outcast is rescued by his tribe or is taken in by another tribe, he faces isolation and individual breakdown. John Hull, whose life is safeguarded by a plurality of moral spaces, has the opportunity to move between these spaces and retain a sense of individuality.

[25] Yet, John Hull undergoes a spiritual crisis during his early years of blindness where he feels disconnected and distanced from God; he experiences moral collapse.

Individuals as Expressers of Cultural Spaces

The preceding interpretations bring up important questions for an expressivist psychology of inhabited space. How do people maintain and protect their inhabited spaces? What does a person do when their inhabitable spaces contract or collapse? How do the Crow come to realize a new manner of inhabiting spaces after cultural collapse; how might their *modern* manner of inhabiting space serve as a moral ideal for other moderns?

These case studies exemplify the lives of people facing secularization and the prospect of individualization at a rapid rate. In my view, the cases highlight the moral straits that all cultures face when their moral spaces begin to collapse. Particular to the expressivist view is the idea that every culture expresses its own kind of moral spaces and languages of moral distinction particular to the time and place in which it is situated. No external or universalistic psychological account can make sense of or do justice to a culturally specific expression. I advanced an expressivist anthropology as one way of making sense of culture-bound stories.

One consequence of the expressivist interpretations I have taken up in this chapter is that when moral spaces begin to collapse, the individuals living within those spaces make sense of collapse in terms of their language of moral understanding. A second consequence of this idea is that moral spaces are shaped only in communal expression. Conversely, moral disruption in an individual can threaten the moral space of the community, and thereby demands some kind of corrective response from the community.

An individual therefore *necessarily* belongs to some kind of moral community and they cannot live within a moral space of their own. Moral spaces and common spaces are two aspects of inhabited spaces that cannot be fully disentangled.

The psychological relevance of this spatial understanding of moral realities is that the individual is always involved in a communal moral space of some kind. The individual derives their orientation in moral space by participating in cultural practices that shape their languages of moral discernment. A privileged ego or sovereign subject who stands outside of a community's moral space, following the examples I gave earlier, expresses dissociation. In that way, a social psychology that studies an individual by severing them from the culture in which their expressions are meaningful… effectively studies a marred and dissociated subject. If this is true, then any psychology that detaches a person's expressions from their home or community (i.e. the ideal of behaviorism), effectively destroys the possibility of psychological interpretation, because the expression is rendered meaningless. Without a home or community in which their expressions are understood as meaningful, the research subject is evacuated of psychological insight.

Contrastingly, an expressivist conception of moral and spiritual realities imagines people and their inhabited spaces as inseparable aspects of one another. To be *someone*, I must inhabit a space with other people who can evaluate my actions or words or desires in terms of their moral value or

worthiness. As Sugarman (2005, p. 797) notes, the "moral goods of our cultures and communities provide a framework for individual identity by lending coherence to our purpose and commitments." The framework of moral goods is held communally.

Therefore, one of the primary tasks of an expressivist psychology lies in articulating the moral landmarks that comprise a culture's moral spaces by situating a culture's moral language in their history and sense of place. Simultaneously, individuals express their cultural understandings in their personal expressions. An expressivist interpretive approach moves from culture to person and person to culture; each move reveals how spaces create boundaries for expression, and in the process of being expressed reshape spaces.

In the next chapter I consider how inhabited spaces can be renewed and reshaped through poetic interpretation. When traditions, cultural practices and language are taken up poetically, they redefine common and moral spaces. We confront a radically new vision of persons caught up in change who, unlike those trapped in collapsing or contracting spaces, transform their social-moral realities by re-imagining them and thereby enacting poetic spaces.

## Interlude: Poiesis as Play

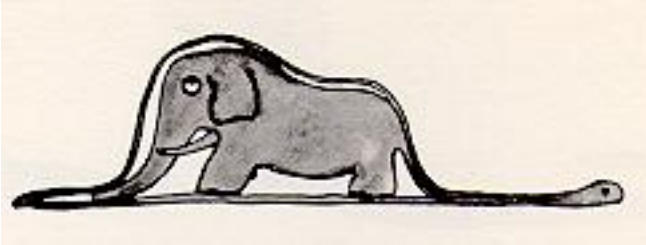
Before I can articulate what poetic space means, I must begin with a simplification of the problem that I believe Gaston Bachelard confronts in his phenomenology of inhabited spaces.

In 1940, after the Franco-German armistice at the height of second World War, a French aviator and reconnaissance pilot for the for French Air Force traveled to the United States. During this several-year stay, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry wrote and illustrated a fantastical novella – seemingly for children – about his confrontation with a little boy from outer space, whose home planet was "scarcely any larger than a house." In *Le Petit Prince*, Saint-Exupéry (1943) recounts his chance meeting with The Little Prince after his plane crashes in the Saraha desert.

In the introductory chapter of the book, Saint-Exupéry recalls an early childhood memory of encountering an awesome illustration in a book titled, *True Stories from Nature*. The illustration was of a boa constrictor swallowing a large animal. Saint-Exupéry (1943, pp. 1-2) writes,

> In the book it said, 'Boa constrictors swallow their prey whole, without chewing it. After that they are not able to move, and they sleep through the six months that they need for digestion.' I pondered deeply, then, over the adventures of the jungle. And after some work with a colored pencil I succeeded in making my first drawing. My Drawing Number One. It looked like this:

> I showed my masterpiece to grown-ups, and asked them whether the drawing frightened them. But they answered: "Frightened? Why should any one be frightened by a hat?"
> My drawing was not a picture of a hat. It was a picture of a boa constrictor digesting an elephant. But since the grown-ups were not able to understand it, I made another drawing: I drew the inside of the boa constrictor, so that the grown-ups could see it clearly. They always need to have things explained. My Drawing Number Two looked like this:



Most adults, including myself, if presented with Saint-Exupéry's first drawing would have guessed it was a drawing of a hat. Only when explicitly shown the outline of the snake and the elephant inside, the things hidden beyond the surface in the second drawing, are most adults able to say, 'Oh, I get it now. You were trying to draw an elephant inside of a snake.'

This second, rationalized, description explains away the humour, terror and mystery of Saint-Exupéry's original image. For some reason, despite Saint-Exupéry's careful illustration in "Drawing Number One", I too, see a hat. Frustrated in anticipation of our failure to see his first drawing as he intended it, Saint Exupéry (1943, p. 3) replies,

> Then I would never talk to that person about boa constrictors, or primeval forests, or stars. I would bring myself down to his level. I would talk to him about bridge, and golf, and politics, and neckties. And the grown-up would be greatly pleased to have met such a sensible man.

For a person like me who did not see, at first glance, the elephant swallowed whole by the boa constrictor, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry is a strange figure. He was a renowned commercial pilot who flew mail for the French postal service at a time when airplanes were highly dangerous and without instrumentation, he rescued countless fellow airmail pilots from their crashed planes, he was an accomplished author who had written stories on his experiences as an aviator, he had survived a plane crash in the Sahara desert. His life ended as a reconnaissance pilot for the Allied forces in the Second World War, purportedly shot down by a German pilot. He was a romantic, a child of a wealthy French family with aristocratic roots (yet resentful of aristocrats), whose imagination would often take him to the comforts of his maternal home (Schiff, 1994, pp 42-43).

How could a man who was confronted with the most serious commitments in life, like the continual prospect of his own death in the temperamental flying machines of the 20th century, be the same man who lived in a world of deep wonderment with images of the jungle as a child and adult, and who wrote, in his forties, an illustrated children's book recalling an imaginary encounter with a boy from another world? Is his *Le Petit Prince* the expression of a kind of idealism, an expression of childish regression, a romantic nostalgia for his lost childhood, a fanciful children's story meant only to amuse or instruct?

Or does Saint-Exupéry attempt to re-capture the wonderment and impulse of childhood from the perspective of an adult who has become unwillingly caught up in a world of deep commitments? Might *Le Petit Prince* be his attempt at showing us how it is possible to live once again in an enchanted world, this time experienced

with a deeper appreciation for its meaning? Is Saint-Exupéry perhaps showing how the rational adult can seize a second naiveté, one deepened and conditioned by experience? How can we understand and be moved by poetic images, such as the boa constrictor in the elephant, without immediately intellectualizing or rationalizing them?

The perniciousness of instrumental explanation can be confronted when one considers a scene at the beginning of the book. The Little Prince demands that Saint-Exupéry draw him a sheep, and after three attempts – each rejected by the Prince – in frustration, he draws him a picture of a box instead. He says to the Prince, 'This is only his box. The sheep you asked for is inside.' Surprised and delighted, the Prince replies, 'That is exactly the way I wanted it!' (Saint-Exupéry, 1943, pp. 6-7)

The Little Prince sees the sheep inside of the box, which is to adult eyes, is just a drawing of a box with three holes in it. If someone points at the box and asks me what it is, I might reply that it is a thing for containing other things. It is a cardboard object, with each opposite sides of the same dimensions, and I can fit other boxes inside of it if there is enough room. It is a thing I use for moving other objects around in, for instance when I moved from an apartment to my house, or when I mail a parcel. If I cut its top off, I can use the box for holding cat litter. I have seen thousands of them, all different shapes and sizes. Like Saint-Exupéry's hat, to rational adults, the box is something I *use*.

Take the same box and put it on the floor. Any child below a certain age, or adult with an imaginative relation to the world, does not see a box. It is a place that invites inhabitation. With a strong enough imagination, it is an infinite tunnel that

one can climb into and secretly peer into the outside world from. It is a wild animal that constantly escapes my grasp – every time I run towards it (and playfully kick its sides) the stiff creature bounces away from me as if it possessed a life of its own. It is a house to live in alone and open to only invited guests when they knock on the door that I drew and decorated with crayons. It is a *thing-in-waiting*... it waits to become a robot's thick metal armour - I push my arms through its sides and my head through the top, and I paint buttons and lights on its sides; I make whistling and beeping noises as I become a part of the armour.

For the child, whose spaces are not yet populated with the adult's instrumentalized understanding, the box presents a space of relational possibilities grounded in a direct affective grasp of the space. To call this a "box", as if implying that it is a use-thing or a container-thing, reduces it to a short list of instrumental relationships that are only a part of a very specific kind of culturally conditioned adult world. The thing, whatever it is, is open to interpretation for the child and imaginative adult. While the average adult *also* sees the box in terms of numerous relational possibilities, the adult's instrumental understanding of space is much smaller and less tied to one's emotions and imagination, and correspondingly evokes fewer opportunities for creative expression. Inevitably, the child will one day learn how to put things away in the box and begin treating it as a container-object – perhaps as their parents teach them to clean up their toys at the end of each day – but this is not their original relationship to it.

What I am getting at in the previous examples is that the modern adult's rational understanding of the world is grounded in a more imaginary and affective

understanding appropriated in childhood. Saint-Exupéry and the Little Prince participate within an imaginary world in which the box *really does contain a sheep*; this is a world that I can only participate within when I embrace and participate within that poetic image. At the heart of my expressivist psychology I wonder how deeply I can dwell in the experience of another? Can I, like the tiny sheep, crawl into Saint-Exupéry's little box and find peace and comfort within its walls when I am in crisis?

## Chapter Four: Poetic Space and the Topoanalysis of Home

We are all familiar with the experience of having a certain phrase or expression strike us in profound way. Often, these "poetic" expressions stir feelings up in our depths, but prove difficult to understand in any exact way. As Gaston Bachelard (1994, pp. xviii-xix) puts it, "… how can an [expression], at times very unusual, appear to be a concentration of the entire psyche? How – with no preparation – can this singular, short-lived event constituted by the appearance of an unusual poetic [expression], react on other minds and in other hearts…?" How can one be arrested or moved by a poetic event or poetic expression, when people are separated by large cultural or experiential gaps? How can one be moved by a story or poem that is hundreds or thousands of years old?

For Jonathan Lear, Plenty-Coups's expression "after this, nothing happened" demands an entire book to expose its deeper meanings. For Malidoma Patrice Somé, it is the strange rambling of the outcast who cries, "How horrible to be the only sane person in a world gone mad." For John Hull, who interprets his own life, it is the moments in which his blindness makes previously secure territory totally hostile to him. For myself, it was a moment when I listened to my friend's experience of her house fire… when her face took on a distant expression, and she said quietly, "It's like I still have a house. But I don't have a *home* anymore." The words used in these expressions are commonplace… but the manner in which they are spoken and the moments that they are spoken in, the way the words are crafted, the people whom they are spoken by, and the way I tremble when I hear them, all point toward

deeper meanings not immediately visible. In this chapter I work out another aspect of my expressivist psychology, this time by working more phenomenologically. I interpret spatial concepts from Gaston Bachelard's book *The Poetics of Space*, and show how a "topoanalytic" approach to the imagination invites poetic inhabitation. Following Gaston Bachelard's expressivistic interpretation of the relationships between the imagination and spaces shows that when a person becomes sensitive to the poetic possibilities of an expression, the interpreter begins to inhabit a *poetic space*. I argue that when a person articulates their experiences poetically, they begin to reshape their common and moral spaces. An expressivist psychology interprets poetic expressions as transformations of moral and common spaces.

Common to the case studies I have interpreted in this thesis is the notion of "home"… thus I have made a note whenever the ideas of "home" and "being-at-home" have appeared in or are implied by an expression. In this chapter I consider how the home, and being-at-home are most evident in changing moral and common spaces – poetic expressions allow a person to reclaim a sense of home.

I take up Gaston Bachelard's notion of poetic space to understand the *imaginary* aspect of inhabited spaces and how expressions (spoken words, images, dreams, poetry, etcetera) are experienced spatially. Bachelard's phenomenological approach to poetic expression, what he calls "topoanalysis", draws the imaginer into a space, opens one up to an expression's manifold moods and subtleties, and allows the imaginer to embody the meanings of the space. Bachelard's topoanalysis is not a "method" in the scientific sense, but is rather a phenomenological approach to interpreting poetic expression. I see Bachelard's topoanalysis as a means for

transforming psychological listening, because topoanalysis provides us with a phenomenological method for intimately dwelling in the poetic possibilities of expressions. Like other expressivists, Bachelard is concerned with how language and expression constitute a human world. When understood as an expressivist view, Bachelard's poetic understanding of space reveals that our unnoticed, normative and often habitual modes of inhabiting spaces with others are counterbalanced by an equally powerful mode of personal agency manifested in our imaginative participation in the world. For my purposes, topoanalysis is used as a phenomenological enrichment of the expressivist psychology I have sketched out in the thesis. Bachelard (1958/1994, p. xxx) argues that the imaginer does not need to live "through the poet's sufferings in order to seize the felicity of speech offered by the poet", but instead the imaginers learns to resonate with the poetic expression itself. In other words, we do not need to live out the lives of Plenty-Coups or John Hull in order to understand their expressions. Their expressions of loss and grief bear upon poetic spaces that they beckon us towards.

I show how an expressivist psychology can interpret expressions topoanalytically, and show how poetic experiences renew and reshape common and moral spaces. Returning to two case studies presented earlier, I interpret the poetic experiences of John Hull and Plenty-Coups. I use topoanalysis as a means for understanding their experiences in poetic spaces as expressions of *home* and *being-at-home*. I show how their poetic stories express their experiences and how their stories serve to renew their common and moral spaces by evoking for them new images of how they can be at-home in the world again.

Generativity and transformation of space are central to Bachelard's understanding of poetic expression. For Bachelard, one's *being* really is changed when one inhabits a poetic expression. If one of the problems of modernity is a plurality of non-intersecting common and moral spaces, where people are genuinely separated from one another culturally, this puts great value upon moments where a poetic expression draws individuals into a communal 'we'. In this interpretation, poetic expressions shape *new* moral and common spaces; these new spaces forge together different spaces. If it is possible that poetic expressions can reshape or even forge together spaces then an expressivist psychology must be vitally interested in the idea of expression as *poiesis* (*Gr. 'making')*. This expressivist view suggests that people are the poets and storytellers of their own experiences and, by definition, are shapers of space.

I sketch out three interconnected arguments from Bachelard's *topoanalysis*: (1) spaces are primarily experienced affectively, (2) habits close one off from the manifold meanings that spaces hold, and (3) poetic expressions can open a person up to unforeseen values in a space and in oneself.

## Home as Intimate Space

In the introduction to *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard (1994, p. xv) succinctly describes his own history of thought,

> A philosopher who has evolved his entire thinking from the fundamental theme of the philosophy of science, and followed the main line of the active, growing rationalism of contemporary science as closely as he could, must forget his learning and break with all his

> habits of philosophical research, if he wants to study the problems posed by the poetic imagination.

Chimisso (2001, p. 43) – a biographer of Bachelard – expands on his intellectual path,

> The development of Bachelard's thought reached a decisive point with *La poétique de l'espace (1957)*, in which he announced a change of perspective in his treatment of imagination. From then onwards, he aimed at a phenomenology of images, this abandoning his previous project of objective analysis of them. He no longer approached images 'from outside;' rather, he was now seeking a subjective and immediate investigation of reverie, aiming at a description of it as 'we' individually live it.

*The Poetics of Space* is Bachelard's best-known work in North America. In it, Bachelard counters the notion of "geometric" space (see the preface in this thesis regarding geometric space) with his own "poetic" understanding of space. Bachelard appreciates that this book is a topoanalysis of our intimate places. He plays the Newtonian term "space" against itself by denuding the term of its geometric associations in order to reveal the underlying tenderness and intimacy of spaces. Bachelard's delight in teasing intimacy out from uninhabitable images, such as "space", is understandable for two reasons. First, one must appreciate that the breadth of his academic scholarship was in the philosophy of science – and that his training was in mathematics, physics and philosophy – where geometric spatial concepts reign.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, Bachelard's philosophy of science (and subsequent interest in poetics) is based on the idea that habitual forms of thought and action must give way, periodically, to total irruptions and

discontinuities – that our patterns of everyday speaking and thinking require us to re-imagine things that we take for granted, such that we can move on to new forms of knowledge and being. This second aspect, that resembles the notion that human beings must continually reshape their world in order to inhabit it, places Bachelard firmly within expressivism.

Bachelard makes poetic images central in his analysis of the "intimate" relations between persons and their inhabited spaces. Topoanalysis is a means for understanding how spaces – both imaginary and material – can become sites for poetic inhabitation. When a space is inhabited poetically, it becomes a place of intimacy and new possibilities. For the expressivist, an *intimate* relation to a space means that one cannot fully disentangle one's experience from the space in which it happens. The phenomenological aspect of expressivism is an attempt to reclaim the porous self's experience of space (see chapter three for a discussion of the porous vs. buffered self).

Bachelard (1994, p. 7) sees the home as the "human being's first world"… it is the first space that a human being inhabits, and for him, expresses the intimate relations of persons and spaces. Jacobson (2009, p. 360-362) supports this reading of Bachelard's phenomenology of home when she argues that the domestic space, the home, is our first place for expression where our sense of self emerges. It is the domestic space that demands expression and gives one a stable center of rhythms and rituals. Jacobson (2009, p. 363) writes, "It is in the context of our first experiences of having a home that we learn how to walk, how to move about our environment, how to sleep, how to deal with our needs for ingesting and excreting,

and how to secure and manage countless other bodily powers." The home is our first space, our first world. In other words, we learn to "make ourselves at home" by dwelling in the domestic space with other people. Thinking of how we begin our lives in a home full of domestic practices, Bachelard (1994, p. 15) writes that the social and personal habits that appear are owed to a "… passionate liaison of our bodies… with an unforgettable house." This passionate liaison imagines an interpenetration of house and person, such that "… the house images move in both directions: they are in us as much as we are in them…" (Bachelard, 1994, p. xxxvii)

The most important space for the poetic imagination, according to Bachelard, is the home. Kirsten Jacobson (2009, p. 356) who draws her phenomenology of home from Bachelard, writes that being at home in a space involves, "a developed *way* of being that is marked by a sense of 'my own', or, more properly, '*our* own', an intersubjective *way* of being that is familiar and secure…" A home is a refuge for an inhabitant. What is "domestic" to us is an expression of home: I can inhabit my domestic space intimately, where "foreign" spaces are uninhabitable.[26]

There is a developmental notion implicit in Bachelard's understanding of home: that the home is crucial for understanding how selves emerge from the domestic space, and that the developed human psyche expresses the spatial structure and values of the inhabited home. As our spaces grow, and we move into new spaces, Bachelard (1994, p. 5) believes that we retain the modes of inhabitation of our first home, where, "An entire past comes to dwell in a new house... we bring

[26] This is something that Herder is interested in, and is focal in his political and philosophical texts. Herder's "populism", according to Berlin (2000, p. 176) invokes the question of what it means to belong to a society, a culture, a *homeland*, and that having a homeland is an indispensible part of being human.

our *lares* with us…"[27] Bachelard sees the imaginer as born into an inherently social and cultural world. The house that we are born in is already inhabited with a particular domestic life, a home replete with "values of intimacy" that are "physically inscribed in us. [The house] is a group of organic habits." (Bachelard, 1994, p. 14) In other words, we grow up sharing a house with others who powerfully shape our understanding of the home as an intimate space. Expressivists see the house as a language of being, and language as the house of being.

The house that we grew up in lives within us. Our understanding of home is expressed through our habitudes: I tend to eat in a similar manner across the many different spaces that I eat in. Jacobson (2009, p. 368) clarifies this point when she says that our first home, "habituate[s] us to *certain* ways of doing things… [and] open[s] and close[s] ourselves off from *certain* possibilities." We carry with us, later in life, the familial habitudes ingrained in the childhood home, "even when we have left behind the 'objective' home in which they were formed." (ibid.) Habitudes therefore develop through a dynamic relation between my body and the spaces I inhabit.[28]

Following Bachelard, the child's domestic space cannot be expressed in a full description of its floorplan and the facts of a childhood; it is rather best expressed in the *orientation* to the home a child expresses in her habitudes. The subtle gestures, such as the way a child delicately rolls the arches of her feet outwards as she sneaks up and down the staircases of her home, hints at the way in which the domestic

[27] *Lares* were guardian-gods who protected a localized space in ancient Rome.
[28] I take the word "habitude" from its French roots, meaning how things "usually" go.. counter to the idea that habits are composed of rules or mechanisms.

space appears to her and calls forth habits when she is an adult. The child, who tries to move through the home without making a sound, who shrinks away in the domestic space, becomes the adult who shrinks away in social settings and pads off to find a quiet corner at the party (see Jacobson, 2009, pp. 364-365, for other examples). Inhabiting a space shapes the character of that space and simultaneously ingrains itself as my habitude; self and space emerge together. In adulthood, it becomes possible to articulate the origins of one's habitudes.

If inhabited spaces like the home are conditions for expression, this leads to an insight into the lives of people who are caught up in uninhabitable spaces. In an earlier chapter articulating the notion of common space, I showed how the common space John Hull enjoys with his children shrinks and fractures as he descends into deep blindness. The domestic space, once inhabited communally by the entire family through the expressions of visual sight, descends into a senseless chaos for John. John's common spaces cease to grant him common experiences, and he slowly becomes isolated from the people he loves. In the years that he mourns the passing of his prior life as a visually sighted man, his spaces remain measured and understood by the memories of a past life. When a space no longer demands expression from him, he loses his motivation to act within them and his life becomes uninhabitable.

This is why the poetic should be important for understanding John's life. If all poetic spaces grant new experiences and demand new practices for inhabitation, then John's spaces have lost their poetic aspect. John Hull's fall into deep blindness means that when he no longer experiences his common spaces intimately, he has no

poetic experiences. Likewise, the Crow undergo a rapid collapse of their moral space as their traditional domestic and warfare practices fade away. As Lear argues, when the Crow can no longer hunt buffalo or engage in feats of courage as a warrior, their way of life effectively comes to an end. In both of these cases, people are faced with the prospect of living in spaces that are emptied of their poetic possibilities, left to dwell in spaces that no longer grant new expressive possibilities. They have lost their homes.

Is John Hull relegated to "cope" with his blindness and forever remain a man deprived of sight? Years later, Hull remembers asking himself, "was I going to live in memory? Was I going to live in nostalgia? Was I going to forever live as a sighted person who could no longer see, and whose mental life was governed by memories of what life had been like when I could see?" (Kirchner, 1993)

Similarly, do the Crow lose hope and live out an existence without "happenings" after their moral and common spaces fall apart? Or, is there a powerful way in which the tribe can discover new moral landmarks and poetic possibilities in the ruins of a past life? What kinds of experiences are necessary in order for people to newly inhabit uninhabitable spaces?

As a young boy, Plenty-Coups – the last great chief of the Crow - has a medicine dream that anticipates a change in Crow moral and common spaces. The medicine dream of Plenty-Coups, which happens many years before the buffalo disappear, serves to safeguard Crow life by offering a vision of how the Crow might retain their cultural traditions while accepting the inevitable arrival of modernity. In the case of John Hull, years after he has gone blind, it is a poetic experience he has in

a medieval monastery on the Isle of Iona that transforms his self-understanding, such that he is able to affirm himself as a "whole-body-seer", not as a sighted-man gone blind. Where Plenty-Coups's medicine dream allows the Crow to *envision* a new way of being housed and protected in the modernizing world, John Hull becomes capable of dwelling within his own body and once again *seeing* in the world.

Both of their stories involve unforeseen poetic events and poetic interpretations that lead to new possibilities for inhabiting their spaces in an intimate and meaningful manner. Both experiences open on to a new way of seeing spaces such that the spaces can grant them new possibilities for living a meaningful life. In order to interpret these experiences, I work out Bachelard's topoanalysis to make sense of their changing spaces and poetic experiences.

## Topoanalysis and the Home

Bachelard (1994, p. 8) defines topoanalysis as "the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives." As I discussed previously, the most intimate site of expression for Bachelard is the home. Bachelard sees topoanalysis as a blend of interpretive methods that resonate with one another to articulate the expressive possibilities of the home space. He writes, "Descriptive psychology, depth psychology, psychoanalysis and phenomenology would constitute, with the house, the corpus of doctrines that I have designated with the name topoanalysis. On whatever theoretical horizon we examine it, the house image would appear to have

become the topography of our intimate being… [the house is a] *tool for analysis* for the human soul." (Bachelard, 1994, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii, original emphasis)

Bachelard is careful to point out that topoanalysis is *not* concerned with interpreting how people "factually" inhabit homes, i.e. the mundane domestic habits of the household or the house's floor plan, for these would not disclose the expressive values that a space offers. He writes,

> … the real houses of memory… do not readily lend themselves to visitors… What would be the use, for instance, in giving the plan of the room that was really *my* room, in describing the little room at the *end* of the garret, in saying that from the window, across the indentations of the roofs, one could see the hill… Paradoxically, in order to suggest the values of intimacy, we have to induce in the reader a state of suspended reading. For it is not until his eyes have left the page that recollections of my room can become a threshold of [daydreaming]…
>
> Bachelard (1994, pp. 13-14)

In other words, Bachelard believes that one must turn to poetic expressions, such as those found in literature and poetry and art, in order to find strong expressions of being housed or being at-home in a space. In that way, topoanalysis articulates how one *should* inhabit spaces… how spaces should be lived at their best. This means that poetics is always concerned with an ideal and intensified expression of inhabited spaces. Bachelard (1994, p. 16) clarifies this point when he writes, "It is on the plane of the daydream and not on that of facts that [the home] remains alive and poetically useful within us… To [daydream of] the house we were born in means more than to inhabit it in memory; it means living in this house that is gone, the way we used to dream in it." Topoanalysis demands an active imagination from the interpreter, because inhabitation begins when one's eyes (or ears) depart from the

poetic expression and begin to daydream in it and experience the expressive qualities of a poetic space.

A poetic expression stirs us up in our depths in a mysterious manner before it becomes an articulate experience. When I encounter a poetic expression, there is an inchoate resonance of some kind… a word or sound seizes me and I tremble a bit. But for Bachelard the initial sensation is only a beginning. The initial experience must be made more articulate, more intense, more exaggerated, such that the daydreamer enters into a poetic space. Topoanalysis makes an active imagination central to the method, which allows the interpreter to intensify or idealize a poetic expression. Intensification makes it possible for the interpreter to see the kinds of expressive qualities that a poetic space carries. Through the imagination the interpreter begins to possess the poetic expression as her/his own… where the, "psychological nuance: 'I should have written that,' establishes us as phenomenologists of [expression]." (Bachelard, 1994, p. 21).

Again, this means that for topoanalysis begins with an initial experience that must be intensified and exaggerated through the imagination. In practice Bachelard's topoanalytic method works roughly like this: he begins with a short expression that moves him, like a fragment of a poem about a house. He imagines the scene or situation that the poem evokes, and expresses the moment it in his own words. His re-expression serves as a basis for finding other poetic expressions (poems, literature, artwork) that express a similar value. As Bachelard works outwards from the original expression, he works *syncretically*, by juxtaposing and layering related expressions until he has enriched the kinds of images that the

poetic expression draws upon.[29] Through a process of finding harmonies and disharmonies between poetic imagery, Bachelard intensifies, exaggerates and enriches the poetic expression.

The idea of intensifying and exaggerating a phenomenon should make even a scientist uncomfortable. After all, Eugène Minkowski, a psychiatrist of lived experience whom Bachelard draws upon often, writes that in order to gain access to a natural universe, Enlightenment scholars sought to, "de-poeticize our lived world and rewrite it in terms of prose." (Minkowski, 1936, pp. 166-167) Topoanalysis turns objectivity on its head by taking prosaic expression and re-imagining it poetically, and in that way topoanalysis takes up an interpretive position where the interpreter is fully implicated in the interpreted expression.

Imaginary Spaces

Bachelard only implies a definition of the "intimacy" one experiences in relation to one's lived spaces. An "intimate" relation to one's spaces can be understood as embracing the indeterminate boundaries of oneself and the spaces one inhabits. When a domestic space takes on intimate values for us, Bachelard believes, it becomes a new site for poetic daydreaming. He writes, "The house we were born in is more than an embodiment of home, it is also an embodiment of dreams. Each one of its nooks and corners was a resting-place for daydreaming." (Bachelard, 1958/1994, p. 15) That is, the corners or hidden spaces of the home

[29] It is not clear to me whether Bachelard wishes to define anything "essential" about the poetic expression through his phenomenology, or if the phenomenological enrichment serves only to expand the hermeneutic circle.

where children retreat to out of boredom or a desire for solitude, such as the bedroom or the attic, offer intimate spaces where imagining becomes possible. Bachelard (ibid.) even suggests that, "often the resting-place particularized the daydream. Our habits of a particular daydream were acquired there." Our manner of imagining is inextricably bound up with the spaces in which imagining happens.

But, what if one did not grow up in a European house, with garrets and nooks and root cellars? What if one's domestic spaces were not limited to the confines of a French cottage like Bachelard's, and was predicated upon an entirely different way of life? Whatever our domestic space is, whether it is a cottage or tipi or an apartment, it houses the imaginer. If the poetic imagination is something possible in all cultures who experience the intimacy of being-housed, then what does this look like in non-Western cultures?

Medicine Dreaming in Inhabited Space

For the Crow, the poetic imagination is expressed in the "medicine dream". According to Lear (2008, p. 67), the medicine dream (or "vision") is the highest-order of dream that a traditional Crow may have, alongside dreams in which one simply witnesses an incident, wish-dreams "which [see] some hoped-for circumstance coming true", and "property dreams" in which one sees valued items that one would later acquire through warfare (i.e. warriors would dream of horses they would steal). Medicine dreams were understood as powerful visions of a future for the Crow and their community. Young men, warriors, chiefs and medicine men would go on vision journeys in hopes that they might have a medicine dream that

would give the individual and tribe guidance or assistance. In some cases, the vision would yield a powerful animal-spirit or “Helper” that the medicine-dreamer would later carry in the form of a “medicine-bundle” or talisman for the rest of their lives (Linderman, 1930, p. 43).

*Figure 2. Plenty-Coups as a young chief, circa 1880 (Bell, 1880).*

In the case of Plenty-Coups, a Crow boy who would decades later become the last great chief of his tribe, his medicine dreaming takes place at the summit of Crazy Peak, and hardly in the comfort and repose of a house that Bachelard imagines. In 1855 or 1856 (Linderman is himself unsure), a Crow crier calls upon the young men of the camp, "Are you afraid of a little suffering? Go into these mountains and find Helpers for yourselves and your people who have so many enemies!" (Lear, 2008, p. 66; Linderman, 1930, p. 57)

In response to the call, *nine-year-old* Plenty-Coups and three other boys embark on a medicine dream journey to Crazy Peak. Plenty-Coups does not eat or drink for days, walking the summit in order to weaken himself. He blisters in the mountaintop sun, his tongue swells with thirst. But he sees nothing. Remembering the stories of his ancestors who "sacrificed their flesh and blood to dream", Plenty-Coups cuts off the end of his left index finger and smashes it upon a fallen tree until it bleeds (Linderman, 1930, p. 59). Still, he does not dream. Four war-eagles, attracted to his trail of spilled blood, perch near him. Fearing that he is dead, his three friends carry him to his bed of cedar and sage, smoking with him before they return to their own dreaming places (Linderman, 1930, p. 60) Finally, on the night of the fifth day without water or food, Plenty-Coups begins to have the medicine dream that not only tells him what his medicine will be, but also gives the Crow a vision of the future.

Mountaintops as Poetic Spaces

The Crow had dreams in many places, not only on mountaintops. But why is a mountaintop, and not the comforts of the tipi or the sweat lodge, the proper site for Plenty-Coups's medicine dream? Why does he engage in fasting and self-mutilation? To understand this, one must appreciate the purpose of Plenty-Coups's medicine dream. Lear (2008, p. 68) writes, "Going off into the mountains to pray to God to 'Pity me!' was a way of drawing the spiritual world's attention to one's plight." Sacrificing one's own body, denying one's bodily needs in this manner, exaggerate and intensify one's grasp upon the tribe's (and one's own) situation. Physical suffering allows the Crow warrior to resonate with the spiritual suffering of the entire community. He desperately pleas to the spirits to help the tribe through a time of crisis. In the time that Plenty-Coups has his medicine dream, ongoing tribal warfare and encroachment from the American government increasingly threatens Crow lands, and buffalo are disappearing from the plains at an alarming rate, provoking what Lear (2008, p. 77) calls a "shared anxiety" for the tribe.[30] The tongue-parching and skin-burning peak of the mountaintop discloses a space *for suffering*; self-mutilation and fasting set the dreamer into reverberation with the inchoate anxiety that the tribe communally experiences. Plenty-Coups inhabits a dreaming space such that he can have a medicine dream that gives guidance to the

[30] In 1876, The Battle of the Little Bighorn (Custer's Last Stand) took place, in which the Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho – traditional enemies of the Crow - routed General Custer's army. This was one battle among many of the Great Sioux War. In The Battle of the Rosebud, the Crow (Plenty-Coups with a contingent of warriors) came to the assistance of the American army, an act that would be one of the grand gestures of peaceful relations made by the Crow to the American government.

suffering and anxiety of his tribe; he dreams "*on behalf of* the tribe" (Lear, 2008, p. 78).

Plenty-Coups and the Medicine Dream of the Chickadee

In the medicine dream, Plenty-Coups is led to present-day Castle Rock or what the Crow called "The-fasting-place" by a person who holds a red rattle in his hand. Plenty-Coups describes the dream to Linderman,

> Then he shook his red rattle and sang a queer song four times. 'Look!' he pointed… Out of the hole in the ground came the buffalo, bulls and cows and calves without number. They spread wide and blackened the plains… When at last they ceased coming out of the hole in the ground, all were gone, *all!*... I saw a few antelope on a hillside, but no buffalo – not a bull, not a cow, not one calf, was anywhere on the plains. (Linderman, 1930, pp. 63-64)

Then, out of a hole in the ground came a torrent of bulls and cows and calves. Plenty-Coups continues,

> These, like the others, scattered and spread on the plains. But they stopped in small bands and began to eat the grass. Many lay down, not as a buffalo does but differently, and many were spotted… And the bulls bellowed differently too, not deep and far-sounding like the bulls of the buffalo but sharper and yet weaker in my ears. Their tails were different, longer, and nearly brushed the ground. They were not buffalo. These were strange animals from another world… During all the time the Spotted-buffalo were going back into the hole in the ground the Man-person had not once looked at me. He stood facing the south as through the Spotted-buffalo belonged there. (Linderman, 1930, p. 64)

The dream continues as the Man-person leads Plenty Coups to a dark forest, and then disappears. Imagining the dark forest, Plenty-Coups says to Linderman,

> A fierce storm was coming fast. The sky was black with streaks of mad color through it. I saw the Four Winds gathering to strike the forest,

> and held my breath. Pity was hot in my heart for the beautiful trees. I felt pity for all things that lived in that forest, but was powerless to stand with them against the Four Winds that together were making war. I shielded my own face with my arm when they charged! I heard the Thunders calling out in the storm, saw beautiful trees twist like blades of grass and fall in tangled piles where the forest had been. Bending low, I heard the Four Winds rush past me as though they were not yet satisfied, and then I looked at the destruction they had left behind them… Only one tree, tall and straight, was left standing where the great forest had stood. The Four Winds that always make war alone had this time struck together, riding down every tree in the forest but *one*…
> 'Listen, Plenty-coups,' said a voice. 'In that tree is the lodge of the Chickadee. He is least in strength but strongest of mind among his kind. He is willing to work for wisdom. The Chickadee-person is a good listener. Nothing escapes his ears, which he has sharpened by constant use. Whenever others are talking together of their successes and failures, there you will find the Chickadee-person listening to their words. But in all his listening he tends to his own business. He never intrudes, never speaks in strange company, and yet never misses a chance to learn from others. He gains success and avoids failure by learning how others succeeded or failed, and without great trouble to himself… The lodges of countless Bird-people were in that forest when the Four Winds charged it. Only one is left unharmed, the lodge of the Chickadee-person. Develop your body, but do not neglect your mind, Plenty-coups. It is the mind that leads a man to power, not strength of body. (Linderman, 1930, pp. 65-67)

Plenty Coups returns to his tribe, and is welcomed into the lodge of Yellow-Bear… a Wise Man who interprets Plenty Coups's experience among a number of chiefs and elders. Yellow-Bear, the "wisest man in the lodge", interprets the dream,

> 'He has been told that in his lifetime the buffalo will go away forever… and that in their place on the plains will come the bulls and cows and calves of the white men. I have myself seen these Spotted-buffalo drawing loads of the white man's goods… I saw cows and calves of the same tribe as the bulls that drew the loads… The dream of Plenty-coups means that the white men will take and hold this country and that their Spotted-buffalo will cover the plains… The Four Winds represent the white man and those who will help him in his wars. The forest of trees are the tribes of these wide plains. And the one tree that the Four Winds left standing after the fearful battle represents our own people, the Absarokees, the one tribe of the plains that has never

> made war against the white man… The Chickadee's lodge in that standing tree is the lodges of this tribe pitched in the safety of peaceful relations with white men, whom we could not stop even though we would. The Chickadee is small, so are we against our many enemies, white and red. But he was wise in his selection of a place to pitch his lodge. After the battle of the Four Winds he still held his home, his country, because he had gained wisdom by listening to the mistakes of others and knew there was safety for himself and his family.'
>
> (Linderman, 1930, pp. 73-74)

In the decades that follow the dream, the Crow would take up arms with the American government against the Sioux as a show of friendship (see footnote 33), and engage in diplomatic relations with the American government in order to retain their lands as a reserve. Plenty-Coups continues to practice Crow traditions yet is baptized (and later buried) Catholic. When Plenty-Coups becomes chief, he builds a European-American log house on his property that nonetheless retains a traditional Crow tipi architectural and decorative style (Carter, Chappell & McCleary, 2005, pp. 103-105). He encourages fellow Crow to pursue "the white man's education" (Lear, 2006, p. 5). In 1921, as part of a delegation to Washington D.C., Plenty Coups is chosen to represent the Indian-Americans who fought in the First World War, laying his headdress and coup-stick at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.[31] Although it is a history told with contention, Lear (2006, pp. 144-145) believes that the Chickadee medicine dream, and its interpretation and committed fulfillment in the life of Plenty-Coups, allows the Crow to enter modernity with the hope that their traditions will be passed on to the younger generations. According to Lear (2006,

[31] At the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Plenty-Coups made the following speech, "For the Indians of America I call upon the Great Spirit with gesture and tribal tongue: That the dead should not have died in vain; That war might end; That peace be purchased by the blood of Red Men and White*"* (McCleary, 2002, p. 176, quoted in Lear, 2006, p.153).

pp. 152-154), Plenty-Coups's commitment to the medicine dream of the Chickadee acknowledges the cultural destruction that the Crow face in modernity without falling into despair or empty traditionalism. His advocacy for the Crow and his shrewd diplomacy with European-Americans allows him to express Crow traditions in a radically new way, one unimaginable before the medicine dream of the Chickadee.

The above interpretation contextualizes the medicine dream within a Crow historical and moral ontology, and shows how a poetic expression (the dream) shapes new possibilities for the Crow. This tells us how the Crow historically made sense of the dream. But does the medicine dream disclose a poetic space for non-Crow, and if it does, how is the "lodge of the Chickadee" a universal expression of human inhabitation? To do this, we can proceed topoanalytically, by juxtaposing the dream with other expressions that invoke the image of a house caught up in a devastating storm.

## The Lodge of the Chickadee as House and Refuge

In a chapter of *The Poetics of Space* titled "House and Universe", Bachelard considers how expressions of being-at-home or housedness are experienced in the imagination. Bachelard takes Henri Bosco's novel *Malicroix* and interprets the powerful image Bosco offers of a humble house that is besieged by a great hurricane. Bachelard sees Bosco's passage becomes an expression of human resistance and courage. In the following passage, Bosco describes the house fighting as it might against the powerful storm:

> The house was fighting gallantly. At first it gave voice to its complaints; the most awful gusts were attacking it from every side at once, with evident hatred and such howls of rage that, at times, I trembled with fear. But it stood firm. From the very beginning of the storm, snarling winds had been taking the roof to task, trying to pull it off, to break its back, tear it into shreds, suck it off. But it only hunched over further and clung to the old rafters. Then other winds, rushing along close to the ground, charged against the wall. Everything swayed under the shock of this blow, but the flexible house stood up to the beast… The house clung close to me, like a she-wolf, and at times, I could smell her odor penetrating maternally to my very heart. That night she was really my mother. (Bosco, 1948, p. 115, quoted in Bachelard, 1994, pp. 44-45).

Bachelard sees the humble house is a refuge for its inhabitant, not only protecting him from the storm outside, but also making him a participant in its resistance against the terrible winds. In Bachelard's (1958/1994, p. 46) view, the house stands defiantly against the universe and in doing so expresses "the physical and moral energy of a human body" that resists and bends with the forceful demands of a powerful world.

Bosco's house image bears a striking resemblance to Plenty-Coups's medicine dream of the Chickadee. Plenty-Coups says, "Bending low, I heard the Four Winds rush past me… I looked at the destruction they had left behind them… Only one tree, tall and straight, was left standing where the great forest had stood." (Linderman, 1930, p. 65) I imagine Plenty-Coups bending into the powerful storm, resisting it with all his might, just as the tree of the Chickadee's lodge bends with the wind.[32] He takes on the hunkered stance of the tree. The inflexible trees around him and the birds that pitch their lodges in the trees are annihilated by the storm.

[32] It is worth noting that the Mountain Chickadee, the species of chickadee that inhabits Crow territory, usually makes its nest in the hollowed-out holes of Ponderosa Pine and

Bachelard (1994, p. 46) interprets the moral and spiritual qualities of Bosco's house to mean that,

> Such a dwelling has an educative value, for in this passage of Bosco's book there is a sort of dovetailing of the reserves of strength with the inner fortresses of courage… The inhabitant of [the house] must dominate solitude in a house on an island where there is no village. He must attain to the dignity of solitude that had been achieved by one of his ancestors, who had become a man of solitude as a result of a deep tragedy of his life. He must live alone in a cosmos which is not that of his childhood. This man, who comes of gentle, happy people, must cultivate courage in order to confront a world that is harsh, indigent and cold. The isolated house furnishes him with strong images, that is, with counsels of resistance.

There is an uncanny resemblance between Bachelard's topoanalytic interpretation of the resisting house, and the situation that the Crow face. In this reading, courageousness is not battling one's enemies, but rather bending with the outside world's assaults upon one's home. Modernity might mean for the Crow that they are forced to inhabit a land, "live alone in a cosmos" which is not that in which they were born. They must learn to live truly alone, where there is no village of other tribes… embracing a life of solitude after cultural tragedy. The wisdom of the Chickadee is thus to *make its home in a space that survives the crises of life through its flexibility.* In this interpretation, the dream of the Chickadee's lodge clarifies a new "inner fortress of courage" for the Crow warrior… an inner space where one bends and twists with the savage demands of the modern world but does not break beneath it. Bachelard (1994, p. 46) writes, "Come what may the house helps us to say: I will be an inhabitant of the world, in spite of the world." When expressions of flexibility and vigilance harmonize in the poetic imagination, the imaginer becomes

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Aspen. Both of these kinds of trees are known for their flexibility and resistance to breakage in violent wind. (Hill & Lein, 1988, pp. 875-880)

newly sheltered and capable of weathering-out the storms of life. This is how, by discovering a new form of housedness in the dream, "*the house remodels man*." (Bachelard, 1994, p. 47) This new kind of inner courage, different from the old forms of courage that warriors understood prior to collapse, becomes part of Plenty-Coups' habitudes.

The lodge of the Chickadee weathers out the storm and gives a sense of hope to Plenty-Coups's vision. Despite its dark imagery, the dream is not a sign of apocalypse (although it certainly involves ending and change), but rather expresses the urgency of finding a new way of inhabiting the desolation that the Crow will face in the future.

But there is more to the Chickadee's lodge than resistance. The Chickadee's nest is also a reminder to the Crow that the childhood home is forever lost. Bachelard (1994, pp. 99-100) recalls the poem "The Warm Nest" by Jean Caubère. Caubère writes,

> The warm, calm nest
> In which a bird sings…
> Recalls the songs, the charms,
> The pure threshold
> Of my old home.

The poem seems to take us back to the warmth of the childhood home. But, as Bachelard (1994, p. 100) points out, "in order to make so gentle a comparison between house and nest, one must have *lost the house* that stood for happiness. So there is an *alas* in this song of tenderness. If we return to the old home as to a nest, it is because memories are dreams, because the home of other days has become a great image of lost intimacy." It is notable that after Plenty-Coups has the medicine

dream that transforms his life, he weaves the body of a Chickadee (his "Helper") into his hair as a medicine bundle that he often turns to for guidance (Linderman, 1930, p. 143). While the Chickadee offers him spiritual guidance throughout his life, one wonders if the medicine bundle becomes a reminder of the loss of intimacy his tribe experiences with the world after the buffalo disappear. If the Chickadee's nest is a fortifying presence in Plenty-Coups's inner space, then it is equally a mournful reminder of his childhood. The expression of home weaved into his thick hair both counsels for hope and carries the memories of what was lost.

This topoanalytic interpretation of the dream thus reveals at least three aspects: (1) that the lodge of the Chickadee counsels for a new form of resistance and courage, (2) that if a Crow takes up the Chickadee's habitudes in life, they will be well-housed and nurtured, and (3) that the Chickadee's nest is a reminder to never forget the home of his childhood… of the traditions that went away with the buffalo. Topoanalysis thus reveals the house as a refuge within the world, lending its fortitude and comfort to the inhabitant who inhabits its maternal womb.

## The Growth of Inhabited Space: John Hull's Poetic Experiences

As I discussed in the second chapter, when spaces no longer demand expression from a person, when they cannot act confidently or take for granted a means for expressing themselves, their spaces contract around them… breaking them away from the spaces of others. What emerges in these periods of crisis is a gap in space that can open up new possibilities for expression.

For years John Hull struggles to relinquish the habitudes he acquires as a visually sighted man in order to grasp his new world. Over a period of three years, John carefully articulates his efforts at grasping his spaces and finding meaning in his condition. Over time, his sensitivities change – the world of visual sight he once lived in begins to yield to a world of hearing and touch. Where the prior interpretation of John's common spaces focused on moments of spatial contraction, I now focus on how his spaces grow. After years of grieving the loss of his sight, he is beginning to give way to new habitudes, new forms of common and moral space with his family. Years later, Hull (1990, p. 192, my emphasis) reflects on the years after he went blind,

> As one goes deeper and deeper into blindness the things which once were taken for granted, and which were then mourned over as they disappeared, and for which one tried in various ways to find compensation, in the end cease to matter… One begins to live by other interests, other values. *One begins to take up residence in another world.*

The metaphor of "taking up residence" implies that John is moving towards a new experience of being at-home. So again we face the prospect of trying to imagine how John is trying to really inhabit his spaces, and is not just "coping" with a disability. Part of this inhabitation comes in the form of the new capacity for meaningful expression that John discovers in his blindness – that he has slowly acquired an attunement to touch and sound. Where early in his experience of blindness he is overcome by grief and unable to perceive the expressive possibilities in his spaces, his new habitudes are disclosing new possibilities for expression. He is beginning to perceive blindness as a "terrible gift", and his grief and resentment at becoming

dependent upon others and impotent as a father, is giving way to profound acceptance of his condition and its unexpected expressive possibilities (Hull, 1990, p. 214).

The Poetic Space of the Iona Abbey Church

I believe that John Hull's newfound poetic sense of understanding and inhabitation is best expressed in the last entry of his journal. In the entry, he tells of a trip to Iona Abbey – an ancient monastery founded on the Isle of Iona in 563 by Saint Columba. The modern site is a reconstruction of an earlier Benedictine abbey, which was itself built upon the foundations of the original Columban abbey (Clarke, 1998).

*Figure 3. Walking into the Iona Abbey church (Wilco, 2005).*

Hull stays for a weeklong religious retreat at the abbey, along with a group of other visitors and guests. In the beginning, he attempts to explore the abbey alone during the day, but other guests offer so much assistance that he has no sense of independence in the place. Exploring the space in solitude is necessary for John, because it allows him to map out the space in his imagination… so he goes out at night after the other guests have gone to bed. He explores the abbey tentatively, venturing into a new room and slowly retraces his steps back to his own room each night. He writes,

> One night I discovered a very large wooden door. Opening it, I immediately realized I was in some vast space. It was too still to be outside, but the coolness and the movement of the air suggested an enormous area. I must not get lost. I was at the head of a stone stairway. Every time I went down a few steps I would retrace the way back to the door, making sure I could get out again.
>
> (Hull, 1990, pp. 215-216)

I imagine Hull hesitantly scuffling his feet across the floor, feeling the coarseness of the pavestones wrought over a millennium ago from the primeval rock of Iona. Opening the heavy wooden doors, the dense stagnant air of the hallway gives way to cooler air that welcomes him into the large chamber. He runs his fingertips along the roughly hewn walls, his finger tracing his way like a needle on a record. Setting these images into reverberation, I imagine the brief moments of satisfaction and surprise that come to him as he begins to understand the space, becoming newly attuned to the smells and sounds and textures of the abbey.

He discovers the huge stone floor of the old church, around which the abbey is built. Each night he returns to explore a little deeper into the nave of the church. He writes, “From pillar to pillar I would work my way, counting the steps,

remembering the angles, always returning to the foot of the stairway." (Hull, 1990, p. 216) On the last night, he discovers the main altar. Hull (ibid.) writes,

> It was a single block of marble. Finding one corner, I ran my fingers along the edge, only to find that I could not reach the other end. I worked my way along the front and was amazed as its size… The top was as smooth as silk, but how far back did it go?

He stretches his arms across the top, but cannot reach the other side. Unable to guess the size of the thing, he stretches his body across the altar. His feet dangle over one end, his fingers probe the other for an edge. He finds the back edge. Hull writes, "I did this again and again, measuring it with my body, till at last I began to have some idea of its proportions. It was bigger than me and much older." (ibid)

For Hull, the altar is not gazed upon at a distance, as any tourist might through a camera, but grasped and felt through the intimacy and immediacy of touch. As Hull writhes and twists his body around the altar, the altar begins to take on *his* bodily proportions. Exaggerating this image, one imagines John measuring the altar's size through his body, but as he does so *the altar also gives his body measure*. The altar and his body become a landmark in this vast space, shaping the unknown space into a meaningful one that grants him a place and identity. In other words, John is beginning to poetically inhabit the space of the church and in so doing, inhabit his own body. This intense experience prepares him to enter the poetic space of the altar.

## The Poetic Space of the Altar

The visually sighted person who gazes upon the Iona Abbey altar normally does so by the light that is cast through the enormous stained glass window behind

it. Sunlight shines through the perfect geometry of the windowpanes upon the altar, drawing one's eyes to the smooth surface of the green-yellow veined white marble.[33] The altar reveals itself as an expression of beauty and perfect human craft, with the words "Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" chiseled into the front (Corinthians 11:26). The polished surface reveals the perfecting geometry of human handiwork.

*Figure 4. Close-up of the Iona Abbey Altar (Houston, 2010).*

[33] Iona Marble is one of the oldest geological formations on Earth, approximately 2500 million years old (Stephenson, 2011, pp. 19-21).

Unlike the visually sighted tourist, Hull does not just "see" in the light, he also sees in the dark; both are the same to him. Hull sees something different in the stone, something that reaches deeper into its nature, passing over the surface features that most tourists dwell upon:

> There were several places on the polished surface which were marked with long, rather irregular indentations, not cracks, but imperfections of some kind… The contrast between the rough depressions and the huge polished areas was extraordinary. Here was the work of people, grinding this thing, smoothing it to an almost greasy, slightly dusty finish which went slippery when I licked it. *Here were these abrasions, something more primitive, the naked heart of the rock.*
>
> (Hull, 1990, p. 216, my emphasis)

Visual sight conceals this powerful poetic moment, where only John's touch and imagination can disclose it. For the visually sighted person, a descent into the church after midnight would be pointless – the darkened space would shrink around them and reveal nothing. John, who no longer lives in the world of the light, has shaped a new space in the church unseen by those who live in the light. Years later he writes, "I wondered how they came to be there. Had the marble been damaged at some stage, or were these places too deep to be erased by the polishing?" (Hull, 2006, p. 2)

How do we interpret the poetic expression itself? What does the "naked heart of the rock" express such that it transforms John's understanding of himself and his common and moral spaces? Why does the sharp contrast between the polished surface of the rock and the roughness of its primeval depths matter?

The contrasts between smooth and rough, human handiwork and natural stone, are vital to the experience. Polishing and shaping are the outcome of human

crafting, and take time. The rough and unfinished marble is primordial; it precedes human work and living, awaiting some shape to be freed from it. John perceives *cosmicity* in the stone, a dark and unknowable mystery that precedes human dwelling.[34] Shaping can reveal many different forms, but the final product is always an elaboration and articulation of the older, more primitive material underneath.

Henri Bosco's *Le Jardin d'Hyancinthe* (Hyacinth's Garden), provides us with a poetic hint at the nature of polishing. Bosco writes,

> The soft wax entered into the polished substance under the pressure of hands and the effective warmth of a woolen cloth. Slowly the tray took on a dull luster. It was as though the radiance induced by magnetic rubbing emanated from the hundred-year-old sapwood, *from the very heart of the dead tree*, and spread gradually, in the form of light, over the tray. The older fingers possessed every virtue, the broad palm, drew from the solid block with its inanimate fibers, the latent powers of life itself. This was creation of an object, a real act of faith, taking place before my enchanted eyes. (Bosco, p. 192, quoted in Bachelard, 1994, pp. 67-68, my emphasis)

Bachelard sees "polishing" as a form of care that coaxes new life out of dead objects. Bachelard (1994, p. 68) writes, "From one object in a room to another, housewifely care weaves the ties that unite a very ancient past to the new epoch. The housewife awakens furniture that was asleep." Returning to John's experience at the altar, the meanings of smooth and rough, human and cosmic, personal and pre-personal become clearer. By "touching the rock", by running his fingertips over the rough troughs and smooth plateaus of the altar, John participates in polishing that made the rock into an altar. The naked heart of the rock, like the heart of the dead tree, begins to radiate from the altar… but instead of emanating light, the altar awakens

[34] Throughout *The Poetics of Space* Bachelard identifies cosmicity as a recurrent theme in expressions of home.

intimate touch. When John perceives the caring craftsmanship that awoke life in the dead rock, he awakens a dormant inner space in himself.

If there is life waiting to be awoken in the rock, there are also many shapes waiting to be freed through Hull's touch. In this regard, the experience opens up John to the realization that visual sight is *just one* possibility realized in the craftsmanship of living. To touch the "naked heart of the rock" is to make contact with oneself, to recognize that one has a personal history that one remembers, but that one also belongs to a primordial cosmic past *that precedes oneself*. By "cosmic" I mean a sudden encounter with a *pre-personal past* that is embedded in the marble. In this moment, Hull becomes open to grasping his blindness as a form of expression that reveals a new *aspect* of his spaces, different from the aspect revealed by visual sight.

In this intimate encounter, John discovers a new freedom in his body. Blindness is no longer a negative condition or perceptual deficiency, but is the site for a new configuration of expression of a kind of sightedness where "sight is now devolved upon the whole body, and no longer specialized in a particular organ." (Hull, 1990, p. 217) John has become what he later calls a "whole-body-seer" or WBS; blindness has become a mode of expression (Hull, 1990, p. 217). [35] He is no longer a prisoner of a faulty body, but an expresser of sight guided by touch and sound and smell.

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[35] Years later, Hull comments that whole-body-seeing discloses "the God who says that he dwells in 'thick darkness'… the God [who is]… 'beyond both light and darkness, that darkness and light are both alike to God.'" (Hull, 2001, p. 26)

The preceding topoanalytic interpretation reveals how's John's experience serves to renew him as a sighted person. John's poetic experience shows how he begins to see – through a caress – beyond mere surfaces in order to reveal deeper, cosmic, significances.

The topoanalytic approach I present in this chapter is meant to draw us into new common and moral spaces with others, even with those who live radically different lives than our own. To resonate with another's expression is to begin to inhabit, at least partly, the spaces in which that person dwells. This also means that when understood, poetic expressions attune us to new imports and values, thereby carving out new landmarks in our moral spaces. When poetic expressions reverberate within us, they become fortifying and salutary presences that stay with us all of our lives. Plenty-Coups had his Chickadee medicine bundle, John Hull has the Iona abbey altar… and perhaps Antoine de Saint Exupéry sometimes retreated to the tiny box that he crafted for the Little Prince's sheep.

An expressivist psychology understands actions and events as two sides of the same coin. I do not "construct" a poetic event, nor is the event communicated to me from an external environment. A poetic expression arrests me, moves me, such that there is no longer a sharp distinction between action and event, or person and space. I can come to resonate or harmonize with the poetic event through my imagination, and in doing so personalize it. But there is no neutral ground from which I can determine whether this happening emerged from the space as an external event or from 'myself' as an action. When a poetic expression resonates with me, it can become an inner articulation of an outer event, just as it is an outer

articulation of my inner life. Topoanalysis makes no radical separation between the individual and their cultural community. Expressions always emerge from within a cultural milieu that is pre-personal and largely unknowable to the individual; yet expressions must always be renewed in the lives of individuals whose lives subtly re-shape the values expressed in the expression.

What is common to the poetic experiences of Plenty-Coups and John Hull and tells us something more about how the self can come to inhabit all spaces poetically thereafter?

For the rest of his life, Plenty-Coups carries the medicine bundle of the Chickadee; at times he ties it to braids in his hair and dwells in the wisdom of the Chickadee, appealing to it for guidance. Desiring to share his vision as an old man, Plenty-Coups tells his medicine dream, which is very personal to him and sacred to the tribe, to Linderman (a non-aboriginal man whom Plenty-Coups considers a friend). John Hull, many years later, still understands himself in terms of the poetic moment in which he touches the naked heart of the rock. Hull carries with him the poetic image of the rock, and time and time again seeks to express the manifold meanings it carries for him, in scholarly publications, religious sermons, and in interviews. Hull offers up a new articulation for the social imaginary of blindness in his poetic story; he gives the visually sighted a new way of understanding blindness and perhaps finding new common spaces with the blind.

Both of these men spend the rest of their lives trying to express for others what they have experienced, such that these images might “take root” in other lives. The poetic expressions are personal experiences that become expressed *visions* that

dwell within others. In this social re-interpretation of topoanalysis, personhood emerges when someone allows a poetic expression to dwell within them, and later comes to express the experience for others, thus offering up new ways of inhabiting common and moral spaces. Topoanalysis thus prioritizes neither the person nor his/her space, taking both imaginer and poetic space together as an intimate entanglement.

The experiences of John Hull and Plenty-Coups articulate powerful imaginaries for those coming to cope with the nature of constantly changing forms of life in modernity: you must be flexible and willing to change as your spaces change, or you will be destroyed. They show how their *homes* undergo destruction, and that in order to live well, they must re-imagine a new way of being at-home in their spaces.

Topoanalysis raises the question of the roles that religion and spirituality play in the poetic lives of individuals and communities. Could Plenty-Coups have experienced his poetic vision without some grasp of the spiritual? Like all Crow warriors, Plenty-Coups begs for a medicine dream from a higher order of being; the Chickadee tells him that he must use his powers granted to him by *Ah-badt-dadt-deah* ('God'). Similarly, John Hull, a Christian, perceives the sacred space of the marble altar as an expression of the nature of God; that God grants worlds of both light and darkness. If these examples draw primarily upon religious images, then topoanalysis must be sensitive to the kinds of religious images and archetypes that the stories draw upon. For instance, the extensive theological writing on suffering are especially relevant to the stories of Plenty-Coups and John Hull, yet are not

explored in this text. Bachelard's notion of "cosmicity" may introduce a necessary spiritual aspect to topoanalysis that is lacking in my current understanding of the method. In other words, there are spiritual and religious languages that would help to intensify the meaning of these images, expressing different aspects than those offered in the original texts.

Thus, an expressivist psychology must become strongly literate in the poetic images that a culture confers upon its inhabitants. To understand and resonate with the expressions of others, to see other people and their expressions as works of art, a topoanalytic perspective requires one to adopt a stance that is *open* to poetic events and subsequently use one's imagination to forge new common spaces with others.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

In the prior chapters I worked towards developing an expressivist psychology of inhabited space. I began by sketching out the kinds of conceptual and philosophical arguments at stake in a few broad conceptions of social and cultural psychology, showing that modes of psychological inquiry depend upon an implicit understanding of spatiality. Expressivism, in my view, presented a strong case for a psychology that was inherently social and cultural, and a psychology that would not become trapped in subject-object dichotomies. I argued that the strongest understanding of cultural and social space is implied in expressivism, and that the expressivism of Charles Taylor and Gaston Bachelard yield three aspects of inhabited spaces: common space, moral space and poetic space. I called this a "spatial-expressivist" approach to psychological inquiry, which is a part of a much larger idea called expressivist psychology.

I considered how common, moral and poetic spaces are all inseparable aspects of inhabited spaces, and showed that whenever there is a change to one of these spaces the rest are reshaped accordingly. I pointed out, wherever possible, that the most important inhabited space was the *home* space. In my interpretations of the cases of John Hull and the Dagara outcast, I argued that when a person falls into crisis, it is usually because their manner of inhabiting the home, or the space of the home, has been disrupted. In my interpretation of the Crow of the 19th century, I showed that the home even extends around the territory of a tribe or entire culture, and when the home of a culture collapses, the people living under its sacred canopy

are buried in the rubble. I showed that during these crises of home spaces, people take up spatial language when they express their situation: that they lose *territory*, are *blind*, are *lost* in a forest, or *fallen* to the ground. In each case, expressivist language articulated the implicit spiritual-moral values and communal realities in their expressions of distress and dissociation.

I showed that an expressivist psychology takes up a poetic stance by understanding personal expression as a renewal of cultural goods. I sketched out Gaston Bachelard's topoanalysis as one way of sensitizing and attuning oneself to the poetic expression. What comes of Bachelard's topoanalytic perspective is that there is no clear distinction between a person and their spaces. The home, as a place of shelter, expresses the innerness of the inhabitant: *I am the space where I am*. I worked selectively with my case studies, choosing the lives of Plenty-Coups and John Hull in particular. Both of these figures fall into crisis, but they also rise from the ashes of their prior lives with new visions of the self, with new ways of inhabiting (being-at-home) in unfamiliar spaces. Without poetic experiences and their expression in poetic stories, Hull's and Plenty-Coups' spaces would remain uninhabitable and their situations would be hopeless; they would not be visionaries.

## On Temporality

Neglected in this thesis is *time* and its role in the constitution of selves and spaces. John Hull and Plenty-Coups did not simply have flashes of insight that changed them overnight; their experiences resonated in them over time and were re-expressed in the stories they told others as they grew older. There is a large gap –

three years – between when John Hull began his journey into deep blindness and when he had his experience in Iona Abbey; he spent that whole time gradually becoming familiar with the world of the blind. Although Plenty-Coups was a boy when he had the Chickadee dream, it was not until he was very old that he told the story to Frank Linderman. For my friend who lived through a house fire, an entire year passed before she was able to tell me what the fire had meant for her and her family. Although any discussion of spatiality demands a discussion of temporality and ontogenesis, for the sake of clarity I did not confront the role that temporality plays in living. Towards a future discussion of temporality I only offer this: all inhabitation happens in time, and one cannot inhabit another person's spaces in a short period of time.

Private Spaces for Healing

An expressivist psychology of space gives us insight into the places in which people retreat to in times of suffering or anguish, or total collapse. For John Hull, the place of retreat is within his own body when things are truly bad, and when things are better the family home, or his office. Inhabiting these spaces sometimes allow him to live, at other times elevate him to new understandings. This opens up some general questions about spaces of psychological retreat: What places do people retreat to when their spaces begin to close in around them? Do they hide in the closet, do they bury themselves in their offices, or do they withdraw to the comfort of a book? Are the spaces we retreat to ways of hiding from the pressures of the

world, or are they sites for healing? How do these sites function to "house" the tormented psyche?

In the case of my friend, who withdrew into the virtual space of a video game after her house burned, how could such a place feel "like home" to her, and safeguard her during a period of vulnerability? The thesis originally began as an attempt to articulate what "virtual space" might mean from an expressivist perspective. In future work, I plan to investigate how virtual spaces could also act as "homes" for the psyche. In particular, I suspect that the kinds of video games that I play, that hundreds of millions of other people play, are new sites for inhabitation that have yet to be discovered in academic psychology.

## Searching for a New Story for Psychology

If understandings of the world are captured in stories, which are a forging of time and images, then psychology is in need of a new conception of time and new images to work from. Expressivist psychology is not a "theoretical" psychology, if theory is understood as a way of rationally abstracting from lived experience and re-deploying a theoretical model into life through some kind of practical application. Both Charles Taylor and Gaston Bachelard recognize the expressive power of stories, insofar as their works express the idea that we should look at our world newly after we engage with their stories; and their stories remake our inner spaces such that we desire to re-tell their stories to others. An expressivist psychology concerns itself with producing new expressions of spaces that clarify the values by which we live, and in doing so – I hope – improve our chances for living in a more

intimate relation with our values and other people. Telling a new kind of story for our selves and other people is one of the ways in which values can be interpreted, clarified and understood.

At the same time, not *any* story will do for us. As Jones (2007, p. 226, my emphasis) notes, "The cosy image of storytelling and the seduction of emancipatory ideology entail the risk that we might be 'taken in' by our own pictures, telling our stories and losing sight of questions such as why and how human beings find *particular* stories meaningful." In this critique, Jones rightly articulates the nature of the problem facing a psychology concerned with poetic images and stories: not all stories are equal. Some stories grasp the fundamental questions of meaning that human psychology is concerned with – these kinds of stories open up into poetic spaces. An expressivist psychology is concerned with *both* the interpretation of *and* the re-expression of, poetic experiences. In other words, it is not enough to stand back and interpret stories – an expressivist psychologist is vitally involved in helping others to express their experiences through poetic stories. This opens up psychology to the possibility that psychological understanding is an art.

## A Courageous Psychology

The implications of expressivism demand a new kind of courage from the psychologist: namely that one can no longer encapsulate and explain human behavior in terms of judgments or theories or concepts that stand outside of experience. The psychologist is implicated in all psychological interpretation, and

the interpretive space always widens to include both the expression in question and the person trying to understand its meaning. The interpretive space not only widens to include the psychologist; any interpretation that enriches the inchoate or mysterious meaning of the expression, the interpreter's new expression becomes elevated and intensified and clarified. Thus, the courage of the expressivist psychologist is *poetic courage*: it is the courage to articulate new and unforeseen meanings in expressions that on their surface seem to be strange or confusing or meaningless. From me, this move has demanded that I turn away from a natural scientific psychology, and all of its powerful language of explanation and causality. I move towards a psychology that reshapes my sensitivities, that puts my *self* in danger, as I struggle to clarify the meanings expressed by other people. In other words, an expressivist psychology is psychotherapeutic.

## Coda

The Taurens, who settled in the city of Thunder Bluff after wandering the world of Mulgore as nomads for centuries, are a spiritual race known for their animistic religions and magical skill; the Taurens are the only "aboriginal" race in the *World of Warcraft*. I am struck by the architecture of the city – the peaked wood-and-cloth tents that comprise Thunder Bluff are reminiscent of tipis more than modern dwellings. The central totem pole stands several storeys above the city proper, and it is one of the first things we see when we approach the city on the back of a flying wyvern. I point out the large totem pole, intricately painted and carved with the head of a Tauren at the top, and ask my friend, "Is that your special place?" My friend nods and she leads me to the bottom of the totem pole, where a doorway has been carved into it; in fact the entire center of the totem has been hollowed out to make room for a spiral staircase that winds its way upwards. We reach the top of the staircase, and she walks to another doorway that leads out of the totem pole. I stand on the precarious edge of the doorway and look out into the city – we are now dozens of feet above the tipis. My friend tells me to look upwards, and I see that we are only two-thirds of the way to the top of the totem pole where two sharp horns stand out from either side of its painted face. She says, "I flew up to the top of the totem pole from here. But you need a flying mount to get there." We do not have a flying mount, so I try to imagine being even higher.

I have complete purview of the city from the top of the totem pole; there is no other landmark in the surrounding landscape that rests higher than we are now.

Even the largest tipi in Thunder Bluff lies far below where we are now. Hundreds of people scurry around on the ground of the city and barter for goods, train in skills, battle or chat with one another, and heal their bodies. I look over at my friend who sits on the top of the totem beside me. Her character is strong and poised, nearly at the maximum skill level achievable in this virtual world; I realize that this one place sets her above the profane activities below. The totem puts her "above" where the rest of the players are. I look up and see that the warm glow of the setting sun has finally yielded to a black expanse of stars; the sky becomes a cosmic mystery. I now can understand why this is the place that she found solitude in many months ago, when her life began to crumble into the ashes of a razed house. I can now understand why she wanted to share this place with someone else. The totem pole that rises into the sky above Thunder Bluff is a spiritual space.

*Figure 5. Thunder Bluff at Sunset (Wowpedia, 2011).*

*Figure 6. My friend sitting on top of the totem pole at sunset (Plamondon, 2010).*

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