

PRACTICAL ORGANIZATION OF SPACE

The dynamics of the interrelation, between space and consciousness at the level of creativity is manifested under two distinct forms: that of the aesthetic organization of space and that of its practical organization, both being closely related to each other as far as their formal status is concerned, but either of them *being* diverse under the aspect of its finality. The finality of the aesthetic organization of space consists in restructuring real data in order to provide new forms, which satisfy purely aesthetic requirements. The finality of its practical organization consists in restructuring real data in order to facilitate a better integration of human existence into the cosmos. Nevertheless, in both cases the intentionality of consciousness imposes the seeking of perfectibility of its achievements. I have already dealt with the aesthetic organization of space¹. In what follows I shall deal with its practical organization in amore detailed way.

The study of aesthetic organization of space reveals, the measure to which artistic creation indicates the most spiritual human activity in which the structures of the intentionality of consciousness are reflected. I intend to show how these same structures are reflected at the level of ethical achievements. The interaction of aesthetic and ethical aspects of active creativeness has already been stressed by R. Herz². In spite of their specificity, the «poetic» and the practical domain of human activity, since ancient times³, have been considered as complementary dimensions of human action, through of the affinity established between the values of the True, the Beautiful and the Good, especially by modern eclecticism⁴. I shall try to isolate, as strongly as possible, the various forms under which the spatial character of human praxis becomes obvious in order to underline its similarities and its differences in comparison with those of poiesis within the universe of values⁵.

Praxis and poiesis are modalities of behavior registered in social life⁶. Besides the inner-space, i.e. the space of thought, where the various elements of reasoning are arranged ac-

1. Cf. E. MOUTSOPOULOS, *La conscience de l'espace*, 2nd ed., Paris, IPR-Vrin, 1997, 38-45, pp. 109-129.

2. Cf. R. HERZ, *Die Metamorphosen der Macht Über die Cültigkeit aesthetischer und moralischer Werte*, Zurich, Origo, 1951.

3. Cf. G. MACGREGOR, *Les frontières de la morale et de la religion*, Paris, Aubier, 1952, cf. E. MOUTSOPOULOS, Vers une phénoménologie de la création, *Revue Philosophique*, 86, 1961, pp. 61-91.

4. Cf. IDEM, *The problem of the Beautiful in Petros Brailas-Armenis*, Aix-en-Provence, Ophrys, 1960; IDEM, *Petros Brailas Armenis*, New York, Twayne, 1974.

5. Cf. G. DAVY, *Les sentiments sociaux et les sentiments moraux*, in G. DUMAS, *Nouveau traité de Psychologie*, T.E. Paris, Alcan, 1939, pp. 153 sq.; P. FRANCASTEL, Art et sociologie, *L'Année sociologique*, 2, 1949, pp. 491 sq.; E. MOUTSOPOULOS, Aesthetic and Religious Feeling, *Nea Hestia*, 69, 1961, pp. 604-610.

6. Cf. A. LALANDE, *La raison et les normes*, Paris, Hachette, 1948, chap. VIII and IX; A. PRIOR, *Logic and the Basis of Ethics*, Oxford, University Press, 1949; S. E. TULMIN, *An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics*, Cambridge, University Press, 1950.

according to the most convenient order and submitted to an intentional "economy", especially a space that does not merely contain dispersed elements, but a space that provides to the elements of thought, which are already structured, their proper significance while it is subjected to its own structuring⁷, one may distinguish the external space, i.e. the particular space created through the praxis; a space which is nevertheless sometimes confused with the space created through the poesis in such a way that it may form together with it, a spatial continuum, a whole qualified both as affective and socio-dramatic⁸. In any case, this external space is for the active man the space par excellence, since it is the unique domain within which practical activity may be ascertained.

The distinction possibly established between the notions of biological, vital, social and practically organized and experienced space defines continuous domains, which one may successively refer to. Biological space may be precised thanks to the notion of individuality, which qualifies the beings. In this case one has to do with a space that is dynamically organized self⁹, in respect to its own finality¹⁰. Without this finality, life i.e. the longest possible duration of being would have been unconceivable of¹¹. The disposal of the parts of the body may function as the starting point for the evaluation of the mutual integration of human activity into the external world and, consequently, of the latter into the specific aims of the intentionality of human consciousness, i.e. into the whole life of the human being¹², including the activity which concerns the structure and the restructuring of the living organism according to its own finality which, in principle, is not in-adaptable to changes that occur within the ambient world¹³. Such changes imply respectively an intervention of the intentionality of human consciousness upon the organization of the external space by means of an extrapolation of inner biological organic and visceral structures¹⁴ which form the inner human space and, hence, the intimate part of the existence. This is obvious and there is no need for that to recur to notions such as the notion of extension. Biological space, both organic, and visceral, may become conscious. It is self-organized and, at the same time, it acts upon its environment, just as, at a somehow different way, its various parts act upon each other within a complex of structured interdependences, in order to assure the continuity of life.

Although it seems self-sufficient, the organic life of the individual tends, however, to overwhelm the restricted boundaries of the biological space, to reach the outside space that it appropriates and which, besides, is indispensable to it in order to contribute to its self-conscious confirmation. Out of this illimited space, out of this collection of possibilities,

7. Cf. J. LE MEN, *L'espace figuratif et les structures de la personnalité*, Paris, P.U.F., 1966, t.1, pp. 16-17.

8. Cf. A. DALLO, *L'œuf et son dynamisme organisateur*, Paris, A. Michel, 1949.

9. Cf. L. GUENOT, *Invention et finalité en biologie*, Paris, Flammarion, 1946, pp. 47 sq.

10. Cf. E. MOUTSOPOULOS, Ontological Dimension and Consciousness, in IDEM, *Philosophical Questionings*, t. I, *Consciousness and Creation*, Athens, 1971, pp. 36-38.

11. Cf. J. NAGGOTTE, *L'organisation de la matière dans ses rapports avec sa vie*, Paris, Alcan, 1922, pp. 39-41.

12. Cf. H. ANDRÉ, *Urbild und Ursache in tier Biologie*, München-Ordenbu 1931, pp. 15-19.

13. Cf. R. RUYER, *La conscience et le corps*, Paris, Alcan, 1937, pp. 73-85. One may also think of the «visceral» structures imposed on the conception of the external space. Cf. E. MOUTSOPOULOS, *Conformisme et déformation. Mythes conformistes et structures déformantes*, Paris, Vrin, 1978, pp. 9-19.

14. Cf. R. KUCZINSKI, *Living Space and Population Problem*, London, 1939, pp. 53 sq.

the consciousness picks up, on a given occasion, a precise portion towards which it expands itself thus, changing its existence from potential to actual by animating the portion in question. Far from being arbitrary, this choice corresponds to a minimum of the spatial needs of the individual. It becomes a really vital space, a notion of quite sad memory¹⁵ though harmless, provided it does not disturb the well-being of other individuals and does not evoke geopolitical and geostrategic conflicts on the world's chessboard, such as the one conceived of by S. Huntington who has not invented anything new¹⁶.

In a similar sense one may refer, in a way, to historical spaces of various cultural importance such as those considered by O. Spengler¹⁷. However, the notion of vital space displays a limitative character, in the sense that it supposes a spatial limit. The unlimited spatial extension of life as a reality would become destructive for the being itself. One has to think: of the optimal measure, the metron, which, properly kept and respected, assures the safe duration of existence. The vital space varies according to the case, but its variations imply only its dimensional «elasticity» concerning the various organic spaces and the various modalities of life. Further on, the vital space is connected to the life of the individual organism or the evaluation to such a degree, that it constitutes one of the elements that determines the shaping of its specific character.

It is possible, then, to refer to the character that the spatial environment in which they evaluate communicates to societies and even to whole nations. However its influence is directly submitted to some kind of infiltration, due to psychological conditions. Social individualities may thus be shaped, whose importance may vary numerically from the family cellula, through the team, up to national wholes and even further on. Such a group characterology has been inaugurated by Aristotle¹⁸ and transmitted, through Montesquieu¹⁹, to Kant²⁰ and Taine²¹ and even to contemporary theoreticians²². Such a consolidation of characters may also occur due to historical and other conditions in which the geographical space acquires the importance of a strong factor in the shaping of the character of a nation. There are cases which testify that, starting from originally diverse elements, a new national individuality may be elaborated either by assimilation and integration around a preexisting nucleus (such as the «melting pot» in the USA) or by co-operation (such as the economical and political tendency in Europe, to constitute wider geographical spaces on the basis of a free association). One should not omit to quote prophetic G. Berger's statement on the European Union, written some sixty years ago: «strength is due to the fact that everyone participates in the same civilization, but expresses his feelings through a great variety of cultures²³. On the contrary, nations speak-

15. Cf. already H. SCHMITTHENNER (fr. Transl.), *Espaces vitaux et conflits des civilisations*, Paris, Payot, 1953.

16. Cf. D. SPENGLER, (fr. transl.), *Le déclin de l'Occident*, Paris, Gallimard, 1948, t. I, pp. 161 sq.

17. Cf. P. GROEGER, *La caractérologie ethnique*, Paris, P.D.F., 1961, pp. 13-17.

18. Cf. ARISTOTLE, *Politics*, t.3, 1289 b 27-1291 a33.

19. Cf. Ch. SECONDAT DE MONTESQUIEU, *De l'esprit des lois*, book II, chap. II.

20. Cf. I. KANT, *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* (1764), init; in IDEM, *Von den verschiedenen Rassen der Menschen*, 1775.

21. Cf. H. TAINE, *Philosophie de l'art*, 3rd ed, 2 vol., 1881.

22. Cf. E. DARDEL, *L'homme et la terre*, Paris, P.U.F., 1952; H.F. GREGOR, *Environment and Economic Life*, Princeton, 1963.

23. Cf. G. BERGER, L'unité culturelle de l'Europe, *Caractère et culture de l'Europe*, I, No 4, 1960, p. 45.

ing the same language but belonging to different cultures may come from federations that turn out to be extremely fragile, as is the recent case of the desegregation of Yugoslavia. One may also refer to the fragility of some third world states whose boundaries have originally been traced in an arbitrary way. The solidity of such superspaces depends uniquely on their wealth and its equitable distribution.

As far as the properly speaking practical aspects of the organization of space are concerned, one might take into consideration the critical liberalism that already appears in most national legislations and is reflected upon the spirit of international agreements. It implies a "categorical imperative" applied to a vital conception of the spatial environment, which may be expressed through the²⁴ motto: *cuique spatium suum* (let everyone have his own space), but which by no means entails any individualistic consideration, when it is re-laced into a universal context animated by a fundamental human feeling of sympathy²⁵.

Finally, one should underline the actual reversal concerning space in the direction of height. In respect to the confusion introduced in the way of life within modern urban centers, the old principle of the real private right *cujus est usque ad coelum* (it belongs to the owner up to heaven) has kept nowadays only a very relative value. Besides, it has been completely outrun, due to the new conditions according to which the prolongation of terrestrial space is experienced towards an extra terrestrial one. These new conditions presuppose the necessity for a re-organization of this zone, in order to profitably render it useful to mankind; in other words, in order to completely integrate it into the experienced space as such. In 1958 a special institution was created by the United Nations, called the Committee for the pacific use of space. It is composed of two sub-committees: one technical and one juridical, the latter having been given the task of providing a juridical regulation of the problems entailed by the growing use and further exploration of the so-called outer space²⁶ which man will eventually be called to live in, after having been obliged to evade himself from his native Earth, due to its mistreatment on his behalf; thus becoming himself a fugitive in the Cosmos.

The practical aspect of the organization of space, as well as its aesthetic aspect, brings us from the sphere of the unlimited in which modern thought is moving back to the domain of human limits. There is no need to abolish the privileged conditions under which the human mind asserts its freedom within a space of which he has, e.g. a geometrical intuition. On the contrary, this freedom is manifested on the one hand, through the diversity of the conceptions of space and, on the other hand, by overcoming limitations and corporeal constraints in mentally constructing imaginative spaces. Spaces realized thanks to art or spaces enhanced through practical activity may be considered as reductions of the universal space, such as it has been conceived of by man, at his own scale. To these spaces an entity is attributed conformingly to the way in which human consciousness appropriates them: they are commensurable spaces even in the case when, dealing with artistic realizations, their building up refers to the irrational. Both result from the fecundation of the universe by means of human activity. In return, they help the consciousness realize directly what we may call "the spatial possible".

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24. Cf. I. KANT, *Critique of Practical Reason* (1784), 57.

25. Cf. MAX SCHeler, *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*, Bonn, Cohen, 1923.

26. Cf. F. PERROUX, *La conquête de l'espace et la souveraineté nationale*, Diogène, No. 38.