Place and the Paradox of Modernity

Timothy Oakes

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Timothy Oakes

Department of Geography, University of Colorado

The concept of place has, over the past decade, been invigorated theoretically by geographers emphasizing the unboundedness, historical dynamism, and multiple identities inherent in places. This work is often characterized as a new way of conceiving place, enabled in part by the rise of postmodern cultural and social theory and the related demise of modernism in academia. Modernism, it has been claimed, devalued place as a relevant vehicle for understanding social change. This paper, however, contends that in fact place has been a particularly significant terrain for representing the experience of modernity, and that the conception of place envisioned in contemporary cultural geography has important humanistic roots in much nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature. The paper examines the intersections between this literary tradition of place representation and academic geography, examining the work of Goethe and Hardy, and the fiction of Raymond Williams. These writers articulated a vision of place not as the site of by-gone traditions and knowable communities, but as the landscape of modernity's paradoxes and contradictions. While there have been echoes of this distinctly modern approach to place in cultural geography, it is often obscured by a focus on the oppositional geopolitics of resistance. I argue that the vision of place derived from the literature discussed can serve as a template for examining the contemporary cultural dynamics of socioeconomic transformation and restructuring, and is advocated here as a basis for evaluating the cultural politics of place in terms of the contradiction and paradox—as opposed to a narrower conception of progressive politics—with which people continue to engage the changes swirling around them. Key Words: place, literature, cultural geography.

O ver the past decade, the concept of place has been enjoying something of a renaissance, having been invigorated theoretically by proponents of a new cultural geography who have found in place a dynamic tool for asserting geography's importance in the expanding interdisciplinary field of cultural studies (Agnew and Duncan 1989; Jackson 1989; Bird et al. 1993; Carter et al. 1993; Duncan and Ley 1993; Keith and Pile 1993). At the heart of these studies can be found a conception of place in which, as Massey's (1984; 1992) pioneering work has demonstrated, place-based identity is constituted by the interactions between the extra-local forces of political economy and the historical layers of local social relations. For some critics, this invigorated conception of place can be attributed to the general rise of postmodern thought (Harvey 1989; Swyngedouw 1989).[1] The implication underlying the microspatial place focus of postmodernity, then, is that the demise of modernism, with its grand narratives and Kantian claims of objective Cartesian space-as-container, has enabled place to emerge as a new geographical touchstone for critical social and cultural theory. In particular, place can be associated with a new

spatial politics of resistance, an effort to reinscribe a place-based territorial identity in opposition to the spatial colonizations of capitalist modernity (Clark 1993; Rose 1994; Cresswell 1996). In this paper, I would like to intervene in these discussions of place, as something of a radical modernist interloper, with a theoretical argument about the cultural constitution of place. Specifically, I offer a challenge to the view that place and modernity represent conceptually antithetical phenomena.[2]

Agnew (1989) has argued that place was devalued in modern social science because it was conflated with the idea of community. The community, of course, was seen as something modern society naturally evolved beyond as it progressed toward increased levels of rationality and abstraction; identities were assumed to become nation-based, rather than place/community-based, as in "traditional societies." Modern social science was, in many ways, founded upon a need to explain, legitimate, and at times critique the changes associated with urban-industrialization and nation-building. The now-familiar reference to premodern, place-bound "traditional societies" awaiting the inevitabilities of social evolution was perhaps one of the greatest legacies of

this new discipline of scholars.[3] Yet it would be misleading to assume that this diverse body of "modernization theorists" had the last say on the relationship between place and modernity. Many writers have offered much more compelling representations of place in relation to the experience of modernity, but have done so by writing not social theory, but novels, essays, plays, and poems.

If place is to be marshaled as a theoretically rich contribution to interdisciplinary cultural studies, it would be unfortunate, in evaluating the historical legacy of place in modern social thought, to confine our critical surveys to social science. A more complicated picture of the relationship between modernity and place emerges, rather, in the intersections between the social sciences and the humanities. This paper examines these intersections—between literature and geography—in order to reclaim a vision of place distinctly counterpoised to that assumed by "modernization theorists"—that is, not as the nostalgic site of by-gone traditions, but, surprisingly, as the very terrain of modernity's paradoxes and contradictions. This approach to place—more fundamentally modernist than that assumed under the conventional modernization thesis—can serve, I believe, as a template for examining the contemporary cultural manifestations of socioeconomic transformation and restructuring, and is advocated here as the theoretical touchstone for a cultural geography of modernity. My point is to capture in the cultural politics of place a sense of the ambivalence, contradiction, and paradox with which people continue to engage the changes swirling around them.[4] This is necessary if we are to move beyond the view that place-identity and modernity represent opposing and incompatible realities.

In some ways, the approach taken here recapitulates a theme central to humanistic geography: the analysis of literary representations of place and landscape. Yet the vision of place articulated here is quite different from that more typically associated with the liberal-humanist tradition. Instead of interpreting literary representations of places as repositories of humanist aesthetics, culture, and all that otherwise appears to be lost in the rush toward an industrialized, mass-produced society (Relph 1976), I read literary places as representing the inherently unstable terrain of modernity—marked by paradox and contradiction—where human subjectivity meets the forces of abstraction and objectification, be

they represented by industrial and agrarian capitalism, imperialism, patriarchy, or colonialism.[5] What follows is a somewhat Lukácsian reading of place in literature, with a geographer's bias.[6] Thus I adopt Lukács's (1963; 1972) rather flexible approach to critical realism in tracing the modern literary roots of what many cultural geographers now celebrate as a "progressive sense of place."[7] My intent is not to uphold literature as somehow more inherently "progressive" than social science. But the open-ended and complex quality of literary representation allows the crisis-prone interactions between space, human agency, and abstract historical processes to come sharply into focus in a way social science is too often unable to match. It is this tense relationship—between place-based subjectivity and placeless objectification—which lies at the heart of my argument.

I examine three historical "moments" in critical realism—occupied by J. W. von Goethe, Thomas Hardy, and Raymond Williams—and then apply the insights gained to cultural geography, in its historical development as well as its contemporary forms. Before moving on, however, the concept of place needs some clarification in order to avoid confusion about how the term is used throughout the paper. This is most easily done by first establishing what place is not. First, it is not (organic) "community"—this connection having already been severed by the work of Pred (1986) and Agnew (1989) among others (for example, Anderson and Gale 1992). Second, it is not "locality," nor is it simply a more local version of "region" or "nation." These terms assume a distinct territorial quality, defined by a bounded unity of some sort. Rather than being defined simply in terms of a more micro scale, place is conceived as consisting of two key components: as a site of both *meaningful identity* and *immediate agency*. The latter of these is what distinguishes place from region or nation, for while a nation and a region may also command a sense of identity, they remain imagined abstractions for individuals. A sense of territorial bond attempts to allow individuals to overcome this abstraction. Place, on the other hand, is a site of meaningful action for the individual. But more important, such action cannot be territorially delimited as with regions or nations, but is rather derived from linkages across space and time which make place more of a dynamic web than a specific site or location.[8] It is in this way that place becomes the geographical expression of the interactions between individual action and abstract historical process.

Modern Landscapes of Ambivalence and Contradiction

The seemingly random choices of Goethe, Hardy, and Williams as subjects of the exploration below can be explained by turning briefly to Lukács's basic argument regarding the transformative role of critical literary realism. Lukács defended realist narrative in literature as "a way of keeping human values alive within the hostile environment that is modern capitalism" (Sim 1994:42). Especially in his attacks on modernists such as Joyce, Kafka, and Beckett, Lukács offered realism as a narrative model capable of capturing the dialectical interaction of individual consciousness and abstract social forces. Other genres—including naturalism, romanticism, and especially early twentieth-century modernism—tended to obscure this interaction as the fulcrum of historical process, focusing instead on voluntaristic individuals with Olympian sensibilities (as in romanticism) or on dwarfed and alienated creatures incapable of confronting the impersonal and implacable forces before them (as in naturalism and modernism). The point was, instead, to find within individual struggles over meaning and identity the dialectical processes of history itself. For Lukács, only critical realism could bridge these opposing levels of abstraction, ultimately enabling a class consciousness to emerge in which the oppressed could themselves see the links between individual action and social change.

What interests me here is less the inherent politics of Lukács's argument—indeed his belief in the transformative powers of the realist genre has been much debated—than its vigilant foregrounding of ambivalence and contradiction as the fundamental quality of modern life. Lukács lauded the realists not for their politics (in fact, most represented the more conservative if not reactionary elements of bourgeois society), but for their breadth of vision. For them, modernity was more than anything a paradox. As Marshall Berman (1970; 1982; 1992) has suggested, this paradox is based on the realization that the human freedom and liberation enabled by the forces of modernization are constantly threatened by the totalizing tendencies of those forces toward increasingly oppressive forms of rationality and standardization. The paradox yields a dynamic tension between the exhilarating possibilities of modernization and a profound sense of loss. It is

this tension, I believe, that defines the experience of modernity, a tension that was fundamental in the works of critical realism that Lukács found so appealing. Modernity was bittersweet, engendering a longing for a lost sense of organic wholeness even as it provided a liberating subjectivity from which one could express such decadent nostalgia. "The tragedy of the modern world," writes Sim (1994:37) in his précis of Lukács's work, "is the simultaneous presence in the individual of a desire to unify the inner and outer worlds in a manner of the classical epic, and the recognition that this is no longer possible, that the cultural conditions which sustain such a unity are gone beyond recall." Writers who made this tragedy the driving force in their work displayed what I will refer to as an "ambivalent creativity," a contingent and contradictory—yet inherently creative—process of recovering that which, in Baudelaire's terms, is "eternal and immutable" in the face of dislocating and alienating change. Place, then, can be read as a geographical expression of modernity's paradox—that tension between progress and loss—a creative yet ambivalent space carved out somewhere between the oppressiveness of the new order and the imprisonments of tradition.

Each of the three writers discussed below wrote this tension into his work. In keeping with the Lukácsian tone of this paper, we begin with Goethe, who, for Lukács, paved the way for the great realist tradition of the first half of the nineteenth century. For some, calling Goethe a realist may be a considerable stretch; his masterpiece, *Faust*, was a work of truly fantastic and decidedly "unreal" qualities. Cervantes's *Don Quixote* or the historical novels of Walter Scott, for example, might seem more logical choices to mark the initiation of critical realism in bourgeois European literature. Yet *Faust* more fundamentally grappled with the "philosophical problems of a great transitional epoch" in which modernity was rendering human relations increasingly problematic (Lukács 1968:157). Indeed, the form of the drama itself cannot contain the contradictions conjured by its author. As Lukács comments:

> Only in the first part [of *Faust*] is an unimpaired sensible and spiritual unity able to prevail. The intellectual content, the discovery of relations which pertain to society, history, and the philosophy of nature strain the sensible unity of the forms and characters and, in increasing measure, tend to burst it. This is the general process in the development of nineteenth-century literature, a process which de-

stroys the unity and beauty of the world of forms, sacrifices it to the inexorableness of the new great realism, and thereby brings about an 'end of the artistic period' (1968:157).

Thus we are catapulted into the world of the mature modern novel. My choice of Hardy in this next phase is meant to capture a moment when, nearly a century later, critical realism seems to have exhausted itself. Hardy represents another transition, for his novels, as Widdowson (1989: 74) has observed, tend to push realism to its limits, problematizing in profoundly new ways the subjectivity of their characters. In other words, if Goethe can be said to occupy one end of the realist continuum, then Hardy seems to belong at the other. Sketching the extremes, I believe, gives us a clearer picture of the contradictions these writers confronted and articulated.

Finally, I look at the fiction of Raymond Williams. Here we find a writer, equipped with a historical and theoretical perspective unavailable to our first two writers, deliberately reclaiming for socialism—in fiction as well as criticism—the "great realism" so admired by Lukács. Williams makes explicit the often unwitting progressiveness of bourgeois realism and provides us with a battery of concepts that can then be taken into the realm of academic geography and which comprise the second part of this paper.

Goethe's *Faust*: Modernity's Paradox

As a significant body of scholarship has made us aware, modernity generates its own conceptual discourse of progress and rationality. Yet these ideas are supported by a fundamental set of references to (nonmodern) culture, (pristine) nature, and (static) tradition. Terms like "culture," "nature," and "tradition" developed meanings in contradistinction to the abstract rationalism of industrial development; they were symbolic markers representing what modern life was not (Williams, R. 1983). What is significant, then, is that the discourse of modernity was founded on contradictions between the polarized values of progress and rationality on the one hand, and tradition and morality on the other; modern thought is founded upon dualisms. It is therefore crucial to ask in what ways intellectuals articulated and confronted the binary contradictions inherent in modernity. As Agnew argues, modernization theorists and their detractors sought overall to *resolve* contradictions by either embrac-

ing or rejecting the ideals of rationalism and progress. Many writers of fiction, drama, and poetry, on the other hand, sought to derive their creative energies by *cultivating,* rather than resolving, modernity's contradictions, thereby confronting a deeper reality buried under these dualisms: modernity was a chronically unstable and precarious experience. The binary dualisms of modernist thought offered the seductive promise of a stable fix, a realization of modernity's promise of progress. But this was a false promise.

For Lukács, Goethe's genius was precisely his refusal to present a resolution to the emerging contradictions of capitalism, and to expose the false sense of security represented in the formal abstractions of modernist science (Lukács 1968: 193–94; Nemoianu 1994:13). Rather, in *Faust,* he sought to articulate the struggle itself—the individual tragedies visited upon Faust and those he and Mephistopheles come in contact with—in terms of a great historical shift from organic medieval life to a dislocating modernity (Lange 1968:2). *Faust* trumpets the "spiritual awakening of bourgeois Germany," a time when "the thread of its organic development was snapped," requiring a taking-stock of Germany's historical heritage (Lukács 1968:161). But even as *Faust* seeks to recover the fragments of some mythical organic German unity, it finds itself played out upon a fractured modern landscape which is incapable of supporting the continuity of this historical legacy. Instead, Faust and Mephistopheles must first invent new and increasingly contingent myths and then build a new landscape which, as it turns out, merely monumentalizes its own inadequacy for the unifying task put before it. Goethe himself had no answers here. Rather, as Nemoianu (1994:1) argues, he was "struggling honestly with a phenomenon of enormous historical proportions, trying to enact it dramatically before articulating answers, which in any case often proved unsatisfactory." Indeed, Goethe came to believe that the basic condition of modern life was chaos, disorder, and paradox—the "Permanence of Change" (Goethe 1983:168–69)—and that the only meaningful response was not to seek resolution through the imposition of formal abstractions, but to "invite the anxiety of form in motion" (Fink 1996:97).

When we are first introduced to Faust, we find him alone in his study, so tormented by intellectual isolation and the desire for contact with the broader world that he is ready to commit suicide. The scholarship of the Enlightenment, of pure

reason and a detached objectivity, has left Faust no wiser to the ultimate questions of life. Instead, he seeks to bridge the human-nature separation, to know the macrocosm: "How all things inter-weave to form the Whole,/ Each in another finds its life and goal!" (lines 447–48). Yet the Earth-Spirit Faust conjures up here—an apparition from the folkloric past—quickly dismisses Faust's rest-less longings and disappears. For the macrocosm and its sublime Nature of spirits and myth cannot contain the liberties that Faust seeks. He cannot, in other words, turn away from the contradictions that increasingly torment him. Instead, as Ber-man (1982:46) puts it, "Faust will have to embrace a whole new order of paradoxes, paradoxes that are crucial to the structure of both the modern psyche and the modern economy." Mephistopheles emerges as the embodiment of these paradoxes, the "spirit of contradiction." Only by making a pact with such a spirit can Faust begin his quest, becoming himself the expression of contradic-tion, for he cannot deny the modernist spirit of destruction and conquest even as he strives to maintain a sense of righteousness and historical continuity.

Berman interprets Faust's ensuing love affair with Gretchen in the first book, and his eventual role as developer of empire in the second book, as two distinct phases of Faust's journey.[9] For Lukács, it was a journey marked by a series of tragedies which, in a Hegelian sense, confirmed the historical development of modern society (Lukács 1968:179).[10] In the Gretchen tragedy, Goethe constructs an enclosed and unmalleable world of tradition for Faust to travel through, bringing with him the seeds of change which will eventually cause medieval society to unravel from within. Symbolically, this process is illustrated by Faust's seduction of Gretchen, a villager born into a world of age-old morality, in which brutal feudal and patriarchal social conditions also exist. Once the seduction is complete, Faust is able to move on with little more than a guilty conscience, while Gretchen herself suffers the unmitigated wrath of her world. While his desire for knowl-edge and discovery unleashes destructive con-sequences for Gretchen, we cannot completely condemn Faust for his actions; the traditional world's hostility to change appears most re-sponsible. Goethe provides no simple solutions, but chooses to leave us with the contradiction between traditional morality and destructive progress. Berman's (1982:59) interpretation is instructive:

The first part of Faust takes place at a moment when, after centuries, these feudal, patriarchal social con-ditions are breaking down. The vast majority of people still live in "little worlds" like Gretchen's, and those worlds, as we have seen, are formidable enough. Nevertheless, these cellular small towns are beginning to crack: first of all, through contact with explosive marginal figures from outside—Faust and Mephisto, bursting with money, sexuality, and ideas, are the classical "outside agitators" so dear to conservative mythology—but more important, through implosion, ignited by volatile inner devel-opments that their own children, like Gretchen, are going through. Their draconic response to Gretchen's sexual and spiritual deviation is, in ef-fect, a declaration that they will not adapt to their children's will to change. Gretchen's successors will get the point: where she stayed and died, they will leave and live.

It is no accident that Faust *travels* through Goethe's drama, and in doing so, he visits com-munities that must be destroyed before their ulti-mate social value can be discovered by a melancholy bourgeoisie eager to build a new Ger-man unity. But the places in which these commu-nities perish remain as testimony to the human drama that has brought about such change. This is a crucial point, requiring elaboration. But let us first complete Faust and Mephistopheles's jour-ney before examining it further.

In the second book of the drama, Faust's hegira climaxes in a flurry of empire-building and devel-opment—the laying out of a whole new landscape of modern society. Throughout *Faust II*, however, is a subtext in which Faust, despite his successes, is gnawed by regret for what has been lost. Having already experienced this in his lost love for Gretchen, whose memory comes to mean for him a lost innocence, Faust is tormented in his final efforts to elevate mankind to new heights. The symbolic expression of Faust's torment is embod-ied in the figures of Philemon and Baucis. Goethe weaves the legend of this hospitable old couple into the drama; their hut, a refuge for wayward travelers and symbol of all that remains of old-world morality, stands in the way of Faust's ulti-mate development plans. Faust has built a splendid palace where once was only swampy wasteland. He plans a great reclamation project, but is exasperated to find his territory marred by Philemon and Baucis's hut and an adjoining chapel with its "irritating bells." He complains and Mephistopheles, with characteristic swift-ness, has the chapel and hut, with Philemon and Baucis inside, burned to the ground. With the way

now clear for his commercial empire, Faust's torment only deepens. What becomes clear, however, is that despite torment, Faust remains steadfast in his resolve to be free and pursue his desires. Following the death of Philemon and Baucis, Faust is visited by four grey women named Want, Guilt, Distress, and Care. All are barred at the gates of his palace, except Care, who slips in through a keyhole. Dame Care [*Frau Sorge*], a familiar figure in German folklore, represents spiritual privation, and comes to claim Faust for "eternity." But Faust resists her, and despite being struck blind, he remains unabashed:

> This world is not mute if the man is sound.
> Why need he stray off to eternity!
> What he knows here is certainty.
> So let him walk along his earthly day:
> If spirits haunt him, let him go his way,
> Find joy and torment in his forward stride,
> And at each moment be unsatisfied
>   (lines 11446–52).

This is a remarkable evocation of the paradoxical spirit of modernity. Faust is resolved to live a life of contradiction to the end, for *this* is the condition of progress, not resolution but constant disruption and dissatisfaction mixed with joy and freedom. Faust clearly does not rejoice in the destruction of Philemon and Baucis; he condemns the land and leaves it for Mephistopheles and his henchmen. But he pays the price of his torment as the cost of an emancipated mind "in tragic pursuit of truth in existence" (Lange 1968:7).

Faust's blindness during this episode provides a succinct symbol for the tragedy, irony, and ultimately, deep ambivalence which Goethe invested in *Faust II*. For Nemoianu, it marks Faust's final embracing of modern consciousness; blindness is "a precondition of sterile rationality and arbitrary abstraction, ironically at the very moment that Faust clamors obsessively for visual control" (Nemoianu 1994:11). This decline in the sensorial aspects of a more organic past is but one of the many dilemmas Goethe articulates. As one reads through the pages of *Faust II*, a pattern becomes clear: "the ideal of a liberalized civilization gains ground, indeed seems to advance triumphant, while at the same time, the possibilities for manipulation, control, and social engineering grow and are, indeed, implemented by Faust" (1994:10).

The significance of *Faust* for my purposes is that it articulated what would become an impor-

tant perspective on the experience of modernity during the nineteenth century. The contradictions between the worlds of tradition and modernity could be conceptualized in distinctly geographical terms, as the traveling urban eye began to cast its aesthetic and colonizing gaze upon an invented counterpoint: the countryside of the traditional folk. Yet *Faust's* most important revelation is that the sublimity of the organic rural folk can only be appreciated by those whose modern ways of life threaten to destroy it. Faust travels through a metaphorical landscape of paradox: his modern journey is liberating even as it obliterates whatever place-based morality there once was. The places he visits thus become ambivalent expressions of contradiction, rather than irrelevant casualties of the old order.

As Williams has argued, the urban gaze can be identified as a particular "structure of feeling" which defined a rural, pastoral landscape in terms of its regretful loss at the hands of progress. The pastoral took on a meaning that privileged the urban dweller's need for some beautiful and morally correct place: "Its most serious element was a renewed intensity of attention to natural beauty, but this is now the nature of observation, of the scientist or the tourist, rather than the working countryman" (Williams 1973:20). Rural places were transformed by urban viewers from landscapes of work to landscapes of aesthetic appreciation—hence, the literary genre of pastoralism. Yet the liberal-humanism for which pastoralism became so important also maintained a belief in the inevitability and inherently liberating nature of social evolution. Thus, in the hands of more critical writers, the seemingly pastoral landscape of the rural folk could also be read as an important site of modernity's contradictions: the urban gaze which idealized the timeless pastoral landscape was part of the same force of agricultural and industrial capitalism which was transforming rural society and colonizing "folk culture" as the grounding myth of national consciousness and identity. The very changes associated with modernity enabled the redeeming qualities of rural landscape—moral correctness and aesthetic beauty—to be extracted from the destroyed communities of the preindustrial order. Anyone aware of this contradiction would have to regard the idea of "the organic community" with a considerable amount of ambivalence.

Hardy's Wessex: Landscape as Process

By the end of the nineteenth century, the realist inclination to celebrate the liberating spirit of bourgeois humanism was beginning to be challenged by an increasingly deterministic view of the modern individual which, during the early twentieth century, would find expression in modernism—where alienation and despair came to represent the dominant features of modern life. While Goethe's *Faust* had clearly raised the specter of modern alienation, it sought rather to embrace the uneasy tension between alienation and liberation. Modernists would refuse to strike such a balance, preferring to embrace absurdity and nihilism. Bourgeois humanism would increasingly find refuge in pastoralist representations which, like a mirror to the modernists, escaped the ambivalence of the modern experience—finding in a bucolic rural folk the fossils of the human spirit. It is in this context that the novels of Thomas Hardy stand out. For Hardy's landscapes were marked by a "brooding ambivalence" (Rabbatts 1989:4) in which the tension between change and immutability provided the medium by which the modern reader came to know a place. Indeed, Hardy's Wessex can be read as a text for reconstructed regional geography: a landscape of process (see Thrift 1983a; Pred 1986; Pudup 1988). As Eagleton has suggested, Hardy's fiction is marked by an "ideological disarray," revealing, ultimately, his refusal to resolve the contradiction between two competing visions of literary representation: humanist voluntarism and deterministic alienation (Eagleton 1981:128–30). The places of the Wessex landscape offered a terrain upon which these competing visions were struggled over rather than resolved.[11]

There are many places in Hardy's fiction to look for this ambivalent representation of the individual's relationship to broader historical forces—*Jude the Obscure* (1895) perhaps offers the most consistent reading in this regard—but my interest here lies primarily in how this ambivalence was represented in terms of place and landscape. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), we find perhaps the most compelling illustration of this ambivalence in geographical terms. In *Tess*, Hardy achieved a vision of the moral correctness of a seemingly "pastoral" landscape, yet this was paradoxically achieved only through the objectification and eventual decay of that landscape. He articulated this paradox metaphorically, in portraying the violation of the "pure woman" Tess

Derbyfield. As Barrell (1982) has commented, Hardy's pastoral landscape, in its "pure" form (its premodern form), was a geography unknowable to the urban reader, scientist, or tourist. Wessex was the geographical expression of the wholeness which Faust sought in his initial night's torment; it was a "microcosm of the divinely ordered world." But this divine world is, ironically, meaningless until its boundaries are penetrated; as Faust already proved, the modern journey in search of wholeness only unleashes the destructive forces which ultimately send the world into a maelstrom of change. According to Barrell, Tess's personal, localized geography cannot even be written until Hardy's narrator arrives to provide a wider, delocalized viewpoint from which to "see" it. With this arrival, at the beginning of the novel, the stage is set for the eventual corruption of Wessex's moral topography, metaphorically played out in the violation of Tess by Alec D'Urberville.

Listen to how Hardy's narrator introduces us, at the outset of the novel, to Tess's landscape:

> The village of Marlott lay amid the north-eastern undulations of the beautiful Vale of Blackmore or Blackmoor aforesaid—an engirdled and secluded region, for the most part untrodden as yet by tourist or landscape painter, though within a four hours' journey from London.
>
> It is a vale whose acquaintance is best made by viewing it from the summits of the hills that surround it—except perhaps during the droughts of summer. An unguided ramble into its recesses in bad weather is apt to engender dissatisfaction with its narrow, tortuous, and miry ways . . . .
>
> The traveller from the coast who, after plodding northward for a score of miles over calcareous downs and corn-lands, suddenly reaches the verge of one of these escarpments, is surprised and delighted to behold, extended like a map beneath him, a country differing absolutely from that which he has passed through. Behind him the hills are open, the sun blazes down upon fields so large as to give an unenclosed character to the landscape, the lanes are white, the hedges low and plashed, the atmosphere colourless. Here in the valley the world seems to be constructed upon a smaller and more delicate scale; the fields are mere paddocks, so reduced that from this height their hedgerows appear a grass. The atmosphere beneath is languorous, and is so tinged with azure that what artists call the middle-distance partakes also of that hue, while the horizon beyond is of the deepest ultramarine. Arable lands are few and limited; with but slight exceptions the prospect is a broad rich mass of grass and trees, mantling minor hills and dales within the major. Such is the Vale of Blackmoor (p. 18).

Beholding a place as yet "untrodden" by tourist and landscape painter, Hardy's narrator is nevertheless willing to set about describing the Vale of Blackmoor as if he were a tour guide or landscape painter. Indeed, the scene described is virtually a painting; to the outsider, it seems a static and timeless picture. Blackmoor, being of the old world, is practically a foreign country (cf. Lowenthal 1985) whose "narrow, tortuous, and miry ways" are best not ventured without a guide. Hidden from the "blazing sun" and "unenclosed" lands behind, Blackmoor is unexpected and authentic. But this initial viewing, much like Faust's earlier idyllic gaze upon Gretchen's village room, is, to follow Berman's logic, "part of a design on it, the first step in a process that is bound to destroy it" (Berman 1982:53). Thus, guided by Hardy's narrator, we enter Blackmoor and meet Tess Derbyfield, a village girl about to encounter a similar situation and a similar fate as Goethe's Gretchen. Our entry into idyllic Blackmoor presages its change from a landscape of organic continuity to one of profound new tensions between the forces of change and the habits of tradition, between "modern self-conscious alienation" and "the layered organic community" (Langbaum 1995:96).

As voyeuristic participants in this tour, we are all implicated in the violation of Tess. It is as if we, the traveler-reader, are playing the part of Faust and Mephistopheles as we pry Blackmoor open in our desire to see something "eternal and immutable." Similarly, Tess's sexual encounter with Alec D'Urberville uproots and renders her a traveler in her own region; it profoundly destroys her sense of place. As the novel progresses, the landscape that surrounds her is increasingly a bleak and barren one. Tess becomes a migrant laborer, dislocated and alienated from her community, and her sad musings betray not simply a fallen village girl but the very "ache of modernism" (p. 129).

Along with Tess's journey into the maelstrom, we notice that the Blackmoor landscape itself is showing more and more signs of change. As we follow Tess's wanderings, we catch glimpses of the dark messengers of industrialism: the man with his steam threshing machine who "served fire and smoke" rather than "weather, frost, and sun" (p. 315), and villages increasingly devoid of "an interesting and better-informed class" of families, "who had formed the backbone of village life in the past, who were the depositories of the village traditions" (p. 339).[12]

For many, Hardy's Wessex has served as an authentic counterbalance to placeless modernity; mainstream criticism has claimed "the poet of Wessex" as a pastoralist-humanist.[13] Indeed, Hardy's work was appropriated by early twentieth-century British nationalists and patriots in the "formation of a pastoral myth of rural England—often recalling a past, more glorious heritage—which is the true 'essential England' of national identity" (Widdowson 1989:61). Yet it is a strange pastoralism which Hardy offers. Despite those who would claim him as a rural elegist, Hardy's writing seemingly precludes the possibility of representing the organic community at all. We—the urban traveler, scholar, writer, or landscape painter—can never know it as a complete place. Indeed, *it does not even exist* until we arrive to break it open; its very definition depends on its eventual loss. As Widdowson (1994:97) comments of *Tess*, this is "precisely *not* a novel attempting to offer us a 'knowable' character," nor does it offer us a knowable community, a knowable place.

Similarly, in *The Return of the Native* (1878), we find a novel ostensibly suggesting some sense of organic continuity—the heath and its folk with their Druidical rites and Saxon ceremonies—but the story in fact revolves around "the rupture of continuity, as in the modern self-conscious attempt to revive ancient customs that have lost meaning" (Langbaum 1995:95). Even as Hardy suggests the possibility of landscape as refuge, giving "ballast to the mind adrift on change, and harassed by the irrepressible New" (p. 14), we are ultimately given little comfort by a place whose "true" nature eludes us and remains obscured by nightfall. For only when night befalls the land does the "Egdon waste tell its true tale." At that point, "the sombre stretch of rounds and hollows seemed to rise and meet the evening gloom in pure sympathy, the heath exhaling darkness as rapidly as the heavens precipitated it" (p. 12). Perfectly matching the urban reader's misplaced yearning for refuge in the heath is Hardy's returned native, Clym Yeobright, and his urban-inspired idealism to reclaim an organic continuity with the place of his birth, an effort which accomplishes only the destroyed lives of his mother and wife.[14] Those who sought in Hardy a progressive affirmation of humanist resistance to the ills of modernity were repeatedly frustrated by the uncertain subjectivity of characters such as Clym, Eustacia Vye, Tess Derbyfield, Jude Fawley, and Sue Bridehead. All of them emerge from land-

scapes which at first glance appear "eternal and immutable," and yet their stories are of dislocation, alienation, and tragedy.

The sense of place evoked by Hardy is based not on a stable and enclosed location, but on a tense *relationship* between dwelling and detachment. In this sense, Wessex was an ambivalent and unstable landscape of process. Williams points out in his comments on *The Return* that,

> At the same time the separation of the returned native is not only a separation from the standards of the educated and affluent world "outside." It is also to some degree inevitably [a separation] from the people who have not made the journey; or more often a separation which can mask itself as a romantic attachment to a way of life in which people are merely instrumental: figures in a landscape . . . . [So] the real Hardy country, I feel more and more, is that border country so many of us have been living in: between custom and education, between work and ideas, between love of place and experience of change (1966:98–99, 195–06).

"It is not a question of Hardy's being 'progressive,'" writes Seymour-Smith (1994:300), rather it is a question of Hardy perceiving the profoundly uncomfortable state many were living in—the place between—and finding *that* to be the condition of modernity (cf. Entrikin 1991). It was a place, like Wessex, which could only be represented with ambivalent creativity. That Raymond Williams observed this quality in Hardy's writing suggests something of the affinity between their novels. Williams's fiction in many ways takes us beyond the limits of cultural theory, offering insights—which resist theoretical closure—into that ambivalent place between dwelling and detachment. Yet Williams made explicit what was only indirectly suggested in Hardy's novels: it is precisely in the representation of the place-between that the link between individual action and abstract historical process—a link which, according to Lukács, lay at the heart of critical realism—could be articulated and made meaningful.

Raymond Williams: Landscapes of Struggle

It has not been uncommon to claim Williams as a British Lukács. Pinkney has argued, however, that Williams's early attraction to 1930s modernism disqualifies him from such a standing. Despite his "excessive enthusiasm" for critical realism, Pinkney claims, Williams was ultimately an ambivalent realist novelist. His most well-known novel *Border Country* (1960) is not as socially transformative as one might expect given his theoretical commitments. Rather, according to Pinkney, it is structured to capture the defeat it novelizes, the failure of the 1926 General Strike. The novel simply records political collapse and, in its metaphorical austerity, marginalizes the dreaming consciousness of hope in its characters (Pinkney 1989:26). To Pinkney, Williams was a modernist at heart who displayed an unfortunate penchant, like Lukács, for realism and its questionable political possibilities.

Pinkney, of course, is not without his critics (for example, Eldridge and Eldridge 1994: 147–49). But rather than recall the polemical positions claimed over whether or not Williams's novels were transformative, I would like to suggest that the very existence of such a debate alludes to a deeper significance underlying his representations of Wales. The issue is not the extent to which Williams's fiction is politically progressive. Searching for instances of progressive social theory in his novels does a disservice, it seems, to the real complexities which demanded literary representation (as opposed to cultural theorizing) in the first place. What strikes one, after reading the Welsh trilogy, is the ever-present and seemingly unresolvable tension between the individuals who inhabit marginal border places such as Glynmawr and the abstractions of social and historical change. Like Hardy, Williams's characters display a confusing subjectivity, caught between a resigned alienation and the continuing promise of individual agency. As with Hardy, Williams's critics have argued over how to read this confusing subjectivity: does it carry us beyond modernity's objectifications, or does it simply reveal the implacable determinism of history?

But posing the question in these terms misses the point. Eldridge and Eldridge (1994:140) have called Williams's novels his "theory in practice." But his fiction was more than an extension of his theory; it offered a wholly different mode of representing the relationship between individuals and society. Harvey has argued that there are two reasons why Williams resorted to the novel as a vehicle to express this relationship. First, the novel allowed him to represent the immediate qualities of people's everyday lives in ways analytical essays could not. Second, the novel allowed him to "emphasize the ways in which personal and particular choices made under given conditions are the very essence of historical-

geographical change" (Harvey 1995:79). Fiction allowed Williams to represent place as the locus of individual action. But most significantly, he invested his places with a profound tension between what Harvey refers to as different levels of abstraction, between cultural place and social space, and between local actions and social movements (see a similar argument in Thrift 1983b: 14–15). This tension should sound quite familiar to that described above in Hardy's work.

Williams's rural places were represented as landscapes of work, where social relations of production could be read in the local landscape, but which were also problematically linked to a broader history and geography. Such a portrayal is clearly evident in *Border Country*. In the early scenes of this novel, Matthew Price returns from London to the valley where he grew up on the Welsh frontier. Just beyond the heathered ridges of the Black Mountains lie the Welsh mining districts. Matthew recalls his image of the valley, carried with him to London, and compares it to the reality now once again before him:

> It was not less beautiful; every detail of the land came up with its old excitement. But it was not still, as the image had been. It was no longer a landscape or a view, but a valley that people were using. He realized, as he watched, what had happened in going away. The valley as landscape had been taken, but its work forgotten. The visitor sees beauty: the inhabitant a *place* where he works and has friends. Far away, closing his eyes, he had been seeing this valley, but as a visitor sees it, as a guide book sees it: this valley, in which he had lived more than half his life (p. 75, my emphasis).

It is no coincidence that Matthew's remembered vision of the valley bears remarkable resemblance to our initial view of the Vale of Blackmoor in *Tess*. As with Hardy's Wessex, the valley where Matthew grew up is becoming increasingly integrated into the British economy, partly due to the efforts of locals themselves, people like Morgan Rosser who confront the greater forces bearing down on the valley with entrepreneurial ventures. In one episode, Rosser tries to convince Matthew's father, Harry, that "out-dated" local attitudes of self-sufficiency ignore the ways the frontier is already tied to a broader political-economy:

> There's never been the capital, Harry; our coal and iron had to be got out with English money. The English, see, always understood money better . . . . [The Welsh are] strong enough, Harry, in their own little patch, their own fields. But what they don't

realize is there's far stronger things, not like people at all, breaking in from the outside. If a man digs hard enough he'll eat: that's all they see of it. But a miner digs, just as hard, and it isn't the same. The coal has to go out and come back as meat, and alot can go wrong with that. Even here it's the same. It isn't just what they grow, but what happens out there, places they've never seen and know nothing about (p. 240).

Indeed, as the novel progresses, "what happens out there" increasingly plays its part in reshaping the valley's geography, but always via the actions of locals. Rosser continues:

> This place is finished, as it was. What matters from now on is not the fields, not the mountains, but the road. There'll be no village, as a place of its own. There'll just be a name you pass through, houses along the road. And that's where you'll be living, mind, on the roadside (p. 242).

Later, we find a description to reflect this attitude:

> The houses seemed now to stand in relation to the road, rather than each other. It was no longer an enclosed village, but a place on the way to somewhere else, as almost everywhere in Britain was coming to be (p. 307).

In conveying this sense of loss, Williams seems to suggest less a eulogy for the enclosed village tradition than a sense of place which comes to be defined as locals participate in the processes of change; the valley dwellers play out their lives as a balancing act between integration and isolation. Returned natives, like Matthew, with their often misplaced ideals, become the quintessential expression of this tense balancing act.

For Williams, this tension yielded a process of cultural *production*, in which Wales as a culture was constructed out of the multiple instances of individuals inhabiting in-between places and acting on the contradictions of their lives. *This* was the modern Welsh experience. It was defined by the many problematic and complex connections between individuals and a broader political-economy, rather than some fantasy of the organic community making its last stand against the unfeeling steamroller of progress. This is precisely the argument made by Dai Smith (1989:44–45):

> Raymond Williams's Wales could be depicted as a whole community, integrated and cultured, to hold up, as worthy example, against the more rootless life of the university-factory city. There would be enough evidence, from the idyllic evocation of country life in *Border Country* to the patriotic pride

in Welsh radical specificities, to bring in the verdict of love-blindness, if it were not that at every juncture he has insisted on revealing the interpenetrations of that life by those 'abstract' forces . . . . This is the tale of Wales that, for Williams, cannot be gainsaid. It is, indeed, more than any rooted tradition of people or language, the Welsh experience. The culture that he detects is, of course, not given or inherited but, in every real sense, manufactured and created.

As Eldridge and Eldridge (1994:184–85) observe, "community" could not be defined organically; it could only be "known" in terms of struggle. The landscapes of industrial and agrarian capitalism, for Williams, "undermined the very possibility of community" which comes to be identified "not in terms of a way of life but a way of struggle." They further claim, not surprisingly, that this was a quality in Hardy's fiction that Williams admired greatly.

Place, however, is not simply a backdrop for the class-based struggle to construct a community. Place is that spatial terrain in which levels of abstraction clash and conflict, requiring individual action (see Longhurst 1991:236). Place is the stage upon which individuals confront the "pressure" to which Williams again and again refers, that force which drives the cultural production of a class of people.

What is important for Williams, then, is that the landscapes of Wales be represented not as enclosed places being corrupted from without—as in the well-established genre of Welsh literary regionalism, the association with which Williams greatly resisted—but as on-going historical processes of both local and broader social relations.[15] Nostalgic pastoralism tends to deny such a dynamic sense of place. The urban tourist, scientist, and landscape painter search not for change, but stasis. Williams (1973:9–12) likens the search for the pastoral to riding an escalator, on which we are continuously looking down and back at a way of life which only just died out. This escalator of nostalgia is not merely so many instances of the well-known habit of using the past as a stick to beat the present. "The apparent resting places, the successive Old Englands to which we are confidently referred but which then start to move and recede" (p. 12), are expressions of the dominant "structures of feeling" of the times, and are contingent upon the pervasive transformations in processes of production at each successive point in history.

What Williams's fiction articulates is a tense and wary linkage between local cultural expressions and broader material processes, specifically agricultural and industrial capitalism. The problem with the idea that places have disappeared along with organic communities, he argues, is that it deflects criticisms of contemporary capitalism into an irrecoverable past. "A necessary social criticism is then directed to the safer world of the past: to a world of books and memories, in which the scholar can be professionally humane but in his own world either insulated or indifferent" (1973:36). The pastoral as antidote to modernization only legitimizes an objectifying new order, for no alternative can be reasonably envisioned. This is because the very *possibility* of the pastoral and its organic community is itself dependent upon the modern traveler's eye and its misplaced metropolitan idealism.

As the landscapes of Hardy's Wessex and Williams's Wales suggest, the alternative to the traditional and enclosed place colonized by the urban industrial gaze is the place between, the place of tension, ambivalence, and immediate agency. For Williams, this meant situating a place—in his case, the working countryside—within the broader contemporary forces of capitalism that impinge on it, rather than in an idealized past or a distant land, drawing not on a reactionary appeal to tradition, but on the ambivalent yet creative possibilities offered by modernity itself.

A Cultural Geography of Modernity

In this final section of the paper, I would like to shift the focus from literary to academic representations of place and modernity. As the previous section has suggested, the power of literary representations of place has been in capturing a sense of the ambivalence with which people engaged the forces of change. That ambivalence stemmed from a sense of loss. Modernity enabled a distanced objectivity with which to perceive a new landscape fragmented by the forces of industrial and agrarian capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism, thus engendering in literature both an aesthetics of loss and an ironic wariness of change. The literary examples discussed above introduced cultural landscapes in which individuals grappled with the paradoxical desire to reclaim a sense of continuity with the past even

as the social conditions which allowed one to imagine such continuity denied the very possibility of its return. Place, I have suggested, may be conceived as the terrain upon which this struggle took place and was made meaningful, a terrain of fragmentation and instability, demanding yet simultaneously denying repair. In the tradition of critical realism, especially, the landscapes of modernity were represented by the myriad struggles between individual subjectivities and the forces of abstraction and objectification. The modern experience was not one in which some inherent progressiveness would ultimately triumph, nor was it pure historical determinism implacably turning everyone into an automaton. Rather, modernity was experienced as a deeper, more precarious tension between the two. While the abstract dualisms of modern scientific thought obscured (indeed, denied) this tension, it was recovered by an artistic attention to the actual experiences of people in place.

In closing this paper, I would like to derive from this artistic vision an epistemological argument for studying place in contemporary cultural geography. My goal is to suggest that the on-going construction of place-based identity needs to be examined by geographers in the specific terms of modernity's "ambivalent creativity." This, admittedly, is not an entirely novel claim for geography. As a brief review will reveal, the aesthetics of loss have informed a long regionalist-humanist tradition in geography. But this tradition is also marred by the seductions of modernist science: Darwinian evolutionary theory, superorganic cultural theory, and dialectical materialism. Yet, the current focus on the cultural politics of place in geography—in which the false promises of modernist thought have been exposed—has yet to fully come to terms with the deeper, paradoxical reality underlying the clumsy repair-work of modernist science. While the concept of place in geography has been invigorated by postmodern social and cultural theory, the turn toward place as a stage for the drama of cultural politics—implying an emancipatory space of resistance to the objectifying processes of capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism, and nationalism—remains a highly problematic move (see Massey 1993). Of course, resisting modernity's tendency toward totalizing abstractions is a major reason for the continued significance of place as a terrain of meaningful identity and agency. But to leave it at this risks another dualism, posing place as simply the progressive conceptual counterpoint to some vague

placeless modernity. Place is indeed a terrain of struggle. But the struggles over place cannot be conceived simply in terms of resisting historical and spatial hegemonies. To regard place as an ultimate terrain of emancipatory subjectivity is to deny the inherent paradox upon which the struggle to claim ourselves as subjects (rather than objects) of history and spatiality rests in the first place. It is not in a postmodern landscape of resistance to totalizing discourses and the political economies that support them that we find the contemporary significance of place. Place, I am arguing, more fundamentally represents a geography of modernity in all its contradictory richness.

European Regionalism

There are hints of this approach to the concept of place in early regional geography. Regionalist studies among French and Anglo scholars, for example, displayed many of the concerns—articulated above—over accounting for human subjectivity while not denying the objectifying power of the forces of nineteenth- and early twentieth- century modernization. In the studies of scholars such as Paul Vidal de la Blache (1903), Patrick Geddes (1949), and H. J. Fleure (1932), regions were invested with both the promise of progress and the hope for a return to organic continuity. In Scotland, according to Livingstone (1992: 277), Geddes advocated a regionalist approach which not only contained a political appeal for local self-determination within an increasingly industrialized and integrated Great Britain, but was also an expression of faith in the ability of individuals to determine the trajectory of evolution towards the decentralized formation of civilized places, where modernity's totalizing and alienating ills were counteracted.

Among Geddes's many students, H. J. Fleure most consistently carried on this legacy of neo-Lamarckian "geographical humanism" (Campbell and Livingstone 1983; Livingstone 1992: 282) in viewing the region as a terrain upon which modernity's aesthetics of loss were articulated and made meaningful. As with Geddes, modernity's contradictions inspired a politics of localism in Fleure (see Livingstone 1992:284–90; Gruffudd 1994). For Fleure, the construction of place-based identity became the urgent cause of Welsh nationalism. Fleure's method was characterized by detailed regional studies of rural communities, emphasizing the organic unity between people

and their environment. As with all neo-Lamarckian thought, environment was a significant conditioning factor for local place-based social groups. But as a humanist, Fleure also insisted on the independent role of social evolution and heredity. The environment was significant only in putting up barriers which kept groups isolated from each other, protecting local distinctions. Especially in the rural highlands of Wales, Fleure found peasant cultures that preserved ways of life dating to a remote past.

In this turn toward the peasantry, Fleure expressed the pastoralist longing of industrializing metropolitan Europe to repair a fragmented modern landscape with the promise of organic continuity. Yet what remains intriguing, as Gruffudd (1994:73) argues, is Fleure's consistent commitment to Darwinian notions of progress; Wales as a region not simply represented a return to a purer life but also embodied a better future. It was a region paradoxically poised somewhere between progress and loss. Preserving and understanding rural ways of life were especially important in providing a grounding myth of national identity for forward-looking urban societies. Gruffudd (1994:67) points out that Fleure was not "anti-urban"; his regionalism displayed a kind of "techno-arcadianism," and he saw cities as both "social expressions of the better elements of the human soul" and as concentrations of a devastating materialism. Constructing a moral topography in upland Wales—where "the peasantry cherished universal and abiding values"—was an attempt to come to terms with this contradiction; it was an incipient move of ambivalent creativity, an effort (unfortunately flawed by Darwinism) to carve a space of identity somewhere between integration and isolation.

In France, a similar ambivalence had been articulated in the work of Paul Vidal de la Blache. Vidal's work has been noted for its preference for rural communities dislocated from urban and industrial landscapes (Buttimer 1971). While his *Tableau de la Géographie de la France* (1903) certainly displays this tendency, Vidal was generally more inclined to examine not simply place-based communities interacting with their natural environment, but the processes by which these communities grew and became integrated with broader social systems (Archer 1993; Thrift 1994: 202–10). The nineteenth-century French academic context in which Vidal worked was one in which the social-environmental relationship was not determined by mechanical laws of nature but

was rather marked by society's ability to adapt and change according to environmental conditions (Rabinow 1989:31). Environmental factors did not determine human behavior or life style, but were simply part of a whole set of conditioning elements that could be overcome as social groups progressed and evolved. While social groups initially lived in close harmony with their natural milieux, they were also free to choose among a number of different possibilities:

> [Social groups] escape from the tyranny of physical forces by means of an idea, the idea formed of their environment that impels them to alter it. We find, in fact, two forces: the creative, inventive force of human genius always tending to produce new patterns of work and dwelling, and the conservative, "sticky" force of habit which tends to resist change (Buttimer 1971:51).

As Buttimer's interpretation indicates, Vidal's incorporation of a humanistic sense of freedom in his method led him to that uncomfortable but fundamental area of modernity where progress meets loss. This passage also comes close to describing the landscape of process found in Hardy's and Williams's novels, in which place is located somewhere between dwelling and displacement. "Vidal lived and wrote a dilemma," observes Thrift (1994:206). "He inhabited a France that was becoming more rationalised, more modern by the moment, but he looked back to a world peopled by peasants living off the soil in local communities" (see also Claval 1984:234). But Vidal's was not a simplistic nostalgia. Rather, his *genres de vie* attempted to articulate historical moments of contingency, in which societies carved out "modes of life" that were neither organic enclaves of "natural harmony" nor casualties of modernity's "spatial determinism" (Rabinow 1989:196).

Unfortunately, Vidal stopped short of cultivating this betweenness in his method. Instead, he expressed the nationalistic convictions of his day by borrowing from evolutionary biology in conceiving of the growth and development of social systems from place-based rural communities to vast, integrated societies. Social circulation was thus a fundamental component of his method, and it was with circulation that he began resolving modernity's contradictory nature.[16] Transportation and communication played a key role in enabling humans to modify the environment, to create places given their natural milieux. Civilization was characterized by a struggle with natural obstacles, and social groups that succeeded

were aided by contact with other groups. Groups in isolation could seldom surmount their environmental obstacles. But Vidal resisted exploring thoroughly the tension between "sticky" places and modern integrative processes. He never developed a method to relate this tension to the concept of place. Circulation, Buttimer wrote, was seen by Vidal as "a destructive force transforming traditional regional equilibria and stable *genres de vie* and also as a creative process promoting the diffusion of ideas, the emergence of areal comparative advantages, and the radiation of sociocultural influences from nodal centers" (1971:190).

Despite evoking modernity's contradictions, Vidal ultimately celebrated the progressive spirit of science in overcoming them. While recognizing that modernity was indeed a profoundly destabilizing force, producing contingent landscapes, his response was ultimately unequivocal. Indeed, he regarded colonialism as the "glory of the age" (Vidal 1926:24) because of its ability to penetrate traditional *genres de vie* and force them to progress. Yet one is nevertheless left to ponder Vidal's devotion to describing the pre-industrial geography of France. Some, like Buttimer (1971:58), have interpreted this as the inherent proclivities of an artist rather than a scientist, a commitment to aesthetics in a world ever dominated by rationalism. As Thrift (1994:208) claims, Vidal's work was pervaded by a humanism that potentially viewed place as an unstable terrain of individual human actions, the understanding of which went beyond the universalisms of scientific theory.

Sauer's Landscape of Moral Recovery

It is ironic that, despite being surrounded by an intellectual climate in which regionalism predominated (Dorman 1993), early American geography derived its inspiration from an overconfident and conceited environmentalism that celebrated the very forces regionalists found so disturbing (Peet 1985). Even after environmentalism was ultimately discredited, American geography in the 1920s and 1930s remained profoundly out of touch with the most important questions being asked about place, region, and modernity (Hoelscher 1994). Instead, the field preoccupied itself with debates over the definition of its disciplinary boundaries. It was a situation which understandably dismayed Carl Sauer, one of the few early North American geographers whose ideas reflected those of the regionalist thinkers around him. Sauer's cure for geography's "definitional neuroses" was to find inspiration in the regional monographs of the European tradition (Livingstone 1992:261–62). Sauer's motives in coaxing geography toward a more European regionalist tradition did not simply involve concerns over the health of the discipline, however. The studies he advocated served a greater need. As Livingstone (1992:302) puts it, "Sauer's geographical project of elucidating the cultural landscape was, as much as anything, an exercise in moral recovery."

Reflecting the significant influence of the natural sciences in American academia, Sauer was perhaps less of a "geographical humanist" than his British and French colleagues. Certainly his view of culture betrayed a lack of concern for humans on an individual level (Duncan 1980). What initially interested him were the long-term historical phases of cultural landscape morphology (Sauer 1925). But his work came to be marked by an anti-industrial conservatism which apparently drew from the more humanist regionalist sentiments around him (Entrikin 1984:404), as well as elements of his own German-Missouri upbringing (Williams, M. 1983:4; Kenzer 1985: 261). For Sauer, industrialism was a force that encouraged naive rationalism, in which people failed to achieve an historical understanding of their relationship to the environment. Rapid modernization in the U. S. had encouraged a rational, technology-centered stance toward the natural landscape. Industrial and commercial culture had divorced people from the land, and geographers were failing in their ordained role of explaining the human condition as one based in a fundamental relationship with the environment (Sauer 1941).

For Sauer, perhaps nothing better exhibited the blind rationalism of industrial capitalist culture than environmental determinism. Although the bulk of his criticisms were expressed in terms of the methodological difficulties of environmentalism, they were driven by a clear distaste for the idea that modernization represented a sort of "gift of nature," that humans were encouraged to exploit as part of some divine imperialism. He saw environmental determinism not as a science, but as a naive expression of faith in industrial civilization as the apogee of progress. In "The Morphology of Landscape," he wrote that, "Geography under the banner of environmentalism represents a dogma, the assertion of a faith that brings rest

to a spirit vexed by the riddle of the universe. It was a new evangel for the age of reason, which set up its particular form of adequate order and even of ultimate purpose" (Sauer 1925:53).

As this passage also reveals, "Morphology"—while primarily a methodological treatise—contains significant elements of antipositivist German phenomenology, inspired largely by Goethe (Speth 1981:233; Williams, M. 1983:5–6). Goethe's concept of "morphological change"—the study of form as process—was developed to meet the inadequacy of positivist science's abstract systems and categories (Fink 1996:96). The actual world, argued Goethe, defied systematic categorization, while the human mind needed to organize the world in such a way to make it comprehensible; morphology helped bridge this gap between actual chaos and abstract order. Yet Goethe was adamant that morphology not be used to "fix" the paradox of reality, rather it enabled us to continue to strive for meaning. More important, it revealed constant change as the basic condition of existence. The desire for organic stability in both natural and social sciences represented a false promise, establishing an abstract dualism between subjective and objective experience in order to bracket our anxieties about the incomprehensible. Morphology sought to unify and transcend this dualism by making humans and nature *both* nonreducible to stable essence (Wilkinson 1968:118–19).

For Sauer, the point was simply that human cultural landscapes were dynamic, requiring a long-term historical perspective (Williams, M. 1983:6). This message—obscured by Sauer's early preoccupation with the material manifestations of culture—was lost on those who saw in "The Morphology of Landscape" a manifesto on the nature of geography as chorology (Solot 1986). Yet, even while Sauer became increasingly frustrated by methodological arguments, he maintained an underlying commitment to the antipositivist kernels imbedded in "Morphology." Thus, by 1940, he was more explicitly advocating a process-oriented approach to geography that emphasized historical change (Kenzer 1987:469). Unfortunately, Sauer's inherent philosophy failed to realize the truly radical potential of Goethe's "Permanence in Change." Instead, Sauer's vision developed into a rather simplistic antimodern conservatism (Entrikin 1984). While this retained a healthy suspicion of positivism, rationalism, and abstract universalism as the false promise

of modern science, it sought refuge in a nostalgic historicism rather than embracing paradox and instability themselves. Sauer's cultural landscape contained important aspects of the tension between progress and loss that inspired Goethe—landscape was more than a set of resources to fuel the machines of industry and commerce—but it also retained a disturbing and essential idealism that ran counter to Goethe's deeper message of inviting the "anxiety of form in motion" (Fink 1996:97).

The Cultural Politics of Place

There has been some concern recently over the turn to social theory in cultural geography. Entrikin (1996:219), for example, notes that the emphasis on the social construction of place might indicate a new reductionist trend among geographers seeking to replace a "long disavowed natural reductionism," thereby diminishing "our understanding of the many ways in which place is constitutive of human experience by encouraging us to collapse the multiple dimensions of geographic place into a single dimension of social space." This perhaps explains, as well, an apparently widening gap between theoretical work on place and the regionalist narratives that continue to be produced (Murphy 1991). Theoretical work on place has been driven primarily by spatially invigorated social theory and its agenda of political intervention which, however necessary, has tended to obscure place as a terrain that resists theoretical closure.

In a similar vein, Massey (1992; 1993) has argued that the myopic focus on capital among geographers studying localities in relation to the restructuring of the global economy has precluded a broader understanding of the way place-identities are conditioned, threatened, and reproduced. Colonialism, imperialism, and patriarchy have long been factors by which people feel dislocated and disoriented from their sense of place. As she ironically observes, displacement is a fundamental part of the experience of place, rather than an aberration introduced by the forces of capitalist restructuring. Her argument implies that place has merely been used as the latest medium through which "culturally aware" geographers can establish more thorough critiques of capitalism, rather than interrogate issues of meaning and identity (Jackson 1991).

Despite this insight, however, most theoretical studies of place continue to be informed by a geopolitics of resistance to the pervasive rationalism and objectification of industrial capitalism. The preeminent theme is of disempowered groups resisting in various ways the dominant meanings and representations of the places in which they live and work (for example, Anderson 1988; Jackson 1989; Anderson and Gale 1992; Clark 1993; Keith and Pile 1993; Cresswell 1996). Rose (1994) both exemplifies and critiques this trend in claiming that cultural geographers have displayed very little research on the multiple ways representations of place are "read" and appropriated by groups who have little access to broader powers of representation. Geographers, she argues, focus almost exclusively on the texts produced by those who display such access, a move which allows them to both criticize the hegemonic dominance of powerful groups and construct a marginalized group which, surprisingly, displays very little voice in their analyses:

> Although Harvey has implied several times that the power of capital and the capitalist state is such that any attempt at subversion will be appropriated and negated, the insistence by many other geographers on the possibility of resistance suggests that his pessimism is not ubiquitous; yet none of the geographers exploring the cultural politics of place have offered an explanation for their lack of interest in substantive examples of contestatory cultural work (Rose 1994:47).

She goes on to argue that "power relations do not neatly divide the cultural field into two opposing camps" (p. 48). Rather, cultural politics are complicated by the hybrid identities resulting from complex social relations which fracture the local cultural field.

Despite her assertion that the colonizing power of capitalism is only half of the story, Rose goes on to insist that resistance to dominant representations remains at the heart of understanding the experience of place. This is important, of course, but it assumes a limited conception of place, defined merely in terms of oppositional and contested readings of dominant representations. While Rose herself argues for an interpretation of cultural difference in terms of "multiple identities and interdependence" (p. 49), the continuing focus on disempowered groups resisting dominant representations risks the assumption that marginal groups define their place-identity in a purely oppositional fashion. This seems to be a rather attenuated conception of individual agency. Although Rose's argument opens the possibility that alternative readings of place representations by marginal groups may themselves be fraught with contradictions, I am suggesting that we need to take the contradictions further than this. Indeed, Rose herself appears aware that such a step is needed, writing in *Feminism and Geography* (1993: 159–60), that the spaces of resistance aren't simply emancipatory, but are inherently paradoxical. Indeed, places as sites of resistance "may not remain emancipatory" but instead are "insecure, precarious, and fluctuating."

Significantly, much of geography's turn to narratives of place-as-site-of-resistance has been inspired by a more general spatial turn in the field of cultural studies. Much of this literature has emerged from the idea that modernity's inherent struggle—between subjectivity and objectification—is profoundly spatial and, more specifically, territorial. Theoretical work on the social production of space (Lefebvre 1991; cf. Soja 1989) and its cultural ramifications (Gramsci 1971) has led to a large body of writing on the geographies of exclusion, discipline, and visibility in modern societies (for example, Foucault 1979; Mitchell 1988; Sibley 1995). This perspective informs the work of Said (1979; 1993) as well, for whom modern imperialism and colonialism were most significantly projects of spatial production, representation, and control (Gregory 1995). Said's work has, in turn, helped spawn an emphasis in cultural studies on issues of diaspora, displacement, and disjuncture (Appadurai 1990) and how these have led to a new regionalist politics of representation, reclaiming subjectivity over the fractured landscapes of modernity (for example, Wilson 1995).

It is in these terms that some geographers have come to conceptualize place in association with resistance. As Gregory (1995) observes, Said's work is marked by a "politics of space" in which resistance to the hegemonic appropriation of place figures prominently. Yet Gregory also identifies Said's more "humanist" commitment to what Bachelard termed a "poetics of space" whereby space is encoded with subjective meanings that form the basis for constructions of identity. Said's work is consistently political in motivation, yet it is also undergirded by a humanism inspired more by the cultural studies of Raymond Williams than Foucault's spatial analytics. Thus, in his readings of Austen, Conrad, Kipling, and others whose literature helped reproduce the

culture of European imperialism, Said betrays a deep appreciation for their ability to represent modernity's paradoxes even while being trapped within them. His interpretation of *Heart of Darkness*, for example, is indicative:

> [I]f Conrad can show that all human activity depends on controlling a radically unstable reality to which words approximate only by will or convention, the same is true of empire, of venerating the idea, and so forth. With Conrad, then, we are in a world being made and unmade more or less all the time. What appears stable and secure — the policeman at the corner, for instance—is only slightly more secure than the white men in the jungle, and requires the same continuous (but precarious) triumph over an all-pervading darkness, which by the end of the tale is shown to be the same in London and in Africa (Said 1993, 29).

What Said's analysis points to is the fundamental instability of the modern landscape. Such instability, of course, engenders continuous efforts to maintain what Said calls a "consolidated vision" of hegemonic dominance on the one hand, and resistance to those efforts by reclaiming an organic connection to territory on the other.[17] But what fundamentally underlies all of this is an awareness of the contingency of place. As I have argued above, it is an awareness which has been best captured in literature rather than social theory, and Said's reading of Conrad seems to suggest the same thing.

My objective, then, is not to deny the importance of place as a terrain of struggle and resistance. Such a claim would fly in the face of some of the best work being done in human geography today. Rather, I want to recover a less essential notion of place not necessarily allied with the geopolitics of resistance but as an unstable terrain which in fact problematizes not only hegemony and domination but resistance as well. This is a direction toward which a significant number of feminists and even a few postmodern theorists have been moving (for example, Haraway 1991; Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Natter and Jones 1997). Yet this articulation of place as an unstable and highly problematic site of contradictions has its roots in the most radical message of modernity, a message obscured by a long obsession with the false promises of scientific abstraction and order. The construction of place-based identity stems more from the troubled awareness of an unresolvable tension between progress and loss than any conviction to resist hegemony. More important, it is the deeper realization of one's contradictory

subjectivity that informs action more than an a priori political consciousness.

To conclude this section, I would like to borrow from Pred (1992) to illustrate this conception of place. Pred documents the ways Stockholm's working class attempted to assert its own sense of place-based subjectivity on the changing urban landscape. Lacking access, enjoyed by the bourgeoisie, to the means of capital accumulation and the "rational ordering" of civil society, workers asserted something of an "underground" alternative urban geography—an *espace vécu* (Lefebvre 1991)—by resisting the new street names and methods of surveillance imposed by the bourgeoisie in Stockholm. An alternative sense of place was thus constructed by the underclass based on their own folk names for places and their own methods of disciplinary avoidance. The bourgeoisie, for their part, asserted its own dominant representation of space (similar to Haussman's Paris), based upon a rationalization of streets, normalization of the general population, and regulation of public spaces and public behavior. This constructed a space based on ideals of modern science and progress, in which all that was morally decadent, unhealthy, and dangerous about the old order was exposed to the healthy breeze of circulation and flushed out.

In both cases—for the proletariat as well as the bourgeoisie—the spatial sense of identity articulated is both intimately bound up with the aesthetics of loss and profoundly contradictory. For the proletariat, the assertion of an alternative place-identity—while politically "progressive"—represented a need to reclaim the familiar geography of the past. Stockholm, during this time of rapid industrialism and capital over-accumulation, was truly melting into air as "rural idyllic qualities of many parts of the city disappeared in wave upon wave of creative destruction" (p. 136). Constructing an underground geography of folk names could only generate meaning once a destroyed past could be imagined, thus enabling the contingent invention of some kind of cohesive cultural tradition.

Similarly, the bourgeoisie's attempts at spatial hegemony were also supported by the paradoxical foundation of a collective sense of loss. Maintaining a representation of space based on the ideals of modern science and progress entailed the construction of a sense of national identity, a sort of glue needed to hold the fragmented and unstable landscape of modernity together. The ordering of urban space went hand in hand with an organic

mythology of national romanticism and solidarity. This, in turn, depended upon the invention of a shared past and common cultural heritage and territory:

> The rural "past" was not merely to invoke the once-existing past but was now to signify "the good old days," an age of unity to be recaptured, a time when life in agricultural villages "was simple and harmonious," an epoch free of speedy technological change, an era when the everyday was uncomplicated, straightforward, and frictionless, a period when people "knew their place" and relations between high and low were marked by paternal care and attention on the one side and contentedness on the other (Pred 1992:146–47).

It is in this context that Sweden would be the first country in the world to turn a peasant village into an "open-air museum" so as to construct, and then preserve, this invented tradition of a moral rural topography (see Horne 1984). The bourgeoisie attempted to reconstruct Stockholm as a place that monumentalized rational progress, yet the very means by which this was attempted—the invention of an organic continuity with the past—would ultimately only reveal the false promise of such arrogance, as successive waves of change would carry the lived space of Stockholm farther and farther from that which could be rationally represented in any way.

In this example, place serves as the shifting fulcrum between subjective appropriation and abstract objectification. It is the terrain upon which individuals act in attempts to secure a meaningful sense of spatial identity. But significantly, progressive individual action represents less the supposed emancipation of an oppositional agenda than an awareness of modernity's inherent paradox, in which the threats of dislocation and displacement enable a desire for organic unity even as they render such unity impossible.

In conclusion, I would like to stress two general points which underlie this paper. First is a call for geographers to adopt an epistemological stance in which the literary vision of place articulated above can be integrated into our methodological repertoire: that is, a call for a human geography that moves beyond the narrower strictures of conventional social science in representing the paradoxical landscapes of modernity.[18] The significance of literature, of course, has long been stressed by humanistic geographers (for example, Pocock 1981; Watson 1983; Porteous 1985). Yet, with important exceptions (Olsson 1981; Thrift 1983b), geographers have been reluctant to enlist

literature in their theoretical work emphasizing place as process. More often, literary representations of place have been used by humanistic geographers to reaffirm the subjectivity of spatial experience as a refuge from positivist abstractions (Brosseau 1994:342). Less developed have been the deeper contradictions of the human experience of place conjured by the best literature.

Second is a caution against assuming a necessary and unproblematic link between place and a progressive political agenda. It has become common to claim place as a crucial aspect of the politics of inclusion, multiple identities, marginalized cultures, and contesting political positionalities. But the paradoxical qualities of modernity can just as easily yield a place-based politics which is reactionary, exclusionary, and blatantly supportive of dominant regimes. Despite the fact that as geographers we might conceive a "progressive sense of place" that has no boundaries, is constituted by multiple identities, and is historically dynamic, many individuals, in attempting to reconstruct the "eternal and immutable" in the face of constant change, are often very much attempting to build boundaries, unify identities, and establish historical stasis. This is why their "creativity" is so "ambivalent" and contradictory. The paradox inherent in their actions is what, I believe, continues to make place such a rich and dynamic concept for understanding the experience of modernity.

Notes

1. It should be made clear, however, that Harvey and Swyngedouw, among others, do not give much credence to the critical potential of this new conception of place, but rather interpret it as an unfortunate symptom of recent intellectual trends which are themselves the outcome of more general social changes associated with "late capitalism" (Jameson 1984). Others more sympathetic to "poststructuralist" approaches (for example, Duncan 1990 or Agnew 1989) have enthusiastically enlisted place as a significant conceptual terrain upon which to battle the perceived metanarratives of modernity. Either way, place and modernity have come to appear as conceptual opposites.

2. Something should be said at the outset regarding the term "modernity." My use of the term throughout this paper is in large part inspired by Berman (1970; 1982; 1992), who argues that the experience of modernity is neither one of liberating progress nor imprisoning totalities but an un-

easy tension between the two. It can thus be characterized as a very open-ended experience, offering a number of sometimes contradictory possibilities in which to negotiate one's subjectivity within the broader historical and geographical forces of change. I thus have very little to say here about postmodernism since I believe its assertions of a new era of decentered subjects—dislocated and unable to achieve a critical perspective on the continuities of history—fails to recognize that this has always been the condition of modernity. As I will argue here, the landscape of modernity is chronically unstable, requiring both actions of domination and resistance to repair its ruptures. But unlike the less nuanced versions of postmodernism (see note 4), I believe this approach to modernity leaves open that possibility of repair, even though, paradoxically, the repair itself causes still new ruptures.

3. The relationship between place and modernity in modern social science is itself a complex and differentiated body of writing. It is possible, however, to identify a loosely defined body of work which has theorized, from various perspectives, the passing of "enclosed traditional places" and the "organic societies" they contain with the advent of urban-industrial societies organized into nation-states. A sampling of the major scholars I have in mind include the following: Emile Durkheim, Ernst Gellner, Claude Levi-Strauss, Karl Marx, Lewis Henry Morgan, Walt Rostow, Herbert Spencer, Frederick Tönnies. Useful surveys of the place/modernity problematic can be found in Entrikin (1991) and Livingstone (1992: ch. 8). It should be clear, however, that the general thesis of "the modern eclipse of place" is but one of many theoretical perspectives historically associated with modern social science and should not be equated with some generalized notion of social science overall.

4. This point, as the work of Rose (1993) and Soja (1996) suggests, has already been made by geographers seeking a more nuanced antiessentialist postmodernism. The argument made in this paper is that such antiessentialism—as seen, for example, in the work of Lefebvre (1991)—is precisely what lies at the heart of the experience of modernity.

5. According to Brosseau (1994:347), humanistic and neo-Marxist geographers alike have tended to seek in literature evidence for theoretical positions already established, thereby ignoring much of what is "disruptive, subversive or a source of new questions in the novel." Following from this, my goal here is to focus on those aspects of literature that disrupt theoretical closures (see Olsson 1980; 1981).

6. Admittedly, invoking Lukács here is not without some risk. Said (1993:49) has noted that Lukács focused on temporality—that is, historical proc-

ess—as the critical problematic in modern literature, leading him to miss the crucial spatiality of imperialism underlying European fiction (see also Gregory 1995). Referring to the more explicitly geographical work of Gramsci, Said argues that modernity's key struggles were not simply between human subjectivity and abstract historical forces, but were inherently territorial as well—that is, between place-based identity and the forces of dislocation, displacement, and territorial fragmentation. While Lukács failed to articulate the modern problematic in these terms, I believe that such a spatiality only complements his work, thus informing a geographical reading of modern literature in which place represents the fulcrum between individuals and broader geographical and historical forces.

7. I refer, of course, to literary realism here, not the method of critical realism associated with Bhaskar and, in geography, Sayer (1992).

8. This conception of place derives much inspiration from the "lived space" (*espace vécu*) articulated by Lefebvre (1991), as well as Massey's conception of place (1993:66–67).

9. The dissonance between the first and second books of *Faust* has stimulated a considerable amount of criticism. For while the first book represents the relatively straightforward tale of Faust's bargain between Heaven and Hell, the second book takes us in new directions, failing to clearly resolve the wager, but rather complicating the very terms upon which the first book is based. According to Heller (1968:136–37; see also Lange 1968:6–7), Faust's bargain is itself an expression of a modern paradox which resists closure. By the end of the second book, it has become apparent that Faust cannot arrive in Heaven or Hell, for his very *being* is defined by continual striving, by *becoming*. Faust's journey is marked, more than anything, by "an uncertain destination."

10. The reference to Hegel here is important. *Faust* is marked by a series of tragedies—that of Gretchen being perhaps the most poignant—which can be interpreted as dialectical in nature. For Lukács, Goethe was, like Hegel, an Enlightenment thinker who believed "that the human race is capable of indefinite perfection once it has freed itself from the fetters of the Middle Ages" (1968, 180). This conviction, however, did not stop Goethe from pointing out the contradictions of emerging capitalist society or from representing the sufferings such contradictions are capable of creating on an individual level.

11. As is the case with Goethe scholarship, the immense body of Hardy criticism cannot possibly be done justice in this brief account. Other than those noted in the text, the sources that have been most helpful in guiding my reading of Hardy

have been Hasan (1982), Kramer, (1990), Millgate (1971), Pinion (1977; 1992), and Salter (1981).

12. This line, taken verbatim from Hardy's 1883 essay "The Dorsetshire Laborer," refers to the livier class, into which Hardy himself was born. As Millgate (1971) and Rabbetts (1989) have both argued, the livier class of independent village tradesmen and craftsmen was the most precarious of British rural social classes, with prospects for advancement being undercut by economic transformations which threatened to dispossess and uproot the village cottager. Most of Hardy's protagonists were from this class, thus emphasizing the chronic instability of the Wessex landscape.

13. Perhaps more than any other critic, Douglas Brown's (1954) work established a critical tradition of Hardy mourning the destruction of the rural community by the dehumanizing process of nineteenth-century industrialization. There have been, however, a number of important materialist interpretations of Hardy's work, including Wotton (1985) and M. Williams (1972). While these also focused on Hardy's concerns over the rural consequences of agrarian and industrial capitalism, they challenge the humanist-pastoralist tradition by insisting, persuasively I believe, that Hardy was less concerned with reclaiming rural organic continuity in the face of "progress" than with simply detailing the rural contradictions of emerging capitalist relations of production (but see countering opinions by Salter 1981:27–52; and Goode 1990). Despite his impatience with Marxists who would claim Hardy as some "closet-socialist" (evidenced, for example, by "The Dorsetshire Labourer"), even Seymour-Smith (1994:303–04) has found Brown's thesis too simplistic given Hardy's overall preference for contradiction and irony rather than polemical standpoints. See Rabbatts (1989:5–8) for a sustained critique of Brown's thesis.

14. Clym Yeobright embodies the same tragic search for perfection that Goethe invested in Faust and which lies at the heart of the paradox of modernity (for an interesting comparison see Berman's 1970 analysis of Rousseau's Julie). According to Pinion (1977:103–07), Hardy's allusions to Greek mythology in The Return—symbolizing "the irreconcilability of Hellenism with modern Positivist philosophy"—was influenced by the work of Walter Pater, who contrasted Greek sensuousness with Christian asceticism as a major problematic of the Victorian era. Pater wrote that, "The longer we contemplate that Hellenic ideal, in which man is at unity with himself, the more we may be inclined to regret that he should ever have passed beyond it, to contend for a perfection that makes the blood turbid, and frets the flesh, and discredits the actual world about us" (cited in Pinion 1977: 105). This is the paradox of modernity in a nutshell, that striving to become which yields only the further recognition of all that has been lost along the way.

15. The "Welsh model" of literary regionalism was, in Williams's view, simply a literary extension of bourgeois England's continuing colonization of Wales. Welsh pastoralism simply confirmed an ancient quaintness which only emphasized the region's contemporary political-economic subordination. Thus, Williams referred to himself, in Politics and Letters, as a "Welsh European," internationalizing the links upon which progressive political action in Wales may be based. Yet, in keeping with this paper's argument, Williams's novels revealed the real complexities of such a position, rather than simply providing a narrative model for "progressive politics." In The Fight for Manod (1979), it is a marginal character, Tom Meurig, and not Matthew Price, who articulates Wales's potential links to international socialism. "He [Meurig] can't make up his mind," Peter Owen says, "whether to proclaim an immediate Federation of the Celtic Peoples, with honorary membership for the Basques, or whether simply to take over Europe, with this new communal socialism they've been dreaming up in the hills." But Matthew remains skeptical, for Meurig's ideological commitment to a progressive Wales risks recapitulating a kind of "radical pastoralism" based on an essentialist notion of Welsh culture and obscuring the social divisions within Wales, divisions that relate to the broader geography of capitalism and that continue to condition the on-going production of a so-called Welsh regional culture (pp. 133–36).

16. As Rabinow's (1989) analysis makes clear, the concept of circulation in nineteenth-century French social thought had metaphorical roots in the classical science of pathology. Circulation literally "cleared the air" of stagnant and diseased elements; similarly, circulation encouraged backward, isolated communities to modernize and join the healthy forces of civilization. Circulation, for example, legitimized Georges Haussman's massive reconstruction of Paris in order to break open the narrow streets which had prevented the "stagnant air" of poor neighborhoods from dissipating (Rabinow 1989:73–81). As Berman (1982:147–55) points out, Haussman's "creative destruction" was quintessentially modern in its paradoxical ability to create an environment for a liberating "street modernity" even as it engulfed thousands of Parisians with its alienating logic.

17. Indeed, Said's work was profoundly influenced by his own displacement as a Palestinian, his desire to recover a ruptured organic unity for the fragmented territory of Palestine, and his paradoxical awareness that a "Palestinian presence on the map" could only be reinscribed by "a space of

representation that deploys hybrid, broken, fragmentary forms" (Gregory 1995:451).

18. I do not wish to suggest here that human geography has always been imprisoned within the "strictures of conventional social science." Of particular importance in this regard has been the work of Yi-Fu Tuan, who has for years deployed a vast array of creative approaches to understanding the relationship between human subjectivity and modern landscapes. My call is, rather, for a renewed focus on the ways human subjectivity becomes enmeshed in the paradoxical nature of modern landscapes, something to which Tuan and other humanists have alluded and yet which has remained undeveloped in geography.

Acknowledgments

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Correspondence: Department of Geography, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309, email toakes@rastro.colorado.edu.