ARENA OF ORIGINS

Geographies of the Self: Space, Place, and Scale Revisited

Luke Whaley[1]

Abstract Where do tendencies to exclude, discriminate, and dominate originate from? Why for many do harmful traits like these appear so characteristic of modern life? How might we move beyond this predicament to foster more sustainable and enriching relationships with one another and with Nature? In this paper, I explore the classic geographic concepts of space, place, and scale and apply them to a consideration of the body and of selfhood. In doing so, I trace out two markedly different 'geographies of the self'. The first 'self' emerges from the basic tenet that space and matter are mutually exclusive, a premise that underpins the dominant episteme of objective rationality. This is the self as selfish, insular, and oppositional. The second 'self' emerges from the basic tenet that matter dynamically includes and is included in space, giving rise to the philosophy of 'natural inclusionality'. The natural inclusional self is hence dynamically distinct but not definitively discrete, a vital inclusion of its natural neighbourhood. I consider some of the implications of these two versions of the self for society, contending that the first promotes a culture of exclusion and the second a culture of belonging. In finishing, I consider questions of method and praxis as they relate to the project of evolving inclusional selves.

Keywords Natural inclusionality · Objective rationality · Culture · Belonging · Exclusion · Neighbourhood

Introduction

The ways in which we come to understand ourselves and others is a contingent phenomenon. Far from there being a single conception of what it is to be human, and what 'types' of human there are, these questions instead find their tentative answer in the details of a particular time and society. Perhaps most famously, Foucault (1978, 1989) demonstrated this for the likes of social categories comprising madness and sexuality. In doing so, he drew attention to the relationship between power and knowledge (see also Foucault 1980). Following Rayner

✉ Luke Whaley
   l.whaley@sheffield.ac.uk

[1] Geography Department, University of Sheffield, Winter Street, Sheffield S10 2TN, UK

(2017), this article argues that in the present day, all prevailing forms of knowledge are founded on a definitive logic that presupposes that space and matter are mutually exclusive, which in its purest form has given rise to the dominant episteme of objective rationality. Moreover, these abstract ways of thinking have had a powerful hold over our understanding of the self, engendering profound forms of psychological, social, and environmental damage. In response, Rayner (2004, 2011a, b, 2017) has developed a new system of knowledge grounded in a radically different philosophy called 'natural inclusionality'.

In this article, I employ the three classic geographical concepts of space, place, and scale and apply them to a consideration of the body and selfhood. The intention is to trace out two ways of perceiving the world and our place in it, one founded on the abstract logic of objective rationality and the other on a natural inclusional understanding of the 'each-in-the-otherness' of space and matter. To this extent, Rayner has done a good deal of the 'underlabouring' for what follows. In utilising geography's key concepts of space, place, and scale, I am not simply looking for hooks to hang my argument on. Instead, I will engage both with key thinkers within human geography, as well as with philosophical and social science traditions and ideas that underpin the discipline. In the case of human geography, these influences are multifarious, and so I focus in particular on phenomenology and on the political and sociological writings of Henri Lefebvre. In doing so, the intention is to bring natural inclusionality into wider engagement with the ideas and critical insights of other thinkers and disciplines.

In charting two markedly different 'geographies of the self', I start by considering modern conceptions of space and what distinguishes them from an inclusional understanding of 'natural space'. I also distinguish between general theories of space and the use of the term to denote instead historically situated social 'spaces'. This consideration of 'Space and Spaces' acts as the centre point around which the proceeding argument revolves. In the next section on 'Place and Body', I consider how different understandings of space in turn influence the treatment of place, and what this infers about the relationship of place to the body. Having developed two radically different understandings of place and body—one of places and bodies as discrete objects and the other of 'body-as-place'—in the section 'Scale and Neighbourhood', I explore their implications for how we understand the self. In the discussion section, these developments are incorporated into a consideration of the far-reaching psychological and social consequences of perceiving ourselves and others from the perspectives of objective rationality and natural inclusionality. The article finishes by reflecting on questions of method and praxis, drawing upon several ideas and insights introduced previously in order to contemplate ways of furthering natural inclusionality as both a research and political project.

Space and Spaces

- I have become convinced that the implicit assumptions we make about space are important and that, maybe, it could be productive to think about space differently (Massey 2005, p. 1)

'Space' has proven to be a central concern for Western thought. During the early modern period, the increasing attention afforded to abstract notions of space in the preceding centuries culminated in the dominant conception of 'absolute space'. This was part of a larger shift toward rationalism, objectivity, and the 'scientific method'. Writing of this shift, Giddens

(1990) notes that 'in premodern societies, space and place largely coincided, since the spatial dimensions of social life are, for most of the population...dominated by 'presence' - by localised activity...Modernity increasingly tears space away from place' (p. 18). This rupturing of space from place was to formalise for a new era of Western history the absolute demarcation between space and matter. For Newton, absolute space as an isomorphic infinitude was a neutral container for matter. This allowed material form to be mapped and measured as mutually exclusive points or discrete objects in a three-dimensional grid system (Belkind 2007).

Yet, Newton's account of space was not the only one. Most notably, Leibniz and others argued against this fixed framework of absolute space. As elucidated in a series of correspondences between Leibniz and Clarke, Newton's representative, the former instead put forward the foundations for a 'relational space'. Here, the nature of space is characterised not as a three-dimensional container but as the relations between things: as the product of the positions of objects vis-à-vis each other (Belkind 2013). Into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and a third conception of space as 'relative' emerges, most prominently through the pioneering work of Einstein. In short, Einstein's theory of relativity ushered in a new model of the relationship between space and time (as 'space-time') and highlighted the irreducible significance of one's frame of reference when it comes to questions of measurement.

Although cursory and simplistic, the above synopsis of three modern conceptions of space helps to situate human geography's relationship with the subject. David Harvey, the influential Marxist geographer, has argued that precisely this triad of absolute, relative, and relational space can and has been employed fruitfully in human geography, where no one conception is necessarily superior to the other (Harvey 1973). Instead, they are available as 'a mix of means to understand events occurring around us and to formulate ways of thinking and theorizing about geographical phenomena and processes' (Harvey 2004, p. 4). For example, one may employ absolute space to analyse configurations of private property; relative space to develop transport maps based not on absolute distance between places but on variables such as cost, time, and energy; and relational space to analyse such things as 'the political role of collective memory in urban processes' (p. 5). In the case of the latter, Harvey notes, 'I cannot box political and collective memories in some absolute space (clearly situate them on a grid or a map) nor can I understand their circulation according to the rules, however sophisticated, of relative space-time. If I ask the question: what does Tiananmen Square or 'Ground Zero' mean, then the only way I can seek an answer is to think in relational terms' (p. 5).

Perhaps because of the variegated place of space in Western thought, it has proven to be a slippery term. Beyond the three models considered thus far, one source of confusion arises from the distinction between general theories of space and the use of the term to denote historically situated social 'spaces'. As a Marxist geographer, Harvey was keenly interested in the relationship between space and capitalism. To this extent, he drew in part on the French Marxist philosopher and sociologist, Henri Lefebvre, whose writings on 'the production of space' (Lefebvre 1991) has had widespread influence both within and beyond human geography. Lefebvre's focus precisely distinguishes between the development of general theories of space, which he incorporated in his thinking but that did not primarily concern him, and the ongoing processes through which different social spaces are produced (including the standardised urban spaces of modern capitalism).

A cornerstone of Lefebvre's approach is that the production of social space always comprises three 'modes' in dialectical relationship: everyday spatial practices ('perceived space'), representations or theories of space ('conceived space'), and spaces of representation

('lived space'). Here, 'representations of space' relates precisely to the sorts of general theories or conceptions of space discussed above. 'Spaces of representation' refers to space 'as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'' (Lefebvre 1991, p. 39). For Lefebvre, this schema comprises a 'trialectics' whereby the three spatial modes are in an ongoing state of mutual reproduction and transformation: a dialectical interplay of perceived-conceived-lived space.

Three interrelated points can be made about this discussion of space and spaces. Firstly, Harvey's proposition to treat absolute, relative, and relational space as a toolbox for investigating and thinking about geographical phenomena sensitises us to the diversity and complexity of the world seen from a spatial perspective. Employing these differing conceptions has for example allowed human geographers to critically and meaningfully analyse all manner of complex social dynamics and to shed light on social and cultural sources of inequality and environmental degradation and destruction. Here, the various conceptions of space are able to tell us something different about such things as structure, context, relationship, and interaction. The point then is that the ways in which we think about space opens up different ways of understanding the world.

Secondly, Lefebvre's 'trialectics' of social space is useful for considering why space matters in a different way. If, as Lefebvre argues, representations of space are in a relationship of mutual reproduction and transformation with both our perceptions of space and lived experience, then these representations do not only open up different ways of analysing the world but also fundamentally influence the reality of our everyday lives. This imparts a socio-political significance to representations of space, given their inclusion within the ongoing process of the production of social space. Lefebvre's sociological framing thus removes any notion that the prevalence of particular conceptions of space can be uncoupled from wider power structures in society.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the point to note is that despite their differences, implicitly or explicitly each 'type' of space considered above—absolute, relative, relational, social—is founded upon a general abstraction of space from matter. This is Rayner's central thesis and the key premise underpinning his philosophy of 'natural inclusionality'. Whilst they differ notably in some respects, all modern theories of space and the forms of social space they in part give rise to are founded on an abstract materialism 'which presumes that tangible substance and intangible space are either mutually exclusive or coextensive' (Rayner 2018, in this issue). Instead, 'natural inclusion' contends that 'space, far from passively surrounding and isolating discrete, massy objects, is a vital, dynamic inclusion within, around and permeating natural form across all scales of organization, allowing diverse possibilities for movement and communication' (Rayner 2004, p. 55). Resultantly, you cannot cut, occupy, or displace space (Rayner 2011b). It is not a tangible 'thing' and yet nor is it nothing—instead it is 'no thing' (Brunton 1988). Whilst apparently simple, this insight appears to unite all other Western conceptions of space for their failings to incorporate it. In the proceeding sections, I shall develop an awareness of some of the far-reaching consequences of this basic premise.

Place and Body

The previous section began by situating several prevailing theories of space within Western philosophical and scientific developments from the early modern period onward. It ended by introducing a radically different, inclusional conception of space based on the premise that

tangible form dynamically includes and is included in a continuum of intangible space. The failure of absolute, relative, and relational conceptions of space to either recognise or incorporate this insight profoundly affects how material bodies, and by extension 'place', have come to be understood. One notable effect has been to reduce both bodies and places to simple, generic, and entirely determined objects or locations. As Casey (1998) writes:

> 'In simple location every material body (including the human body) is considered to exist in strict isolation from every other body. Not just Newton and Gassendi and Descartes but even Locke and Leibniz – despite being primary theorists of the relational view – stand indicted as complicitous in the promulgation of simple location. For Locke and Leibniz alike, once a given location has been determined by a set of relations, no further set of relations needs to be posited – with the result that the location has been rendered simple, despite its relational character…The notion of place, insofar as it survives at all in absolutist or relativist theories of space, also falls prey to simple location' (p. 211).

Lefebvre's three-part spatial model, introduced in the previous section, suggests that modern abstract conceptions that treat space and matter as mutually exclusive will in turn influence the production of social space. Indeed, Lefebvre's own work has demonstrated the relationship between an abstract, rational conception of space, capitalism, and the industrialisation and urbanisation of society (Gregory 1994; Lefebvre 1991). At the same time, Lefebvre's spatial triad also suggests that we ask questions of how this abstract conception of space is informed by the two other spatial modes comprising his schema. Within the mode of 'practical perception', it is instructive to consider the very thing by which perception occurs: the human body itself. Here, Rayner (2018) suggests that the human propensity to abstract and objectify the world may stem in part from 'our binocular eyesight and grasping hands [that] focus our attention on what we can pick out from our surroundings as tangible substance' (in this issue).

Our body's physiology and *modus operandi* for securing sustenance may therefore endow us with a tendency to objectify the world around us. However, in a quite different way, the body has served as a means through which to rescue both itself and place from the totalizing modernist conception of abstract space. That is, whilst modern theories of space simplified and localised both the body and place, the twentieth century also saw them taken up in phenomenological enquiry. A useful point of departure is Husserl, who took issue with abstract scientific thought, denouncing it as a 'garb of ideas…of so-called objectively scientific truths' (Husserl 1970, p. 51) that obscured the concrete reality of the 'lifeworld'. By engaging with the world in a pre-reflective state, phenomenology could instead pass under this garb to reveal something more fundamental about our lived experience. Building on Kant's insights concerning the body's foundational role in orienting space, Husserl incorporated the body into his understanding of the nature of space and place. Later, other phenomenologists, most notably Merleau-Ponty, more systematically developed this corporeal turn.

Among the many features of these phenomenological investigations was a return to the rich particularity of place through the experience of the 'lived body' (as distinct from the 'body-as-object'). In different ways, phenomenologists showed how place could not be without the body, and likewise the body without place (Bullington 2013; Casey 1998; Seamon 2000). In effect, the distinction between the human body and the places it inhabits became less definitive, more enmeshed. Indeed, for Merleau-Ponty (1962), the body affords 'the opportunity to leave behind us, once and for all, the traditional subject-object dichotomy' (p. 174),

where its relationship to place is of 'reciprocal insertion and intertwining of one in the other' (Merleau-Ponty 1968, p. 138). Casey (1998) observes that for Merleau-Ponty, places are therefore regarded 'not as the mere subdivisions of absolute space or as a function of relationships of coexistents but as loci of intimacy and particularity, endowed with porous boundaries and open orientations' (p. 233).

It is here, with a positing of the intimate relationship between body and place mediated by 'porous' boundaries, that phenomenology and inclusionality enter into fruitful dialogue. From an inclusional perspective, the basic tenet that matter dynamically includes and is included in space renders all natural form distinct but not discrete. Notions of discreteness follow only from the 'paradox of completeness' (Rayner 2004) engendered by objective rationality, which gives rise to impermeable 'wholes' whose boundaries necessarily function as barriers that separate absolutely inside from outside. Reflecting on her experience as a geographer required to demarcate places by drawing boundaries around them, Massey (1994) observes that this 'kind of boundary around an area precisely distinguishes between an inside and an outside. It can so easily be yet another way of constructing a counterposition between 'us' and 'them'' (p. 152). Yet, from a *lived* perspective, the definitive logic underpinning this position does not resonate. As Gupta and Ferguson (1992) highlight, for those who inhabit borderlands or regularly cross national boundaries, 'the fiction of cultures as discrete, object-like phenomena occupying discrete spaces becomes implausible' (p. 7).

The phenomenological writings of Bachelard may help to deepen the understanding of place and boundary elaborated upon thus far. In 'The Poetics of Space', Bachelard (1994) employed his 'topographical analysis' to develop a psychological study of 'the house', 'one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories, and dreams of mankind' (p. 6). Within his lucid exposition, of particular interest are Bachelard's phenomenological revelations concerning in-habitation. Expressed through his concept of 'intimate immensity', the rooms in the house and the house in toto, the house and the universe, local and non-local, text and context, place and space, all feed into and inform one another. Bachelard distances himself from the terms 'here' and 'there', which he considers restrictive in their locating of one and other. Instead, by focusing on *in*-habitation, he explores the ways in which 'in' always relates to 'out'. In the case of the house, a porosity exists between its interior and exterior through the presence of doors and windows that facilitate 'an osmosis between intimate and undetermined space' (p. 230). The relational qualities of boundaries as experienced phenomenologically are distinguished from the excluding, 'implicit geometry' of much metaphysical thinking (p. 212). Bachelard quotes Jean Hyppolite, who (echoing Massey above) spoke of 'a first myth of outside and inside' where 'you feel the full significance of outside and inside in alienation, which is founded on these two terms' (p. 212). In contradistinction to the 'lazy certainties of a geometrical intuition' (p. 220), which infers severance between inner and outer, Bachelard instead recognises in boundaries 'the entire cosmos of the Half-open' (p. 222). Boundaries, being porous, make distinct and yet allow for continuation, distinguish form but retain a sense of limitlessness.

With this understanding, the 'space barriers' (Rayner 2017) of objective rationality are transformed into the space-including boundaries of natural inclusionality. Instead of severing, boundaries distinguish, allowing for communication by coupling inner and outer worlds in dynamic relationship. As Heidegger (1971) observed, 'a boundary is not that at which something stops but… is that from which something *begins its presencing*' (p. 152). For natural inclusionality, then, the reinterpretation of boundaries as sources of receptive continuity and dynamic distinction brings body and place into intimate communion. Yet, not all natural

boundaries are alike, instead varying in permeability, deformability, and contiguity. In doing so, they permit the body to dynamically attune to its environment (Rayner 1997). By way of their fluidly variable boundaries, all life forms exist in co-creative, transformative relationship with one another.

Having brought the body back from the domain of independent abstract objects suspended in absolute space, an inclusional awareness, which as we have seen accords with a number phenomenological insights, offers up a new interpretation of the body as a fluid-dynamic inclusion of place. Yet, this intimate relationship, and the very incompleteness of boundaries that essentially allows body and place to (variably) flow into one another, suggests a further conceptual development—that of body-*as*-place. On a biological level, this is quite literally the case, once we stop viewing the world through an anthropocentric lens. Our bodies, for example, are the places wherein an incredible spectrum of microorganisms live. Consider that the number of bacteria in the human body is at least of the same order as the number of human cells (Sender et al. 2016), and that the human gut alone may house on average 1–3 kg of microflora (National Institute of Health 2012). Our body, then, is also context, *is* place. Indeed, the same applies to all natural form. A tree is at the same time a treehouse, home as it is to all manner of birds, insects, and other organisms. Moreover, this dynamic is reciprocated or inverted when what we traditionally conceive of as places also exhibit bodily qualities. Bachelard's house, introduced above, 'acquires the physical and moral energy of a human body' (Bachelard 1994, p. 46). And whilst there is the body's metabolism, those working in urban studies today likewise speak about a city's metabolism (Demaria and Schindler 2016; Kennedy et al. 2007).

The picture that emerges is one of Nature not as a collection of solid objects occupying space, but as the heterogeneous and dynamic nesting of places within places. The bird that nests in the tree is in place, but likewise is a place itself comprising places nested at lower levels of organisation. The tree too is both a place and in place. To this extent, Rayner (2004) observes that 'not only is every 'place' necessarily both a grouping of smaller 'places' and grouped with others in some larger 'place', but the incompleteness of boundaries ensures that there is communicative spatial relationship and the possibility for transformation across all scales' (p. 65).

Scale and Neighbourhood

- I live my life in widening circles
that reach out across the world.
(Rainer Maria Rilke)

Bodies are places in reciprocal relationship or 'dynamic attunement' with their environment, with the places they are always in and which they co-create. This fluid framing of body as and in place raises profound questions for how we understand ourselves. In particular, it leads us to think about our sense of identity and of our notions of selfhood. The last section concluded by drawing attention to the nested nature of place. In this section, I consider further this question of scale. At what scale or scales might we think about selfhood if we do not conceive of identity as contained entirely within the individual? Once we accept the ternary logic of boundaries as pivotal places bringing inner and outer into dynamic communication, what is

the 'outer' with respect to our body and how might it mutually form and inform our sense of self? So far, this question has been hinted at by the discussion of body-as-place, always attuning to the places it moves in and through. Yet, beyond the boundaries of the body, what 'place' informs our sense of self? It would appear we need another concept that helps to distinguish between places in general and of place as it relates to the self in particular. Here again it is useful to consider what phenomenologists have written on this matter.

Despite largely succumbing to the doctrine of place as simple location, Husserl's corporeal investigations lead him to recognise in kinaesthesia the phenomenological 'mode' *par excellence* for the bodily experience of place. He coined the term 'near-sphere' to refer to the locality that is always proximally available—'kinaesthetically realisable'—by the body (Rizzo 2006). As the body moves, so the near-sphere moves with it as the ever-present domain of physical possibility. Husserl distinguished between the near-sphere and the far-sphere as two aspects of what he called the 'core-world'. Whilst the near-sphere is constituted through its accessibility to the body, the far-sphere represents everything beyond (*ibid*). Later, I will return to consider the relevance of the more all-encompassing idea of the core-world for an understanding of self. However, here, it suffices to point to Husserl's use of 'near-sphere' as a way of distinguishing the place of the body (the body-in-place) from the notion of 'place' more generally.

In Husserl's term 'near-sphere' lies a concept that preoccupied Heidegger in much of his later writings. This is the concept of 'nearness', of being near. For Heidegger, nearness constitutes a fundamental aspect of what it means to be in place with others and with other things. However, humans are never simply in place, as locations in absolute space. Rather, they *dwell* in it. From Being and Time onwards, dwelling is the term increasingly employed by Heidegger to capture the distinctive way in which humans (as Da-sein) are in the world: in a fundamental way, human Being *is* dwelling. By positing the significance of both dwelling and nearness for an ontological understanding of place, Heidegger provides nuance, deepening Husserl's notion of the near-sphere. Yet, there is still the need for a place-term that the qualities of dwelling and nearness together bring about. In his essay "Building, Dwelling, Thinking", Heidegger ponders the etymology of words on the themes in this title, noting that 'the neighbour is in Old English the *neahgebur*; *neah*, near, and *gebur*, dweller', and then, in German, 'the Nachbar is the *Nachgebur*, the *Nachgebauer*, the near-dweller, he [sic] who dwells nearby' (Heidegger 1971, p. 145). Through this exploration, Heidegger is drawn ineluctably to the significance of the term 'neighbourhood' for thinking about the relationship between nearness, dwelling, and place (Casey 1998).

In keeping with the argument presented thus far, Heidegger also understands 'things' less as objects and more as places (or locations) that at the same time co-create place. Again in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking", Heidegger (1971) observes that 'gathering or assembly, by an ancient word of our language, is called 'thing'' (p. 151). From this observation stems the realisation that 'things' are themselves 'gatherings', they draw into themselves whilst simultaneously opening outward in the process of creating place or, more specifically, neighbourhood. Using the example of a bridge across a stream, Heidegger writes that 'with the banks, the bridge brings to the stream the one and the other expanse of the landscape lying behind them. It brings stream and bank and land into each other's neighbourhood. The bridge gathers the earth as landscape around the stream' (p. 150).

There are clear parallels between Heidegger's line of enquiry and the ontological claims of Rayner, for whom neighbourhood is also the logical 'place' pertaining to the human body (and indeed all biological organisms). As we have seen, an inclusional awareness of space and

boundaries does not demarcate absolutely the body from its environment, as objective rationality would have it. Whilst remaining distinct, the human body nonetheless dwells in neighbourhood as its natural inclusion. The result is that the self is understood not as an isolated 'whole' or independent 'I' but as an expression of natural neighbourhood. Likewise, in reciprocal relationship, the self is understood to give local expression to natural neighbourhood. The result is to arrive at a radically different conception of 'self *as* neighbourhood'. As Rayner and Jarvilehto (2008) elaborate, with this inclusional conception of self, 'inner world and outer world are understood to be dynamically continuous and co-creative 'places' that are continually innovative and in 'natural communion' with one another – not just somehow materially 'interconnected' - due to their mutual inclusion of and in non-local space' (p. 72).

The discussion so far has sought to develop an understanding of the body and its emplacement in the world. Neighbourhood provides a meaningful way of thinking about this dynamic. In conjunction with an understanding of boundaries as reciprocally coupling inner with outer in dynamic relationship, it also affords a radically different interpretation of self from the one posited by objective rationality. However, in common parlance, 'neighbourhood' denotes a locale distinguished by the relative proximity of things to each other. To this extent, it resembles Husserl's term 'near-sphere' introduced above. Whilst this interpretation is indeed vital for understanding the inflow and outflow of energy between the body and its local environment, there is the danger of failing to recognise the influence of the world beyond, or what Husserl termed the 'far-sphere'. To this extent, Massey's (1994) writing on the local-non-local nature of place proves instructive:

> '[Place] includes relations which stretch beyond - the global as part of what constitutes the local, the outside as part of the inside…And the particularity of any place is, in these terms, constructed not by placing boundaries around it and defining its identity through counter-position to the other which lies beyond, but precisely (in part) through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections to that 'beyond'. Places viewed this way are open and porous' (p. 5).

The notion of neighbourhood as immediate locale is here problematized. Whilst succumbing to the rationalist trap of material 'interconnection' and boundaries as severance, Massey's argument nonetheless requires us to again return to the question of scale, this time in ways that consider what she called 'a global sense of place'. That is, with few exceptions it is the norm these days for local practices to embed within economic systems spanning large geographic distances and scales of organisation. The products we use derive from elsewhere, the materials they are made from and the ideas that inform them elsewhere still. To a greater or lesser degree, we are embedded in commodity chains that span the globe. As we move through the world, our local neighbourhood reveals a myriad of influences with distant origins. Yet, it is not only the economic that must be subjected to this critique. Our social, political, and cultural realities are similarly complex. In the process of navigating our everyday lives, we draw upon the rules and resources available to us (Giddens 1984), many of which relate not primarily to the 'material' but to socially sanctioned signs and meaning. Douglas (1986) used the term 'leakage of meaning' to capture this dynamic. Here, 'meaning in the form of legitimized discourses, arrangements, symbolic authority and values, leaks or is borrowed from one domain to another' (Cleaver and de Koning 2015, p. 6).

The previous section observed in Bachelard's imaginational concept of 'intimate immensity' a similarly interpenetrating dynamic of the local and non-local. Indeed, Heidegger's

(1971) 'nearness', discussed above, must not be taken as relating to 'mere distance, mere intervals of intervening space' (p. 153). Nearness is not quantifiable; instead, it has to do with the presence of things, and with 'presencing'. Heidegger offers an example. By thinking of 'the old bridge in Heidelberg…From this spot right here, we are there at the bridge…we may even be much nearer to that bridge and to what it makes room for than someone who uses it daily as an indifferent river crossing' (p. 154). And so, the intimacy of dwelling in each other's neighbourhood is not only about the relative proximity of places and things to each other, although in some senses this is of course important. In the case of Bachelard and Heidegger, it is also about their significance, about the ontological bearing they have on us and each other, which may not coincide with their relative proximity in absolute space. In the case of Massey, it is about where they have come from and where they are going; it is neighbourhood as local-non-local process.

(Which) Self and (What) Society

The preceding sections traced out two distinctly different logics. On the one hand, I considered the dominant episteme of objective rationality and related forms of abstract materialism and intellectualism. On the other, I considered Rayner's philosophy of 'natural inclusionality'. In this section, I reflect on some of the far-reaching psychological and social implications of these two logics. In doing so, I revisit and integrate key points from the preceding sections on space, place, and scale and their relationship to two markedly different 'geographies of the self'.

Objective Rationality and a Culture of Exclusion

Objective rationality is founded on the supposition that space and matter can be separated. This dislocation leads to the treatment of bodies as discrete massy objects isolated from space. In this picture, boundaries infer absolute definition, severing inside from outside. Space is conceived of as nothing—an absence of presence—that nonetheless separates one material form from another whilst being subjectable to measurement (as distance, depth, interval, etc.). The logical conclusion of these postulates is a definitive worldview that treats self and other as mutually exclusive and where identity originates from entirely within the individual.

Cut off from context, this understanding of self perceives all so-called *successes* and *failures* as likewise being attributable to the individual alone. We interact and exchange with one another and are connected in networks, but the individual remains paramount: we 'look out for number 1'. In the process, our neighbours become either competitors to keep up with or allies to keep on side. We perceive in others potential threat or challenge. No more is this so than for those considered 'outsiders'. Writing on their personal experiences as people of colour in the UK, Shukla and colleagues (2017) reflect on the ever-present feeling of being unwanted threats or exceptions unless they manage to become exceptional 'by winning an Olympic gold or a national baking competition'.

In a sense, for objective rationality, 'space' becomes the ultimate 'other' or 'outsider'. We come to fear the uncertainty and possibility inherent in the limitless receptivity of space (and the limitlessness of death), seeking comfort in self-serving behaviour that includes material practices of consumption and accumulation. However, the short-term gratification and security we feel materialism and individualism provides us with belies their pathological consequences. Eckersley (2006), for example, points to how cultural forms of materialism and individualism

are not properly recognised for their harmful effects on population health and well-being in Western societies. The author cites evidence that links these 'cultural factors', 'via psychosocial pathways, to psychological well-being, and well-being, through behavioural and physiological pathways, to physical health' (p. 257).

The definitive logic that objective rationality engenders leads us to believe that one thing can never be another thing. That is, once we attribute to any natural form absolute independent singleness or 'wholeness', we both say what it is and what it is not and cannot be. In the words of Oscar Wilde, 'to define is to limit'. Out of this definitive logic emerges an oppositional worldview founded on difference and discrimination rather than complementarity and inclusion. Without acknowledging the receptive influence of omnipresent space everywhere and the dynamic interfacing of space-including boundaries, what results is a culture characterised by a binary set of mutually exclusive terms that ramify throughout wider society. Within the context of this article, we may postulate 'matter' and 'space' as the foundational dualism, where the spatial is opposed to the material as its absence, as a lack. From this pairing, a whole series of lopsided dualisms may be derived. Among the long list, it is worth noting male-female, man-woman, white-black, objective-subjective, reason-emotion, rational-irrational, nature-nurture, culture-nature, winner-loser, me-you, us-them, and self-other.

In each of the dualisms just listed, the first term is the primary term; it is what Massey (1994) called the 'privileged signifier in a distinction of the type A/not-A' (p. 6). This sets up a superior-inferior dynamic, whereby the dominant term does just that: it dominates. At the same time, the abstract objectivism accompanying the assumption that matter can be defined independently from spatial context both reinforces this relationship and provides the means for enacting it. The history of geography serves as a case in point. For example, during what Hobsbawm (1989) has coined the Age of Empire (1875–1914) geography proved an indispensable handmaiden to the colonial project. In particular, cartography, with its abstract representations of independent objects in absolute flat space, allowed the main capitalist powers to divide up the world into spheres of influence, and to 'treat natural and social phenomena as things, subject to manipulation, management, and exploitation' (Harvey 1984, p. 4). The same objectifying 'capture and control' logic has paved the way for all manner of imperial, exploitative, and extractive endeavours beyond the colonial. In the first instance, perhaps, is the relationship between humans and the environment. As Scott (1998) writes on Nature and space:

> 'Certain forms of knowledge and control require a narrowing of vision. The great advantage of such tunnel vision is that it brings into sharp focus certain limited aspects of an otherwise far more complex and unwieldy reality. This very simplification, in turn, makes the phenomenon at the centre of the field of vision more legible and hence more susceptible to careful measurement and calculation. Combined with similar observations, an overall, aggregate, synoptic view of a selective reality is achieved, making possible a high degree of schematic knowledge, control, and manipulation' (p. 11).

Yet, the effects of objective rationality must not be viewed only at the level of 'Nature' or of whole societies or social groups. Rather, what is of interest is the ways in which the pernicious power dynamic it gives rise to filters into and is reproduced through the most intimate spheres of everyday life; what Foucault (1991) called the 'capillary functioning of power'. Patriarchy, racism, classism, ageism, and other toxic social structures emerge from the practices of people in everything from the bedroom to the boardroom and beyond. On the internet, practices that derive from the cold objectivity of definitive forms of logic find their extreme expression in the

pornography industry, abuse videos, and all manner of hate speech that has nonetheless incorporated itself into the mainstream.

It may be that the individuals whose behaviour and thought characterises the dominant or 'oppressor' groups in society[1] feel 'something is missing'. However, the psychological and social risk involved in 'opening up' to their emotions, to forms of compassion and love that can loosen the hard-line boundaries of abstract materialism, necessarily leaves them more vulnerable. Instead of recognising this vulnerability as a vital inclusion of what it means to be human, a dualistic logic instead denigrates it as a weakness that must be denied, suppressed, or eradicated. The corollary to this is that the oppressor, unable to 'open up', may be more inclined to 'close down' or even 'double down' instead. What is more, instead of aspiring to a different dynamic altogether, oppressed groups may oftentimes seek instead to emulate their oppressors, as Fanon (1970) has discussed for race and Freire (1996) for class.

Natural Inclusion and a Culture of Belonging

By revisiting space, place, and scale from a natural inclusional perspective, a different awareness emerges that holds out the hope of loosening the hard-line logic of objective rationality. Rather than regarding space as nothing, as an absence of presence that is nonetheless subjectable to quantitative measurement as if it were a tangible substance, the natural space of inclusionality is instead regarded as a non-resistive 'presence of absence' everywhere. Inverting objective rationality's conspicuous negation of space allows us to recognise its vital influence as the receptive, universal 'bathing fluid' that brings form to matter and makes movement possible. Space and matter, no longer separate from each other (as our binocular eyesight and myopic abstract logics would have it), are vital and dynamic inclusions: receptive space in responsive matter somewhere in receptive space everywhere.

With this shift, consistent with lived experience and modern quantum physics, boundaries are transformed from the discrete barriers of objective rationality to places of dynamic interfacing that distinguish (but do not define) one form from another whilst allowing for communication within, between, and beyond them. The dualisms of the previous section—man-woman, white-black, self-other, etc.—are transformed as a binary logic of rational exclusion gives way to the ternary logic of natural inclusion. We instead understand these terms as receptive-responsive couplings whose 'each-in-the-otherness' is reciprocally mediated by their boundaries. A notable consequence of this transformation is the resolution of the Cartesian dualism between mind and matter, admitting both body and emotions back into an awareness of what it means to be human. From this position, the project of understanding the world is achieved not by the rational mind but through a combination of 'contemplative reasoning and feeling' (Rayner 2018, in this issue).

From the above postulates, a fluid-dynamic worldview emerges that allows us to reinterpret radically our notion of selfhood. Most fundamentally, a natural inclusional awareness brings with it a shift from the self as exclusion or exception(al), to the self as inclusion and belonging. Diversity and difference are understood not as threats or challenges but as vital sources of sustenance and enrichment. We enter into, sustain, and sometimes end dynamic, evolving relationships with one another (not one and other) throughout the creative course of our open-ended lives. When we die, our body's energy scatters whilst simultaneously gathering elsewhere as all manner of lifeforms (initially bacteria and fungi) take up and convert this energy

---

[1] Of which 'middle-aged white men' is the social grouping *par excellence*.

in endless relay. We are always part of the ongoing natural flow of energy somewhere in receptive spatial context everywhere. We are, then, 'gatherings' in the sense of dynamically bounded places in the process of becoming.

The softening of the hard-line boundaries of objective rationality alerts us to the body's dynamic two-way relationship not just with other bodies but also with the environment more generally. As previous sections have demonstrated, this awareness is congruent with the insights of thinkers writing in the phenomenological tradition. For Merleau-Ponty (1968), for example, body and place form a chiasm or 'intertwining'. In developing an inclusional understanding of all material bodies not as objects but as unique places that are also always in place, I drew upon both Rayner's and Heidegger's notion of neighbourhood. Self-identity is understood to be an expression of natural neighbourhood, and vice versa. This reconceptualization transforms the inward-facing self of objective rationality, opening it out into a natural inclusional awareness of 'self as neighbourhood'. Our identity is at once unique and shared. As Lingis (1991) writes: 'One is born with forces that one did not contrive. One lives by giving form to these forces. The forms one picks up from others' (p. 119). Indeed, by recognising selfhood as neighbourhood, we are at the same time drawn back into an awareness of the each-in-the-otherness of self and neighbour. This position is enshrined in the teachings of many if not all of the major world religions, and captured by the declaration to 'love thy neighbour as thyself'.

In the section Scale and Neighbourhood, attention was given to what Massey (1994) called a 'global sense of place'. From this perspective all places—be it, for example, our body or our body's natural neighbourhood—include relations that stretch well beyond the local. As was noted, today we are embedded in global systems of economic production and consumption. Furthermore, our identities are formed within social and political arrangements and through cultural systems of meaning that have diffuse and oftentimes distant origins. These realisations challenge any notion of our natural neighbourhood as purely local (or as what Husserl termed the 'near-sphere'—see above). The self's neighbourhood is not therefore a locale or proximity measurable by physical distance alone. Our natural neighbourhoods instead form and shift dynamically in relation to what Heidegger termed 'nearness', understood as 'meaningful presence'. With this, the foundations are laid for the emergence of a local-non-local ethics consistent with the natural inclusional desire to foster sustainable and enriching relationships with others. Adapting Massey's phrase, a natural inclusional ethics of this sort might have at its heart a 'global sense of love'.

Furthering Natural Inclusionality: Remarks on Method and Praxis

In concluding, I wish to make two brief remarks concerning the challenge of furthering natural inclusionality. I do so because it appears evident that despite the power of its promise to engender more sustainable and loving ways of life, the fundamental nature of natural inclusionality's key premises presents it with a veritable mountain to climb if it is to gain traction in the modern world. The influence of objective rationality and other definitive logics on many of today's modern cultures runs deep. There is a need, therefore, to develop projects that move beyond skilfully articulating natural inclusionality to instead practicing it both within research and in wider society. I am not here making judgements about the extent to which effort has or has not already been expended in this respect; I only offer suggestions from my own perspective as an included outsider 'looking in'. In so doing, I hope to tie together some of the loose ends of threads introduced earlier in this article.

My first remark concerns questions of method. Here, it is clear that popularising natural inclusional forms of research is challenged by the danger of employing methods that instead reinforce abstract, objective, and rationalistic tendencies. However, in the social sciences, this challenge has long been considered and from a spectrum of viewpoints. As a result, much has been written about it. Methods that facilitate situated thinking-feeling forms of research have gained increasing attention, at least in some circles. Within the context of this article, the affinity that natural inclusionality appears to share with phenomenology points to the latter as a potentially useful way of developing natural inclusional forms of research method. As Relph (1970) has observed, 'the most characteristic core of phenomenology is its method' (p. 193). Here, there is not the space to enter into discussion as to exactly what constitutes the phenomenological method (although see for example Eberle 2014; Moustakas 1994; Pickles 1985). Instead, I make the general point that, in keeping with Rayner's philosophy of natural inclusionality, and as noted earlier, a phenomenological approach affords the opportunity to move beyond the 'garb of ideas…of so-called objectively scientific truths' (Husserl 1970, p. 51).

My second remark concerns praxis. In making it, I refer back to Lefebvre's 'trialectics' of space introduced in the section Space and Spaces. Lefebvre's claim was that social space is reproduced and transformed through the interplay of spatial practices and perceptions, representations of space, and spaces of representation (or 'lived space'). This dynamic alerts us to the non-neutral nature of representations of space, given their inclusion within the ongoing process of the production of social space. By implication, a natural inclusional conception of space must contend not only with other rationalistic conceptions of space but also with the forms of spatial practices, perceptions, and lived spaces that 'combine' to produce modern forms of social space (in what may often be a self-reinforcing dynamic). In doing so, natural inclusionality is brought into relationship with present day political economic projects, including forms of capitalism and 'neoliberalism', as well as the resistance movements they have spawned. Lefebvre's spatial triad therefore suggests both ways in which power and practice obstruct the uptake of a natural inclusional awareness of space, as well as pointing to where and when to focus efforts.

In looking ahead, Lefebvre's spatial triad has been developed by others and in ways that are suggestive of the practical and political possibilities of creating what we might call 'natural inclusional spaces'. In particular, Soja (1996) has built on Lefebvre's schema, proposing the term 'thirdspace' to denote those 'lived spaces' that emerge by incorporating and resolving forms of knowledge that divide the world into binary oppositions. Similarly, Bhabha (1994) has employed the term 'third space' as a way of moving beyond the legitimising narratives of cultural domination and toward creative forms of cultural identity 'produced on the boundaries *in-between* forms of difference'. For Bhaba, third space allows us to 'elude the politics of polarity and emerge as others of ourselves' (p. 39). We may therefore posit that in the notion of thirdspace (or third space), there exists the practical embodiment of natural inclusionality's *ternary* logic, and one possibility toward which future efforts may be oriented. With this in mind, I finish with Soja's (1996) description of the revolutionary potential of thirdspace. In doing so, I invite the reader to consider how it resonates with the understanding of natural inclusionality developed in this article:

> 'Thirdspace…is rooted in…a recombinatorial and radically open perspective. In what I will call a critical strategy of 'thirding-as-Othering', I try to open up our spatial imaginaries to ways of thinking and acting politically that respond to all binarisms, to any attempt to combine thought and political action to only two alternatives, by

interjecting an-Other set of choices. In this critical thirding, the original binary choice is not dismissed entirely but is subjected to a creative process of *restructuring* that draws selectively and strategically from the two opposing categories to open new alternatives' (p. 5).

References

Bachelard, G. (1994). *The poetics of space*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Belkind, O. (2007). Newton's conceptual argument for absolute space. *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science, 21*(3), 271–293.

Belkind, O. (2013). Leibniz and Newton on space. *Foundations of Science, 18*(3), 467–497.

Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.

Brunton, P. (1988). *Through knowledge to wisdom: relativity, philosophy, and mind*. New York: Larson Publicaions.

Bullington, J. (2013). The expression of the psychosomatic body from a phenomenological perspective (Springer B.). Dordrecht: Springer.

Casey, E. S. (1998). *The fate of place: a philosophical history*. California: University of California Press.

Cleaver, F., & de Koning, J. (2015). Furthering critical institutionalism. *International Journal of the Commons, 9*(1), 1–18.

Demaria, F., & Schindler, S. (2016). Contesting urban metabolism: struggles over waste-to-energy in Delhi, India. *Antipode, 48*(2), 293–313.

Douglas, M. (1986). *How institutions think*. New York: Syracuse University Press.

Eberle, T. S. (2014). Phenomenology as a research method. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 184–202). London: Sage Publications Ltd..

Eckersley, R. (2006). Is modern Western culture a health hazard ? *International Journal of Epidemiology, 35*(1), 252–258.

Fanon, F. (1970). *Black skin, white masks*. London: Paladin.

Foucault, M. (1978). *A history of sexuality: volume 1*. New York: Random House, Inc..

Foucault, M. (1980). In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1989). *Madness and civilization*. Oxon: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1991). *Disciplin and punish: the birth of the prison*. London: Penguin Books.

Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. St Ives: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc..

Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society*. California: University of California Press.

Giddens, A. (1990). *The consequences of modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishing.

Gregory, D. (1994). *Geographical imaginations*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Gupta, A., & Ferguson, J. (1992). Beyond "culture": space, identity, and the politics of difference. *Cultural Anthropology, 7*(1), 6–23.

Harvey, D. (1973). *Social justice and the city*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Harvey, D. (1984). On the history and present conditions of geography: an historical manifesto. *The Professional Geographer, 36*(1), 1–11.

Harvey, D. (2004). Space as a key word. *Paper for Marx and Philosophy Conference*, (May), 1–16. Retrieved from http://www.inter-accions.org/sites/default/files/space-as-key-word-david-harvey.pdf

Heidegger, M. (1971). *Poetry, language, thought*. New York: Harper Collins.

Hobsbawm, E. J. (1989). *The age of empire, 1875-1914. History of civilization*. New York: Vintage Books.

Husserl, E. (1970). *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology: an introduction to phenomenological philosophy*. Evanston: Northwest University Press.

Kennedy, C., Cuddihy, J., & Engel-Yan, J. (2007). The changing metabolism of cities. *Journal of Industrial Ecology, 11*(2).

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Lingis, A. (1991). We mortals. *PhilosophyToday, 35*(2), 119–126.

Massey, D. (1994). *Space, place, and gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Massey, D. (2005). *For space*. London: Sage Publications Ltd..

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *The phenomenology of perception*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968). *The visible and the invisible*. Evanston: Northwest University Press.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. California: Sage Publications Inc..

National Institute of Health. (2012). NIH Human Microbiome Project defines normal bacterial makeup of the body. Retrieved from https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-human-microbiome-project-defines-normal-bacterial-makeup-body

Pickles, J. (1985). *Phenomenology, science, and geography: spatiality and the human sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rayner, A. (1997). *Degrees of freedom: living in dynamic boundaries*. London: Imperial College Press.

Rayner, A. (2004). Inclusionality and the role of place, space and dynamic boundaries in evolutionary processes. *Philosophica, 73*(1), 51–70.

Rayner, A. (2011a). Natural inclusion: how to evolve good neighbourhood. Retrieved from http://www.inclusional-research.org/introtexts/naturalinclusion.pdf

Rayner, A. (2011b). Space cannot be cut: why self-identity naturally includes neighbourhood. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science, 45*(2), 161–184.

Rayner, A. (2017). The origin of life patterns in the natural inclusion of space in flux. Springer.

Rayner, A. (2018). The vitality of the intangible: crossing the threshold between abstract materialism and natural reality. *Human Arenas, 1*(1). https://doi.org/10.1007/s42087-018-0003-0

Rayner, A., & Jarvilehto, T. (2008). From dichotomy to inclusionality: a transformational understanding of organism-environment relationships and the evolution of human consciousness. *Journal of Tranfigural Mathematics, 1*(2), 67–82.

Relph, E. (1970). An inquiry into the relations between phenomenology and geography. *The Canadian Geographer, 14*(3), 193–201.

Rizzo, G. (2006). *Philosophical exercises. Inquiries into phenomenology and philosophy of language*. Milan: Milan Press.

Scott, J. C. (1998). *Seeing like a state: how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. London: Yale University Press.

Seamon, D. (2000). *Phenomenology, place, environment, and architecture: a review of the literature*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum publishers.

Sender, R., Fuchs, S., & Milo, R. (2016). Revised estimates for the number of human and bacteria cells in the body. *PLoS Biology, 14*(8), 1–14.

Shukla, N. (Ed.). (2017). *The good immigrant*. London: Unbound.

Soja, E. (1996). *Thirdspace: journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places*. Cambridge: Blackwell.