Articles

Geography, Humanism, and Global Concern[1]

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Abstract. This paper frames a perspective on the history of Western humanism, its role in shaping geographical inquiry through the centuries, and its essential message for the future practice of the discipline. Humanism is defined as the liberation cry of humanity, voiced at times and places where the integrity of life or thought was threatened or compromised, or when fresh horizons beckoned. The modes whereby the humanist spirit has been negotiated within the changing contexts of Western history reveal a cyclically-recurring drama which is here captured in the mythopoetic characters of Phoenix, Faust, and Narcissus. It is for its potentially emancipatory role that humanism merits attention today as Western scholars seek better communication with colleagues from other cultures in a common concern about global environmental problems.

Key Words: humanism, Gaia, history of ideas, geography.

WAVES of concern about global environmental crises and frequently apocalyptic warnings of pending doom sweep through the Western world during these latter years of the twentieth century. Geographers, whose espoused domain of inquiry embraces mankind's terrestrial home, face many a poignant paradox. On the intellectual horizon flash images of a Gaia,[2] so vastly complex and self-regenerating, that its survival might not be threatened even if humans, latecomers in the biosphere, were to exit the drama. Anti-humanist voices, too, proclaim the death of the human subject, the apogée of Enlightenment dreams, and post-Modernist texts jostle with other texts in a labyrinthine maze of self-reflecting mirrors. Thus while "all the king's horses and all the king's men" in Western science and politics press on with Promethean zeal to correct, control and ameliorate humanity's impact on the earth, the humanist spirit, often with Narcissist longing, sings the song of the absence, seeking to re-member forgotten features of human nature and to rediscover wiser ways of dwelling.

Words such as "geography" and "humanism" have a chameleon ring, revealing as much about their definers and their worlds as they do about any perennial truths. Despite the universalist aspirations of humanist lore, none of it can be fully appreciated until it is set within its own temporal, geographic, and cultural setting. Proclamations about the essence of humanness, be it *animal rationale, homo sapiens* or *demens, zoon politikon, homo faber,* or *homo ludens,* each claiming generality transcending cultures, history, and environments, reveal quite as much about the authors of such propositions as they do about human nature.[3] Humanism can scarcely be regarded as an autonomous field of knowledge inquiry. Rather it is a stance on life and world shared by people of diverse walks of life, including geographers.

Humanists down the centuries have explored the nature of humanity, its passions and powers, while geographers have studied the earth where humans, among many other life forms, make a terrestrial home. For each facet of humanness—rationality or irrationality, faith, emotion, artistic genius or political prowess—

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there is a geography. For each geographical interpretation of the earth there are implicit assumptions about the nature of humanness. The common ground is vast indeed. Functional specialization among knowledge fields from the mid-nineteenth century on led to situations where "geography" and "humanities" became distinct and often separate institutions. What stirs excitement today is mutual rediscovery, by individuals from diverse disciplines within the Babel Tower of academia, of common goals and challenges for the future of mankind and earth.

It is in mytho-poetic rather than in literal vein that this paper attempts to discern the essential spirit of Western humanism and its potential message for geographers concerned about Gaia in the late twentieth century. Humanism is defined as the liberation cry (*cri-du-coeur*) of humanity, voiced at times and places where the integrity of life or thought was in need of affirmation. The modes whereby this emancipatory élan has negotiated itself within the changing contexts of Western history appear to follow a cyclically recurring drama in life and thought, symbolized here in the classical figures of Phoenix, Faust, and Narcissus. First, it introduces this trilogy of themes and sketches some broad contours of the recent turn toward humanism within geography. Then it traces the unfolding of this drama within four mainstream expressions of humanism, viz., hypotheses about the nature of humanness (*humanitas*), humanist modes of knowing, the humanities, and concern for the human condition or humanitarianism from Graeco-Roman times through the turn of the twentieth century. Finally, it sketches some general challenges facing humanism in the twentieth century and their resonance particularly within the field of geography. A conclusion seeks to evaluate their implications for the geographer's potential contribution toward elucidating global issues of humanity and its terrestrial home today.

Phoenix-Faust-Narcissus

Phoenix offers a symbol for those emancipatory moments in Western history when new life emerges from the ashes, with prospects for a fresh start. In the careers of individuals, as well as in the course of nations, cultural groups, and disciplines, one could identify at least two kinds of emancipatory cry, one seeking freedom **from** oppression, oblivion, or constraining horizons, the other seeking freedom **to** soar toward new heights of understanding, being, and becoming (Fig. 1). Humanism could thus be regarded as the liberation song of humanity, voiced whenever its integrity is threatened, or horizons dimmed. At times when Academy, Church, State, Syndicate, or Proletariat has tried to exercise monopoly power over thought and/or life, a humanist protest has appeared. Socrates told stories (parables) to baffle the Sophist *virtuosi* and their solipsistic utterances. Pico della Mirandola challenged the ecclesiastical dogmatism of the 15th century, paving the way for Giambattista Vico's brilliant interpretations of cultural history two centuries later. Von Herder, Schiller, Blake, Wordsworth and the eighteenth century *literati* inveighed against the rationalistic claims of the Enlightenment, heralding those masterpieces of emancipatory thought associated with Goethe; Kierkegaard, Nietsche and Dostoyevski in the nineteenth century, Saint-Exupéry, Camus, and Sartre in the twentieth, all pleaded attention for dimensions of humanness which were forgotten or ignored in Western philosophy and science.

Odes to human freedom have certainly not always been evoked by feelings of protest. The sweetest songs in the humanist's repertoire are those which have come gratuitously: novel ideas in art, literature, science, music, spirituality or politics, have often been expressions of global concern, generous outpourings of a passion for knowledge, life and beauty. Bruno, Cervantes, Goethe, Shelley, Teilhard, Neruda, and many others, have come with messages that were ahead of their times. Characteristically, they were not immediately appreciated; often they had to become martyrs before their song was heard. Phoenix rises gratuitously, from the ashes of former dreams; if the climate is just not right for receiving this new impulse, it may have to face death through fire before it may reappear.

The key point with Phoenix therefore is its emancipatory message. Its empassioned cry implies far more than pleas for intellectual freedom or social reform. Humanist movements in Western history have sought to reaffirm moral, aesthetic, and emotional dimensions of humanness. At times they addressed themselves to those dimensions which were repressed by one tyranny or another; at times to evoke a nostalgia for those dimensions which were for-

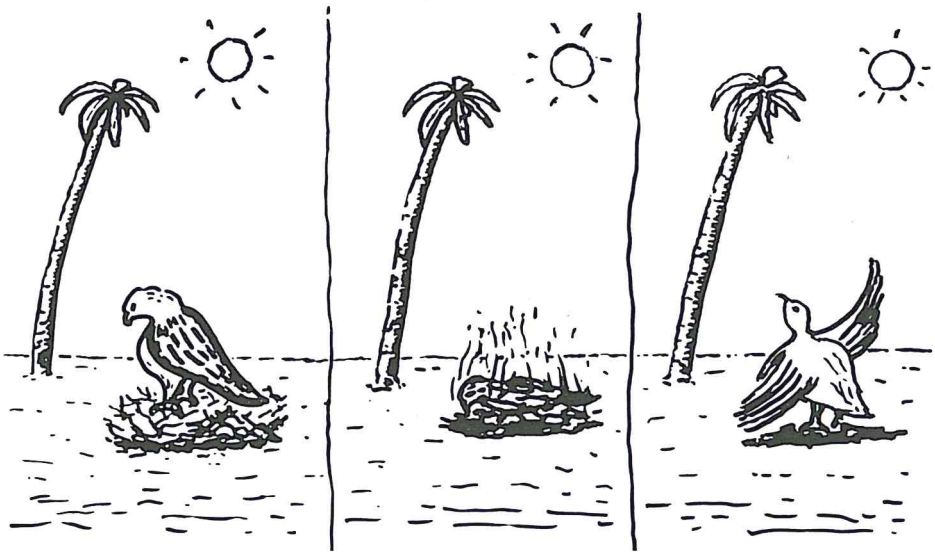

Figure 1. Phoenix, *cri-du-coeur* of humanity, repeatedly reborn to beckon new horizons for life and thought.

gotten or silent, at other times to beckon toward horizons hitherto unexplored. Success in capturing an audience, however, often yielded new orthodoxies and structures, based on the ardent desire to affirm that which had been previously ignored.

So enters the second symbolic figure: **Faust**. It is surely characteristic of Western ways that once a fresh idea appears, energies are directed toward the building of structures, institutions, and legal guarantees for their autonomous existence and identity (Fig. 2). Goethe's *Faust* (Part Two especially) stands as central symbol for this phase: *eines Menschen Geist in seinem hohen Streben* (A mortal soul in high endeavor). For the pioneering spirit, it is often the idea itself and the new vistas for thought and life which it heralds that are most precious. Details of how to communicate it, or render it relevant to ongoing societal interests, may be simply tedious. Phoenix therefore welcomes a helping hand on getting "the show on the road,"as it were, and it is often in that bond which grows among architects of new movements that the emancipatory *élan* is most tangibly felt (cf. Berman 1982). And when the idea has "made it," its legal and institutional bases socially accepted, then some kind of metamorphosis occurs. Pioneering spirits recede and a later generation directs its energies quite as much to the maintenance and reproduction of structures as to the sustenance of the initial emancipatory ideal. But Faust continues to build—for humanity's sake, of course—for otherwise, if ever he were to pause and gaze on his achievement, *verweile doch! du bist so schön!* (Stay the moment! How sweet thou art!), Mephistopheles is there ready to steal his soul.[4] Eventually tensions arise between the initial emancipatory ethos (Phoenix) and the Faustian structures which sought to house and further it.

As individuals or groups begin to wonder about these tensions and apparent contradictions between spirit and letter, dream and reality, of their everyday practices, a reflective mood sets in which could be symbolized by **Narcissus**, pilgrim to the muses of Helicon (Fig. 3). One wonders how it came to be, for instance, that enthusiastically-laid plans and innovative ideas or movements became unwieldy structures and self-perpetuating bureaucracies. In this mood, several possibilities are conceivable. One points toward the vulgar image of narcissism and the propensity to interpret situations through the lenses of one's own cherished self-image. Another points toward a better understanding of history and an appreciation of the drama of events and their context. Ultimately such un-

Figure 2. Faust, a "mortal soul in high endeavour," never ceasing to construct for the progress of humanity.

derstanding could lead to a clearing-ground (*die Lichtung*) and the prospect of emancipation from the encrustations of one's Faustian period. History suggests, in fact, that one may have to pass through this potentially painful death to former certainties in order to allow the new Phoenix to emerge.

Such cycles of human experience have undoubtedly occurred throughout Western history, yet there are threads of linear sequence of discernable in the story (Fig. 4). None of these cycles ever found humanity or earth in the same condition as before. Down the centuries there have been certain persistent melodies, unresolved paradoxes, and typical values which have survived in the twentieth century. Both the cyclical and the linear account could help us to place our late twentieth-century challenges within a broader historical frame. The risk of attempting such a broad-ranging sketch, of course, is that of glossing over important nuances within and between different periods of Western history: a mytho-poetic tale should not be judged in literal terms!

It is in the twilight of this late twentieth-century reflective turn that this account is essayed. Like any narrative, it reflects the narrator's central concern, viz., Western humanity's need to redefine its role and identity and to discern more appropriate ways of cooperation with fellow humans in healing a badly wounded planet. It seeks lessons from history which could elucidate the present challenge facing the scholarly world generally rather than guidelines for circumscribing the proper domain of humanistic geography. For today one is acutely aware of those ways in which academic disciplines have tended to don the ideological garb of their sponsors and audiences and how their internal folkways mirror changing societal trends within those nation states which called them into existence. As Western geographers increasingly recognize the challenge of opening up a respectful dialogue with colleagues in other civilizations, and have finally demonstrated commitment to a global research endeavor on mankind's terrestrial home, some critical reflection on our own traditions is surely in order.

Humanistic Geography and Humanism

It is only a few decades since the term "humanistic geography" has been widely used in geographic literature, and its connotations are many (Tuan 1976; Ley 1981, 1983; Rowntree 1986). What may be subsumed under this rubric varies from one country or language tradition to another, and in some cases, the terms "social," "cultural," and "humanistic" are virtually

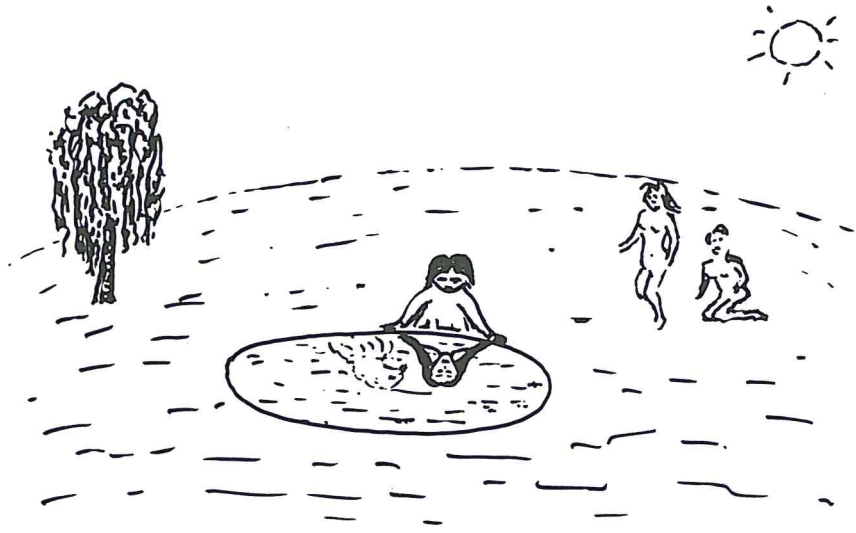

Figure 3. Narcissus, bewildered by the conflicts between ideals and reality, reflecting . . . .

interchangeable (Racine 1977, 1981; Relph 1981; Claval 1984; Ballasteros 1984; Daniels 1985; Rowntree 1988). For some it has been a kind of mission to restore human subjectivity to a field where scientific objectivism has been so dominant (Ley and Samuels 1978; Mackenzie 1986). Some have emphasized human attitudes and values, others cultural patrimony; some have focused on the aesthetics of landscape and architecture, others on the emotional significance of place in human identity (Bowden and Lowenthal 1975; Meinig 1976; Seamon and Mugerauer 1985; Pocock 1981, 1988; Rowntree 1986, 1988). A substantial number, too, have advocated human compassion and engagement in the resolution of social or environmental problems—reminders about twentieth century pilgrims of peace, and early Cassandra voices on environmental destruction (Thomas 1956; Buchanan 1968; Bunge 1973; Guelke 1985; Santos 1975; White 1985). Global horizons beckon in the widespread concern about humanity and earth, the shocking record of environmental destruction and radical transformations in culture and politics (Johnston and Taylor 1986; Brunn and Yanarella 1987). From whatsoever ideological stance it has emerged, the case for humanism has usually been made with the conviction that there must be more to human geography than the *danse macabre* of materialistically-motivated robots which, in the opinion of many, was staged by the postwar Reformation (Ley and Samuels 1978; Daniels 1985; Folch-Serra 1989).

Some have looked askance at this humanistic turn as a kind of amnesia, a turning away from problems and retreat into *esoterica,* or simply a critique of the status quo (Entrikin 1976; N. Smith 1979). An earlier generation suspected that humanistic concern might eventually undermine the identity of the discipline, taking the Ge- out of Geography (Wooldridge and East 1951; Leighly 1983). Today's misgivings reflect not only the doctrinaire anti-humanism of structuralism and other philosophical currents, but also the internal fragmentation of geography itself. The institutional separation of its physical and human branches, bemoaned today by advocates of environmental sensitivity, was itself the product of an emancipatory project launched by leaders of the Interwar period. One sought freedom from the parental bonds of geology on the one hand and from history on the other. Fleeing, too, from ghosts of environmental determinism, one sought a substantive focus on *space* rather than *environment,* methodological procedures inspired by positivism, and livelier interaction with other sciences. After World War II especially, human geography would proclaim itself as a social science; history and the humanities were to become the favored pursuits of only a few. Yet it

Figure 4. Phoenix-Faust-Narcissus: cyclical refrain in the Western story.

was from the rediscovery of writers such as Marsh, Vidal de la Blache, Braudel, Wright, and Dardel, and the heightened awareness of cultural differences in environmental perception, that much of the enthusiasm for a "humanistic" movement emerged in the 1960s and 1970s (Lowenthal 1961; Tuan 1976; Relph 1974; Harris 1978).

By the early 1980s, much of the zest and optimism which accompanied this humanistic turn had faded. "Realists" found the prose of an earlier generation to be quaintly idealistic. Many, too, disillusioned about all the contradictions and tragedies of the Western legacy, condemned humanism as arch culprit, wellspring of all *hubris* and vaunting ambition, a myth overdue for dismissal (Ehrenfeld 1978; Relph 1981). One prop for this judgment was the conventional practice of identifying the origin of Western humanism with the early fifteenth century Renaissance in Italy: a movement which also bore the seeds of Modernism. Humanism thus earned a "guilt by association" for the Promethean excesses of Western humanity and hence shared its condemnation. Materialist manifesto vented spleen on the perennial plots of capitalism to produce and reproduce those power structures which held sway in the global economy (N. Smith 1979; Harvey 1984; Santos 1975; MacLaughlin 1986). Post-Modernist scenarios of texts reproducing texts in a labyrinth of self-reflecting mirrors would preclude any assumptions about human intentionality or meaning in lived reality (Jameson 1983; Said 1983; Kearney 1988). A sense of imprisonment in one's own cultural world, of claustrophobia and nihilism, of "hitting one's head against the ceiling of language" (Olsson 1979; Dematteis 1985) characterized some of the critical thought within geography during the 1980s. One became aware of the many ways in which the entire intellectual heritage of the West had mirrored and been mirrored in the peculiar social history of Western humanity.

Even over this relatively short stretch of disciplinary history, one could discern some resonance of this cyclical movement in life and thought. The 1960s, in retrospect, seem to have been a Phoenix time for many: new life seemed to be bubbling all around. By decade's end, and throughout the 1970s, one witnessed a Faustian will to create new subdisciplines, societies, and specialty groups. The late 1970s and early 1980s revealed many contradictions between dream and reality, *ethos* and structure; a critically reflective mood set in, some became nostalgic for the past, some reaffirmed the status quo, and some even began to envision prospects for a new dawn (Rowntree 1988; Ley 1989).[5]

At least four distinct strands of inquiry could be discerned in the Western humanist tradition. Since classical times, there have been proclamations and debates about **the nature of humanness** (humanitas): diverse and recurrent themes about individuality and sociality, freedom and responsibility, rationality and hedonism, conservatism and creativity down the centuries. There have been claims, too, about **humanist modes of knowing**, which oppose scientific reductionism, seek to elucidate rather than to explain, and emphasize the subjectivity of consciousness and the intersubjective nature of scholarly discourse. There is also the tradition of **the humanities**, fields of learning deemed appropriate for the cultivation of the arts, classical literature, and the nurturing of civic virtue. Finally, there has been an enduring concern about the human condition, e.g., in **humanitarianism**, which has sought to encourage social responsibility and liberal politics. In historical perspective, of course, these different strains intermingle, but each points to a distinct set of scholarly practices whose value and relevance has varied over time. To assess the potential lessons to be gleaned from this historical survey, it seems feasible to orient inquiry toward these practices which are evident in the career journeys of twentieth-century geographers (Fig. 5).[6] The (ontological) questions broached in reflections on the nature of reality, for example, illustrate *poesis,* the art of evoking critical thought and discovery. The (epistemological) questions entertained in discussions of humanist modes of knowing illustrate *logos,* the human quest for general knowledge. *Paideia,* or liberal education, has traditionally been the function of the humanities, and *ergon* (appropriate conduct and action) has been a central goal of humanitarianism and concern about the human condition. One of the biggest challenges facing scholars today is to rediscover the bonds among them and for geographers to reorchestrate *poesis, paideia, logos,* and *ergon* in the everyday practice of the discipline.

In all four practices, the cyclical movements of Phoenix, Faust, and Narcissus could surely be discerned, but in none more dramatically

than *ergon,* the realm of action and concern about the human condition. Throughout the many and varied movements of humanistic inspiration, it is possible to differentiate on the one hand an *ethos,* or fundamental spirit, and a *structure* which sought to incarnate that on the other. Socratic seminars became an Academy, catacomb communities became a Vatican; networks of mutual aid among workers and peasants turned into Syndicated Unions and Cooperatives; folk who felt a common sense of ethnic identity became geographically-circumscribed Nation-States. Malaise over the tensions between spirit and letter, ethos and structure, has generated reflective moments, archival research, and the quest for clarifying one's identity. From such reflection, some have emerged with reaffirmations of the status quo, having interpreted history in terms of the preferred aspects of the present. Some have turned parricidal, having found all sorts of grounds on which to condemn the ancestors. Others, unafraid of shedding the harness of routine-operational ways, have played key roles in paving the way for some new Phoenix. History affords ample evidence of mankind's incredible resilience and its courage to try again.

Mainstream Expressions of Western Humanism

Mediterranean Musings

It is to the Mediterranean world, and to Greek and Roman Classics, that humanists have repeatedly turned for insights and exemplars for their key propositions. Not only have Mediterranean models of *humanitas* impressed the scholarly horizons of virtually all European humanists, but also the Mediterranean world itself, in all its geo-diversity and vicissitudes of cultural history, has exercised enormous appeal to those geographers who have today become rebaptized as pioneers of humanist perspectives for the field. Alexander von Humboldt, Carl Ritter, George Perkins Marsh, Vidal de la Blache, Ellen Churchill Semple, Fernand Braudel, Alfred Philippson, Maximilien Sorre, John Kirtland Wright, and Clarence Glacken all drew examples from the Mediterranean world.

Civilizations, Bertrand Russell claimed, can best be understood in terms of their central pre-occupations. While China sought to master collective life, he suggests, and India endeavored to master consciousness, the West has displayed an enduring desire to master nature (Nakamura 1980). The conquest of nature has indeed been an enduring theme in Western science, and the Judaeo-Christian tradition has been singled out for special criticism and satire in this respect (L. White 1967; Leiss 1974; see, however, Doughty 1981; Kay 1989). Global pronouncements of this kind can unlock major differences in cultural interpretations of human nature, but they can also conceal the enormous internal differences and tensions which have existed within each civilization (See Kirk and Raven 1962; Glacken 1967). While speculating on the nature of creation, Classical Greek scholars insisted on seeking insight into the connections, ambiguities, and contradictions apparent in the interactions between mind, nature, and human society. Three enduring melodies, as Glacken has so eloquently documented, that of a designed earth, of the influence of the environment on man, and of man as a modifier of the environment, are themes permeating Western thought on humanity and environment; all trace their origins to Classical Greece (Glacken 1967).

The legacy of Greek thought is multi-faceted as it is enduring. In pre-Socratic times, it is alleged, ontological speculations embraced humanity and earth in an integrated way. *Physis* (the whole of physical and living reality) and *Nous* (mind, reason) were inseparable in the world views of Heraclitus and Empedocles (Kirk and Raven 1962). It is to Plato that fundamental distinctions, and eventually separations, between mind and matter, thought and being, metaphysics and physics, are generally ascribed. To his school also is credited the glorification of intellect among human qualities, and the enthronement of humankind as superior to all other life forms on the earth. In that famous Socratic tradition, there were essential differences between Aristotelian and Platonic world views. Was humanity to be considered as a special element in Creation which could steer and choose its own becoming (Aristotle), or was it the guardian or shepherd of life (Plato)? Was there a Supreme Artisan's plan for the wise workings of nature, or was the world a theater of becoming, nature bearing within itself the seeds of on-going creation? Through centuries of Judaeo-Christian and Arab philosophy and

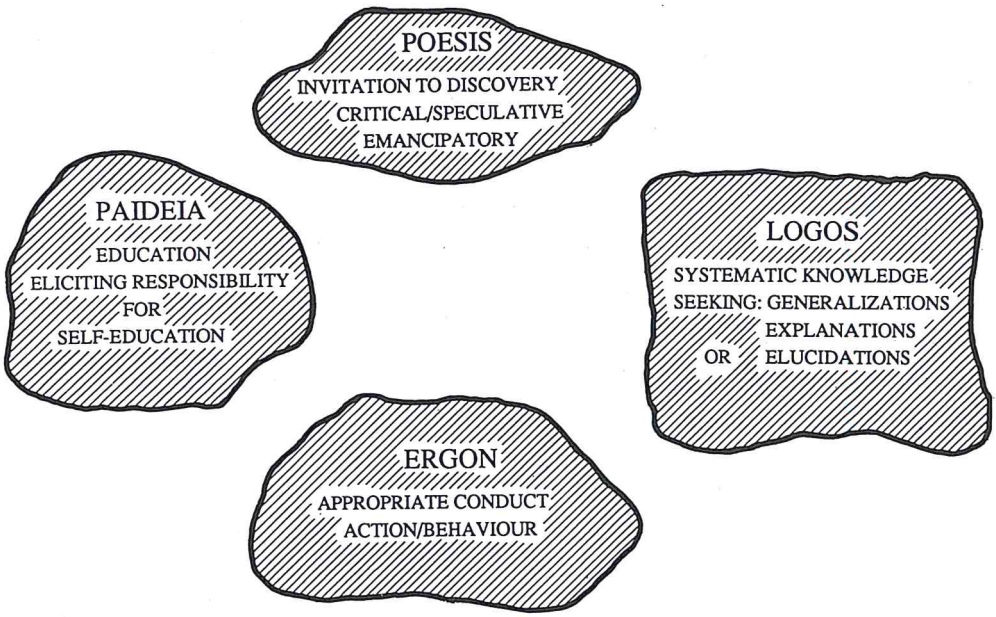

Figure 5. Classical constellations of academic practice. *Poesis*: exploration, discovery, and critical reflection; *Paideia*: education and learning; *Logos*: systematic analytical inquiry; *Ergon*: practical applications of knowledge to life and conduct.

geography, propositions about human nature still echoed basic tenets and tensions inherent in Greek classical thought.

It is to Roman times that many ascribe the origin of the term "humanism." For Cicero, *humanus,* as opposed to *barbarus,* denoted the civilized Roman citizen, erudite in literature and culture, and ready to assume a responsible role in civic life.[7] *Humanitas,* for better for worse, became somehow identified with *Romanitas,* a civility won via Greek (especially late Hellenic) education or *paideia* (Heidegger 1947). In stark contrast to this view was the slogan of Terentius: "*Homo sum: nihil humani a me alienum puto*" ("I am a man, I regard nothing that is human as alien to me"), an appeal to universalism which Saint Augustine, among others, made central in his definition of humanism. Throughout virtually all subsequent flowerings of humanism in Europe, right up to the eighteenth century, one finds, on the one hand, a tendency to define humanity in terms which would differentiate it from inhumanity or barbarism and, on the other hand, appeals to the *uomo universale,* who could become a civilized participant in universal humanity. Characteristic, too, has been the proposal that the achievement of *humanitas* would require a *studium humanitatis,* a schooling in philosophy, literature, rhetoric, and the arts, preferably based on Greek models. Humanists, no doubt, have proclaimed that education involved more than indoctrination; many have favored *Bildung* (*paideia*), which encouraged a sense of responsibility for self-development and humane behavior. Some have placed their highest bids on *poesis,* the art of evoking curiosity, critical reflection, and new invention. As for action and models for social life and behavior (*ergon*), debates about the nature of human communities, democracy, civil rights and moral freedom, too, have consistently found exemplars in Greek and Roman ancestry. And on humanity's modes of inhabiting the earth, Rome has also bequeathed the tension between "Arcadian" (e.g., Virgil's *Eclogues*) and "Imperialist" (e.g., Seneca or Cicero's *Letters*) models of landscape, a tension which has been amply documented in recent writings about humanity and nature (Pepper 1984).

Few Mediterranean legacies could rival that of Arab scholars throughout Europe's so-called Dark Ages. While Platonic ideas dominated intellectual life along the northern coasts and peninsulas, Aristotelian ideas would bear rich fruit along its southern and eastern shores. Christendom may have slumbered within the framework of a Jerusalem-centered world view, but Arab sailors, pilgrims, traders, and cartographers filled in details on a vastly more extensive *oecumene*. Had it not been for the fertile meeting ground of Arab, Jewish, and Christian in Cordoba and other Moorish towns up to the twelfth century, geography might never have been part of the Renaissance Phoenix. Yet for many a Western humanist, the Graeco-Roman classics have been regarded as far more significant than those of the Moor.

Not all brands of humanism have insisted on a return to the Classics. The Romantics of early nineteenth-century Germany and New England found a universe for humanist inspiration in their immediate surroundings (Bunksé 1981; Kohak 1984). Marxist humanism and Sartre's existentialism found no need to ground their appeal in classical sources. Christian humanism set its horizons on the human soul's quest for eternal salvation, the Greeks figuring as one among many edifying cultures who articulated virtue, compassion, and the love of truth. Particularly in the literature about humanist approaches to knowledge (*logos*), the love-hate relationship to Greek paragons reveals itself: Plato and Aristotle especially being successively enthroned and impeached, down through the centuries.

Humanitas

Literary historians traditionally identify the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries A.D. and the Florentine Academy as more proximate origin of modern humanism in the West. Art historians might single out Petrarch or Fra Angelico, explorers Henry the Navigator, others Dante or Leonardo da Vinci as paragons of humanism, but few could question the Phoenix mood of this period, rising from the ashes of medieval times, heralding an age of adventure (de Santillana 1956). Janus-like the Renaissance stands on the divide between boundary and gate, echoing the prototypes of Medieval security and, at the same time, projecting visions of the human individual as explorer of new powers and unlimited horizons. Here was a world when the emancipatory cry of humanity was about reform in the practice of religion, a reform to be justified via a return to the origins in the Sermon on the Mount as well as via a rediscovery of the Greek Classics. Pico della Mirandola in 1486 published *An Oration on the Dignity of Man,* a document which proclaimed human nature to be ontologically free and responsible.

The daring deeds of Renaissance scholars in realms of art and architecture, music and painting, architecture and philosophy each heralded a Phoenix cry about some quality of humanness which was forgotten, oppressed, or simply silent. By no means least important was the rediscovery of Arab scholarship with its wondrous fruits in medical, cartographic, and mathematical genius. For *homo ludens,* the delightful, albeit fleeting, pleasures of Arcadian Springtime; for *homo faber* the marvels of technology, the plastic arts, and freemasonry; for *zoon politikon,* the egotistic ventures of princes and potentates symbolized in magnificent villae. For all of humankind, the image of the human body as microcosm of the universe was an insight which could steer research ingenuity toward connections between alchemy and medicine, and between geography and astrology (Glacken 1967; Mills 1982). Ptolemy's *Almageste,* recovered only in the thirteenth century by Dominican monks, would fire the imaginations of Copernicus, Galileo and others to construe the world as a "perfect work of art," and to reposition the earth itself in cosmographic and astronomical contexts. For *homo geographicus,* the fifteenth century marks one of the most striking moments of creative discovery (Broc 1986). Few topics of joint fascination could rival the *mappae mundi* as windows onto human cultural diversity beyond the known world of Christendom. Between 1409, when Jacobus Angelus translated Ptolemy's *Geographia,* and 1570, with Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum,* the world images of Europeans had been radically altered. Spurred on by fabulous tales and gross misconceptions about the size and shape of the earth and exotic cultures, horizons of space and distance were pushed back by the daring voyages of Portuguese, Italian, French, Spanish, and Dutch explorers. The

finite and circumscribed world of Medieval orthodoxy gave way to vast expanses for exploration, conquest or conversion (Fig. 6).

Within the span of one and a half centuries, a dramatic range of luminaries made their mark. Leonardo da Vinci would pioneer on the frontiers between art, technology, and philosophy; Michelangelo and Fra Angelico would bequeath treasures of painting and sculpture. Prospects for easier communication among scholars were opened up via the invention of print, which would eventually liberate discourse into vernaculars other than Latin. A Reformation in the Christian Church promised deliverance from Vatican hegemony. The rediscovery and dissemination of classical works were certainly due to the expansion of curiosity about the world among Italian humanists. And it was surely from these texts, with all their misconceptions about world geography, that the voyages of Columbus and Cartier drew their inspiration (Broc 1986). But the further awakening of geographical curiosity may well have been due to the mobility of people and ideas which subsequent voyages, commerce, and navigation occasioned and the awakening of horizons for *homo faber, homo viator,* and *homo oeconomicus* (Braudel 1966; Broc 1986). Travel accounts were quickly translated into other vernaculars, awakening geographical curiosities among people from various walks of life, people who, unlike academic humanists, were not too versed in Latin (Matos 1960).

The Renaissance was indeed a time of *poesis,* beckoning toward wider horizons for cosmology, cartography and ethnology; it also witnessed remarkable developments in landscape design and capitalist enterprise (Cosgrove 1984). In all respects, it must have presented subversive challenges for the Faustian structures of the day. New knowledge about *terrae incognitae* would threaten the orthodoxy and undermine the power of established authorities, most especially ecclesiastical ones. Indeed during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, it was to questions of *homo religiosus* that the emancipatory appeals of humanism would be addressed: the primary concern was that of reconciling man and God, man and world, a world whose contours could no longer be accepted as finite. The theme song throughout was that human persons could work out this reconciliation through their own activities, as responsible and creative agents within a potentially expanding universe.

Anti-humanist protest would also come from ecclesiastical sources. Much has been made of the horrors of Inquisition in Spain and Italy, but it is also true that some of the most explicit condemnations of humanism came from the leaders of church reformation, Luther and Calvin, who flatly denounced the liberation cry of Erasmus.[8] The crucial stumbling block, it seems, was the doctrine of original sin, something anathema to the humanist (de Santillana 1956). One can appreciate therefore why the ardent pioneers of scientific humanism of the eighteenth century, such as d'Alembert, de Lamettrie and Diderot, felt so strongly about the need to free human minds from clerical oppression. In this case, as in so many previous and subsequent ones, the Oppressor's Mantle became discernible in the *credo* and structures which followed. The *Encyclopédie* appeared as a kind of alternative catechism, a compendium of facts and faith about the true knowledge of reality. Later Auguste Comte (1798–1857), would announce his prospectus for positive science and a new society based on castes of specially trained experts, in a scenario not that different from those ecclesiastical ones deemed inimical to humanity.

As Renaissance yielded to Enlightenment, and Phoenix yielded to Faust, the foci of scholarly concern became more narrowly specialized, as the arena for debate about humanity and its terrestrial home moved from Mediterranean to Northern lands (Fig. 6). As previous generations had argued about the human soul's quest for eternal salvation, post-Renaissance debates would focus on rationality, on the intellectual faculties of *homo sapiens.* In late Renaissance times, too, other human qualities would be extolled, albeit not in Aristotelian or metaphysical terms. Francis Bacon (1560–1626) would emphasize *homo faber* and lay the foundations for experimental science and engineering. Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1672) drew attention particularly to *zoon politikon,* sowing seeds for a revolutionary change in traditional beliefs about civil rights and responsibilities. But the torch of progress, and hence new compelling definitions of humanity and nature, would be borne by the Galilean spirit of scientific inquiry, based on testable hypotheses rather than on traditional dogma. It would lead directly to the

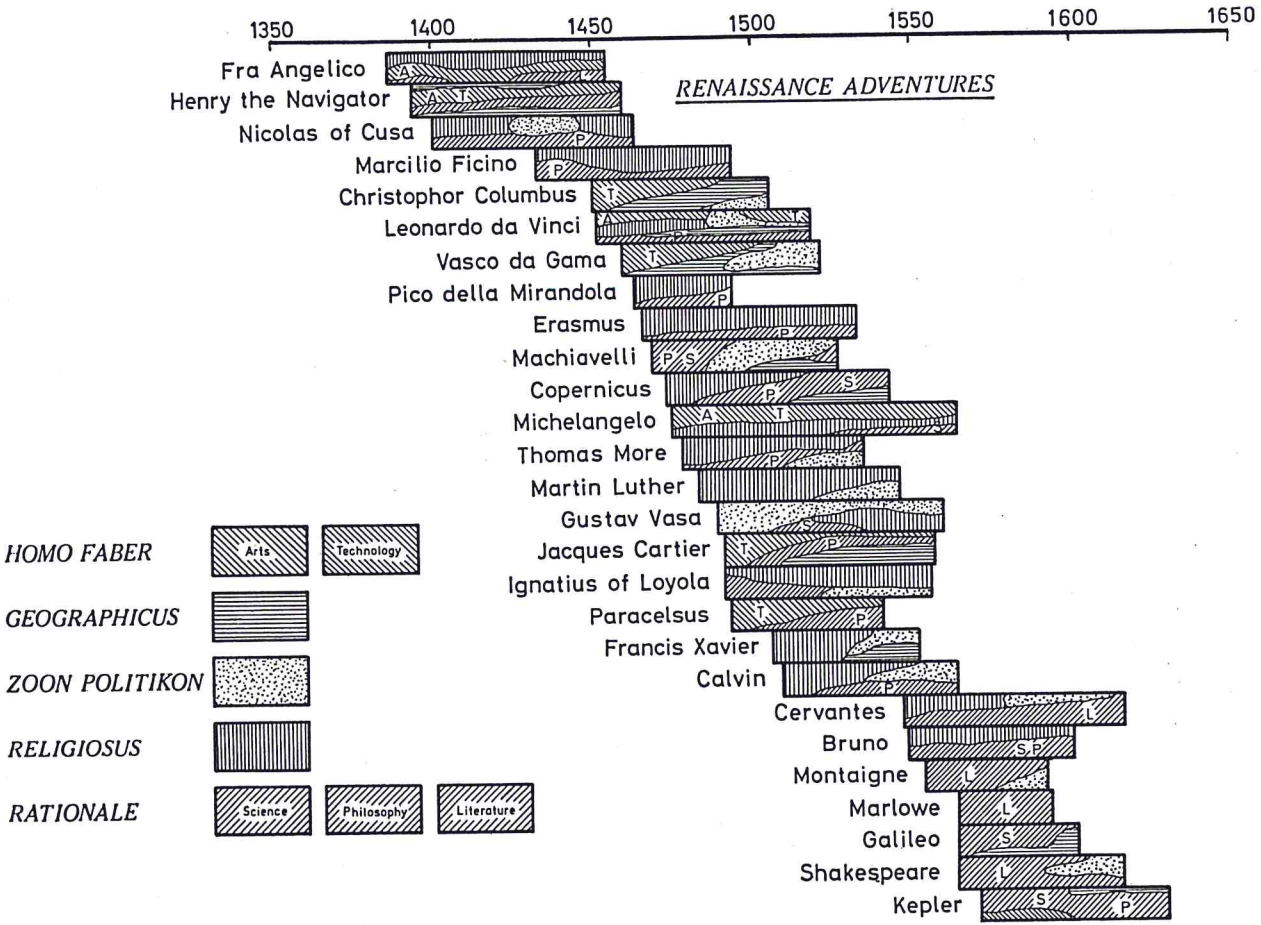

Figure 6. Renaissance adventures. Emancipatory moment for qualities of *humanitas* hitherto shadowed, e.g., emergence of the creative artisan, explorer, and active participant in political, religious, and intellectual life. Note the pluralistic interest of early Phoenix voices, the growing specialization of Faustian constructions and their critics, and the re-emergence of pluralism in the "twilight longings" of Narcissus before the dawn of a new Phoenix.

triumphs of Cartesian and Newtonian science from the seventeenth century on (Koyré 1957).

At the evening of Renaissance times, Narcissus could claim an audience. Montaigne (1553–92) would satirize cultural myopia and the anthropocentrism evident in Western attitudes toward nature (Montaigne I : 31; de Santillana 1956). Marlowe, contemporary of Galileo, sounded an ironic note about the hazards facing *Doctor Faustus* who "takes to himself the wings of an eagle and . . . breaks the circle . . . overreaches . . . achieves all those things which magicians have dreamed of, and eventually finds himself alone in a world which he has not created" (Marlowe 1604). "'Tis all in peeces," John Donne would wail in 1616, "all cohaerence gone."

Proclamations about human nature by European writers, from Renaissance times on, revealed a Janus-like stance on freedom and creativity which was to mark the full adventure of Modern times (Kearney 1988). Occidental beliefs—Socratic, Judaeo-Christian, Latin and Anglo-Saxon—would bend to accommodate, and often applaud, the fundamentally Promethean myth of conquest: mankind as superior to other life forms on the earth, with a mission to dominate or shepherd it; mankind as maker of tools and technology to overcome the barriers of distance or disease; mankind as responsible for choices between good and evil. Foremost among human faculties was reason. From the Enlightenment period on, ontological questions would yield to epistemological ones: "what" and "wherefore" would yield to "how," "when," and "where" of humanity and its terrestrial home.

Humanist Modes of Knowing

The dawn of Enlightenment heralded fresh prospects indeed for human reason and life. Réné Descartes's *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am) was at once a statement about human nature and about human knowledge. Already in the seventeenth century, this credo was questioned, and since then this proclamation has been a primary target of humanist critique. Giambattista Vico (1668–1744) proposed an interesting alternative approach to science (Vico (1744) 1948; Kunze 1984). Cartesian rationality, he argued, could not really account for human ingenuity as expressed historically in the commonsense language and behavior of diverse cultures. Nor could it explain human judgment in moral affairs (*prudentia*). It also implied that the human faculties of imagination, fantasy, intuition, were somehow "non-rational," and therefore inadmissable in the conduct of science. The Cartesian approach thus, in Vico's view, made it virtually impossible to understand history (Vico 1948). That kind of cognitive clarity sought by Descartes was, in Vico's view, something that could only belong to the Creator with respect to his own creations. As man had not created nature, he could never know it with certainty. He could only know history, which was his own creation. "Philosophers have tried to arrive at knowledge through the realm of nature . . . and they have neglected to reflect on the world of nations, or the historical world, which was created by man" (Nicolini and Croce 1911–41, vol. 4, par. 331).

Humanist modes of knowing, in Vico's approach, should capture especially the inventive quality of humans, that is, the ability to discern connections and relationships among dissimilar things. To this ingenious faculty, one should look for insight into metaphorical thought which, for Vico, could unlock the secrets of human culture and history (Nicolini and Croce 1911–41, vol. I, par. 183; Mills 1982; Kunze 1984). Here was a line of thought which would yield a rich harvest in the works of von Herder and later Michelet, and indeed afford one major source of inspiration to twentieth-century *géographie humaine* in France. What was being affirmed here, *inter alia,* was the principle that modes of knowing inevitably imply assumptions about the nature of being.

Less sanguine images of human nature were also projected in the Anglo world of the eighteenth century. Theologians and moralists harangued about mankind's perennially mixed motives, self-deception, and irrationality. Reminiscent of Juvenal and Plautus of Roman times, the theme of *homo hominis lupi* (man as wolf to man) permeated the prose and poetry of the day. The idea that instinct might be a better guide than reason, e.g., Oliver Goldsmith's oft-cited *Deus est anima brutorum* (the divine spark in the spirit of animals), was a theme which would later inspire naturalists and pragmatists in North America. Individual man, faced with the artificialities of "culture" and the complex interplay of passion, emotion, and reason within himself, sought refuge in universals like a

Creator God or universal "nature." In the Creator's grand design, Alexander Pope suggested, there was provision for a potentially creative outcome if harmful things were bounced off one another (Pope 1734, Ep. II).

From a geographic vantage point, the relevant issue was how such models of humanity might elucidate diverse forms of collective living and the politics of terrestrial homemaking. What evidence could be discerned from the *sensus communis* among people from various nomadic, sedentary or commercial livelihoods? Buffon's *Histoire naturelle* (1749–1804) documented the dependency of livelihood and social organization on environmental conditions; through this he made a strong case for monarchy. But in Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois* (1748), for all its environmental determinism, there was again an echo of Pope's recipe for the management of mankind's warring passions. Add this to the doctrines found in the writings of Polybius, Machiavelli, and Jean Bodin, and one had some practical recommendations for the would-be rulers of nations: useful outcomes could emerge from balancing harmful things with one another. Ultimately, here was a "humanist" theory not altogether irreconcilable with the cutting-edge "scientific" theory of the day concerning nature and the universe. As Lovejoy, Warntz and others have suggested, the American Constitution (1787) expressed a view of human nature and political life which reflected the balancing of forces analogous to Newtonian physics (Lovejoy 1961; Warntz 1964). The teaching of geography in Colonial colleges during the seventeenth century reflected such a mechanistic *Zeitgeist*. Newton's *Principia,* amply illustrated with Varenius's "general geography," provided the basic text for that required course on geography and astronomy popularly announced as "The Uses of the Globes" (Newton 1687). Many of the architects of the 1787 Constitution had already benefitted from education in such curricula (Warntz 1964).

In the wake of American and French Revolutions, the *Wealth of Nations* (1776), and the "discovery" of lands and peoples hitherto unknown to Europeans, the focus of speculation about human nature passed over to the realm of the social. Optimistic revolutionary visions of a better world and the progress of humanity emerged from the writings and deeds of scientific humanists (de Dainville 1940; de Lubac 1947). Yet critical (ontological) issues remained: was sociality something innately given among humans, or was it something to be taught or learned? Were there universal traits to the *zoon politikon,* or were all observable traits simply a product of socialization? Were humans naturally disposed toward those virtues extolled in classical humanism—compassion, generosity, good will toward fellow humans—or were they naturally disposed toward competition, conflict, and preying on fellows? Adam Smith surely was unequivocal on this: the Industrial Revolution would be grounded on profit-seeking individualism. The American Constitution would affirm the Enlightenment credo that the common good could be guaranteed through a well-constructed political machinery.

In Europe there were misgivings about such a credo. Voltaire's *Candide* elegantly satirized the Enlightenment dream about rationality in human affairs. From the mechanical certainties and all-embracing explanatory power of Newtonian science, and perhaps more emphatically, from the "dark Satanic mills," Romantic writers would seek to rescue "human nature." As pre-Renaissance scholars had sought emancipation from the well-structured, stable, and closed worlds of medieval times, so too would humanist voices of Romanticism seek to liberate humanity from the all-embracing mechanical certainties of Enlightenment. Schiller, Blake, Milton, Keats, Dryden and Pope would seek, via satire or grand tragedy, to sing of humanity's irrational qualities, its passions and desires, its moral and aesthetic senses, and the contradictions between word and action. Nature, too, was far too mysterious to be scrutinized by physical science; it was, in Schelling's words, "the sacred and primary force," a "great chain of being" (Lovejoy 1936). Goethe (1750–1832), personifying the spirit of this age, bequeathed *Faust,* who pledged to unravel the mysteries of cosmic harmony (Goethe 1949).

For those many geographers whose energies for a century or so had been spent on basic compilations of information and the perfection of mapping techniques, new frontiers for rational and elegant renderings of the earth's surface were certainly afforded by Cartesian geometry and Newtonian mechanics. Many too would hearken to the optimistic promises of eighteenth-century *Encyclopédisme* and the prospects of improving the human condition through societal applications of scientific ra-

tionality (de Dainville 1940). Like Pope Alexander IV, who in 1494 drew the Tordecellas line to separate the territories of Spanish and Portuguese in the New World, Immanuel Kant in the early 1800s would define the legitimate territories of intellectual curiosity for particular fields. Geographers were to focus on space, the outer sense; to historians (and to humanists) would be assigned the inner sense of time, emotion, and human experience.

It was still in Kantian spirit, yet transcending the letter of his epistemological law, that geography's two great pioneers, Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) and Carl Ritter (1779–1859) made their decisive contributions to the discipline. Far from armchair speculation about human nature or worries about boundaries separating science and humanities, von Humboldt's *Cosmos* remains the unrivaled model for a geography imbued with humanist spirit down to our own day (von Humboldt 1845–62; Bunksé 1981). Together with Carl Ritter (1779–1859), the other acclaimed father of modern geography, von Humboldt moved geography beyond the routine-operational compiling of information, classification and mapping of earth features. The earth and its panorama of diversified landscapes mirrored the drama of civilization and biosphere. In their actual writings, of course, the old distinctions between Platonic and Aristotelian ontology would reappear: Ritter's *Erdkunde* (1815), reading the earth's landscapes as script of a Divine plan for humanity (Ritter 1862), von Humboldt finding in the Cosmos itself that "sacred force . . . animated by the breath of life" (Humboldt 1849, I, 3). While attuned to the general quest for *Ganzheiten* characterizing their day, both would defy the Kantian boundaries for geography as mere mapmaking: time, process, causal connections were all included in their mirrors on reality. Fascinating for von Humboldt were the diverse ways in which humans had internalized aspects of nature and landscape. As pioneering voice in the exploration of environmental perceptions (Bunksé 1981), he would actually reverse the Kantian orthodoxy about geography as simply the description of the earth's surface.

In literary and philosophical circles meanwhile, the nineteenth century would witness a Narcissus mood: queries not only about the contrast of "scientific" and "humanist" modes of knowing, but also a search for those elements in thought and life which had been forgotten or ignored. Schopenhauer (1788–1860) once proclaimed "The World is my Idea," emphasizing the fundamental will to power underlying Western approaches to truth. Goethe, Hölderlin, and disciples of Hegel protested not only against the perceived threat of Cartesian scientism, but also against limits on mankind's historical consciousness. Nietzsche (1844–1900) sought to reintroduce questions of emotion and passion, volition and aesthetics to the discourse about human nature. Appealing, in characteristically humanist fashion, to classical sources, *Zarathustra* and *Birth of Tragedy* proclaim the essential tensions between Apollonian and Dionysian elements in Greek drama. As Yin to Yang in Oriental lore, so also, he claimed, was the reciprocity of Dionysos and Apollo in Greek literary creation (de Lubac 1944). Socrates was blamed for the suppression or death of Dionysos: that rational tradition which came to dominate the West via Apollonian styles of thought and life. Kierkegaard (1813–55), albeit a faithful admirer of Socrates, lent weight to Nietzsche's struggle against Hegelian conceptions of universal humanity and the determinism of historical process within which the individual was swept along as passive automaton, bereft of heart, soul, or personhood. For Nietzsche, as for Kierkegaard, as well as for Heidegger, Sartre, and many a twentieth-century existentialist, the challenge was to evoke awareness of emotional, volitional, aesthetic and passionate aspects of human nature, human knowledge, and human action.

Scientists, too, of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Comte, Darwin, Marx, and Freud, dismissing or transcending those antipathies between "humanist" and "scientific" modes of knowing, would press ahead with Faustian zeal on avenues of inquiry which would eventually shed new light on humanity as terrestrial species. Each of these bore a potentially emancipatory message in a world now less tolerant of dogma or ethnocentric conceptions pronounced by national, ecclesiastical, or academic authorities of the day. Darwin beckoned imaginations toward a conception of humans as participants in the general drama of natural evolution, as phenomena to be explored via scientific observations rather than via culturally-engrained beliefs. For Marx the issue was not one of defining man but of liberating him (sic); a *species being,* working out its own liberation in the concrete circum-

stances of life, labor, and history. Freud would later unmask the mysterious depths of the human psyche, opening up realms of human nature hitherto unexplored, and again promising a universal definition of human nature. Traditional notions about freedom, about the human individual as author of thought and action, all were challenged.

For nineteenth century geographers, such ontological queries about "human nature" or epistemological queries about modes of knowing, scarcely captured attention. Far too fascinating and energy consuming were fresh perspectives on the dynamics of the earth, its atmosphere and oceans, its climates and biotic life. Masses of new information about cultures and foreign ways of life flowed in as imperial nations sought to colonize and exploit distant realms and educate their school children in "world geography." The nature of Geography's sponsorship and audience had changed radically since the days of von Humboldt and Ritter. Foremost among its burning curiosities would be questions of environmental determinism, a subject which, like Original Sin, no self-respecting humanist would wish to touch!

But now Dr. Faust enters the drama in earnest. As Nation-states created chairs for disciplined knowledge and formal criteria were defined on which the domains of "science" and "humanities" could be circumscribed, epistemological distinctions would incarnate themselves in institutional separations. Functional specialization in university life would be assured by Faustian structures whose architecture reflected Cartesian (or Weberian) rationality and whose content and functions would eventually fulfil Comtean dreams of positive science. Geography, precariously perched astride the competing knowledge claims of science and humanities, faced an especially challenging situation.

The Humanities

The story is told of a great controversy that captured attention at the Cathedral School in Paris during the twelfth century. There was debate on the functions of a university. The powerful voice of Bernard of Clairvaux argued that the function of university education should be the formation of the whole person, viz., education in moral as well as intellectual virtue, while Abelard, master of rhetoric, argued that emphasis should be placed primarily on the intellectual. Abelard lost the battle, but won the war. The Western University adopted, *de jure and de facto,* the principle that intellectual formation was to be its primary purpose. Given this fundamental option, rationality would eventually demand that each field be allotted its appropriate place, its own special agenda and rules for discourse.

The *Humanities* consisted of a range of knowledge fields whose central focus rested on the study of humanity, that is, history, literature, arts, rhetoric, and others. Already in fifteenth-century England, one William Caxton (1422–91) drew sharp distinctions between "humanities" and "divinities," the former regarding mankind as an object of study in itself, not as part of "nature," which was the concern of biology, nor as an object of divine grace, which was the concern of theology, but as a reality in its own right. Where the boundaries were to be drawn with respect to the social sciences was not then a problem, but later became even a more controversial one. The tradition of liberal education, *paideia,* did pay at least lip service to both intellectual and moral goals. It sought to train and educate students in certain edifying fields of expertise, e.g., literature, rhetoric, and the arts, and also to develop a humane attitude toward one's fellow man on the other. Both of these goals were spelled out by Cardinal Newman in his *Idea of a University* (1852).

The specific range of knowledge fields to be incorporated in Faculties of Humanities varied from one country to another. Continental schools were more open to including philosophy, ethnography, and natural history than their Anglo colleagues were. Explicit in most programmatic statements about the humanities in the Western University has been the assumption that the cultivation of *humanitas* could be facilitated by a return to Greek and Roman sources. Platonic distinctions between spirit and matter, parables of *Phaedrus* and The Cave, and the heroic challenges of Socrates, would permeate texts in moral and natural philosophy. The Ciceronian antinomy of *humanus* and *barbarus* served not only to motivate students, but also to bolster cultural and national identity among the potential citizens of expansionary empires. The Terentian-Augustinian slogan, too, *nihil humanum a me alienum,* would serve as

motto for any and all who ascribed to liberalism, pluralism, and international brotherhood.

This institutional framework demanded anything but an ecumenical attitude toward knowledge. Each field should cultivate its own plot of ground, perfect its own skills, affirm its own identity within the Faustian program for progress which one nation after another launched after the Enlightenment. Thus the Humanities, especially in the nineteenth century, would tend to define themselves in terms of their opposition to natural science quite as much as in terms of what they essentially applauded. *Verstehen* (empathetic understanding) would be couched in terms which would exclude *Wissen* (scientific knowledge). Industry, commerce, urbanization and economic growth were to be regarded as being somehow "inhuman," or at least uninteresting for the humanist. Technology, far from being the emancipatory cry of *homo faber,* was to be construed as evil incarnate. Many a humanist scholar sought truth in the direct sensory experiences of nature and landscape; many, too, reverted attention to the intricacies of classical drama or the waters of Helicon.

What seems apparent even from the published record is that from the late eighteenth century on, fresh perspectives on the earth as home for mankind were offered by scholars who would ignore those Faustian boundaries set down by the *magna carta* for the Humanities. Natural historians, botanists, explorers and poets refused to study humanity in ways which excluded natural science or divinities (Linnaeus 1734; Hutton 1795). Burnet's *Telluris Theoria Sacra* (1680–90) played a catalytic role in provoking further insight into geological time (Gould 1987), as John Rae's reflections on the hydrological cycle and the wisdom of God (Tuan 1968) would eventually pave the way for revolutionary new theories about the circulation of water through the body of earth, and the circulation of blood in the human body (Mills 1982). The Victorian Era would herald a wave of cultural self-confidence and superiority and again an emphasis on proper humanist education for the citizens of Empire. It would witness passion and emotion over issues of humanitarianism and *noblesse oblige*. But on the forward march of science and technology, many a humanist would take a cautious, if not reactionary stance.

And geography, now also claiming academic status within the universities and schools of burgeoning states and would-be empires, would identify itself as a science: a science equipped not only to deliver *Erdkunde* but also an exciting practical art. Captivating indeed were images of the geographer as explorer of polar regions north and south, of Asia's heartland, African jungle or the North American prairie and desert; of the geographer as surveyor, accountant, reporter on resources, livelihoods, cities and ports. Closer to home, there was the image of the geographer as master teacher capable of integrating insights from a great variety of other disciplines and providing schoolchildren with edifying pictures of the world and its peoples, as well as understanding of their home regions and nations. Yet, on the eve of its establishment as formal academic field, geography sought to be counted among the sciences rather than among the humanities. The issue for the founding fathers was to carve out a legitimate domain of inquiry on the differentiation of the earth's surface and to include humanity as one of the formative elements in this drama. How might it confront or circumvent the two powerful orthodoxies of the day, viz., geology and Neo-Darwinian natural science on the one hand, and theology, or theological versions of history and nature on the other? Its acceptance or rejection as an occupant of a university chair had perhaps less to do with the logic of its inquiry methods than it had to do with the *Zeitgeisten* of potential sponsors and audiences (Buttimer 1983).

Despite overt proclamations about being a science, early twentieth-century geography witnessed many a creative encounter with the humanities. Of these, the Vidalian school of *la géographie humaine* serves as exemplar in many ways, successfully appealing to the political and pedagogical interests of the day (Claval and Nardy 1968; Buttimer 1971; Berdoulay 1981). "Geography is a science of places not of men," the oft-cited proclamation of Vidal ran, yet the discipline would retain a solid anchoring in history as well as in geology. French geography introduced a fresh approach to regional life with artistically woven accounts which revealed the dynamic interplay of civilization and biosphere. The humanized landscape was read as a "medal struck in the image of a people." Keenly attuned to the temporal and ecological perspectives pioneered by von Humboldt, Ritter, Ratzel and others, this school would avoid

environmental determinism and emphasize the creative ingenuity of people in developing their *genres de vie* in various regions. To the determinism of natural law, valuable as this was in elucidating the dynamics of relief, climate, and hydrology, they would juxtapose the contingencies of history. By history, of course, one did not imply the officially documented histories of kings, princes, or elite; folk history, already legitimized by Michelet, was far closer to the geographical spirit.

La géographie humaine would inspire numerous lines of further inquiry into e.g., sense of place, regional personality, landscape morphogenesis, and bioecology: themes often applauded abroad long before their recognition at home (Hardy 1939; Dardel 1952). The success of its thought styles and practice may indeed be due to their "fit" with the realities of early twentieth-century French rural life and the perceived realities of *France d'Outre Mer*. Its effective counter-arguments against critics, e.g., those of the Durkheimian school, meant that doors to sociology would remain tightly shut until midcentury (Febvre 1922; see also Berdoulay 1981). Values placed on synthesis and the "art of description" meant a less than rigorous approach to analysis. Tensions between ideational and artifactual interpretations of landscape, between the ideographic and the nomothetic, between the scholarly and the applied, allowed for some intellectual dynamism, but ultimately there was little philosophical reflection or self-critique. *La géographie humaine* provided a model that fitted the realities of early twentieth-century France so well that, in the opinion of many, it became an orthodoxy which was difficult to transcend, once those empirical realities had changed.

Many other doors between geography and the humanities were also opened even during the early period of discipline-making, and have continued to admit mutually creative encounters throughout the twentieth century, e.g., Banse's ideas on regional spirit, J. G. Granö's *Reine Geographie,* the *Heimatkunde* of Nordic and Baltic countries, all illustrated the values of maintaining a strong humanist spirit in geographical description (Granö 1929). In North America the writings of Nathaniel Shaler and John Kirtland Wright stand out as pioneering examples. Most acclaimed perhaps has been the record of the Berkeley School, whose founder also consistently proclaimed that geography was an earth science, *not* a social science (Leighly 1983). Before addressing the present century's hopes and hazards, there is still another strand to be picked up in the historical record, viz., concern about the human condition.

Humanitarianism

Human creativity in Western lands has often been associated with the desire to solve problems and to improve the human condition. It is in the context of *ergon,* as noted earlier, that ideological conflict has been most dramatic. Leonardo da Vinci's discoveries were explicitly made in the service of princes and potentates; breakthrough inventions in cartography and navigation have been possible and plausible because they served the expansionary dreams of nations and commercial magnates. Perennially-admired works of art and architecture were born in an aura of *laudatio* for the egotistical vanity of ruling classes; *chef d'oeuvres* of poetry and prose, engineering and music, have also sought to stir awareness of human poverty and social injustice.

Ergon in geography has traditionally faced an enduring antagonism of stances on the human condition: that of scientific humanism on the one hand and that of humanitarianism on the other. This tension may be eventually traceable to Socratic times and certainly to the contrasts between Stoic and Epicurean views of creation. It was to the emancipatory dreams of humanity that eighteenth century scientific humanists addressed their efforts. Human reason, exercised with Cartesian discipline, was to deliver humanity from the snares of superstition, myopia or dogmatism. While humanist academies would send Jesuit *padres* to launch pioneering efforts of applied geography in the Guarani *reducciones* in the mid-1700s, D'Alembert and others would launch an *Encyclopédie* to affirm the superiority of human reason over ecclesiastical authority. Auguste Comte would be the self-appointed High Priest of the *Église de l'Humanité*. Scientists and engineers, from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries, have envisioned rational transformations of landscapes, circulation routes, housing and industry, convinced that they were contributing to the progress of humanity.

From the humanities, however, another note

has been sounded. Oppressions and miseries following the industrial revolution in Europe and America called forth a "humane" concern about actual life conditions and diverse forms of *humanitarianism*. A growing sensitivity to issues of social injustice and inequality was also emerging from disciples of the Hegelian tradition. From lands more directly affected by rapid economic and political transformations came sensitive accounts of environmental experience and the daily life conditions of regions and places, in literary fiction and landscape art, throughout the nineteenth century. Victorian England, post-revolutionary France, late Tzarist Russia, and New England all produced vivid and provocative insights into the lived geography of their times. In novels such as those of Balzac, Zola, Dickens, Harriet Beecher Stowe and others, came messages quite as effective in pricking public consciousness as were the more scientifically-based theories of social history so brilliantly expounded by Engels and Marx.

Not that all affiliates of the humanities would participate in such concern. Many would look askance at such involvement, considering it quite beyond the scope (or beneath the dignity) of the proper humanist scholar. The cold war between "scholarship" and "social activism" has stirred, more than occasionally, in academic circles. Among the activists, too, the ideological impasse lingered. That liberal tradition of humanitarian help, charity, helping-the-poor-to-help-themselves, characteristic of Christian social morality, was dogmatically denounced by the "Young Turks" of scientific humanism, particularly from those of socialist persuasion. Disciples of Marx, Comte, and Condorcet would argue that energies should be addressed to the reconstruction of society, to the elimination of what they regarded as root causes of poverty and injustice. In this they would rely on the tools of science and the best that social engineering had to offer, so that externally-imposed constraints on individuals could be removed. From anarchist as well as conservative, theist as well as atheist, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries heard many a liberation cry about *la condition humaine,* and the potential contribution of the scholar.

To such appeals the geographer has generally responded in terms of the externalities of life: roads, boundaries, industrial location or the rationality of settlement structures. Concern about the quality of life, social injustices, poverty or pathology was regarded as more or less the business of the social worker, sociologist, or preacher. Yet among nineteenth century geographers inspired by von Humboldt such as Kropotkin, Reclus, and others, one finds keen concern not only about daily life conditions, but also, and perhaps more importantly, convictions about the creative potential of people to seek solutions to their own problems in cooperative and collegial ways, at the grass-roots level (Reclus 1877; Kropotkin 1899, 1902; see also Breitbart 1981; Dunbar 1981). The exhaustive field surveys of working class families in rural France by Frédéric Le Play and his associates no doubt lent inspiration for the humane concerns of a Jean Brunhes and Pierre Deffontaines virtually a century later, as they would to British and American rural sociologists in the twentieth century.

With deep concern over the human condition, nineteenth-century geographers launched an impressive research and pedagogical program during Spain's period of *regeneracionismo* (Gomez and Cantero 1986). Through a creative flight of metaphorical ingenuity, geography flashed forth as Phoenix in a nation debilitated by the loss of foreign possessions on the one hand, and by the misuse of resources, particularly water resources, at home. An integrated plan for geographic *paideia* and *ergon* envisioned that the reclamation and rationalization of irrigation systems could lead to a regeneration of Spanish soil, while education on home areas, life conditions in particular regions, could lead to the revitalization of the Spanish soul (Gomez and Cantero 1986). Tempting indeed are the hypotheses to be explored about essential differences in the hopes and hazards of humanism in Latin and Anglo-Saxon lands, in Reformed and Unreformed Christian worlds, and in "capitalist" and "socialist" regimes across the face of Europe.

In North America the late nineteenth and early twentieth century enjoyed a very different kind of intellectual climate. Pragmatists would espouse a "commonsense" approach to humanism. Agnostic and sometimes hostile toward *a priori* theories about human nature, they would simply assume that people everywhere participated in a common humanity. "Man as Measure," the old slogan of Protagoras and Pope, would now imply a radically empiricist attitude to thought and life. Nineteenth-century writers such as Whitman and Thoreau had

already sought to unburden humanity from the cultural encrustations of history, and like their Romantic forebears, they pleaded for a return to the simplicity of nature itself. American pragmatists, like European existentialists later, promoted an attitude of openness to lived experience, and intellectual curiosity about the concrete realities of everyday life and behavior. This, it was felt, could help steer knowledge toward horizons of usefulness to society (W. James 1907; Dewey 1925; see also S. Smith 1984).

Twentieth-Century Challenges

Contextual Turning

An explicit recognition of *context,* of environmental and societal circumstances in the shaping of thought, language, and action, could perhaps be identified as one of the major motifs in the scholarly world during the latter years of the twentieth century. It has confronted each of the four "faces" of humanism touched upon in this essay with major paradox. With respect to *humanitas,* the exaggerated claims of Promethean individualism evoked stormy protest and eventually death-warrants on the human subject. To the venerable debates over subjectivity and objectivity, reason and rationality, *sociological* rather than *epistemological* modes of discourse would be expressed. Contextual light would eventually be cast on that peculiar ambivalence detectable among academic stances on knowledge and life: passionate declarations about the values of intellectual freedom on the one hand, yet an equally passionate commitment to scientific theories designed to prove how determined everything was on the other. Traditional boundaries separating sciences and humanities would also erode and new alliances would emerge, reflecting radical reorientations within diverse fields as well as the changing priorities of research funding. Inherited notions about humanitarianism and scientific humanism would also be attacked: world wars, the atrocities of so-called civilized peoples, environmental destruction and global terrorism, were surely hard to reconcile with traditional (Western) assumptions about *humanitas.*

"Humanism places its faith in humankind," the argument ran, "so that for the continuing worsening human misery . . . it has no such satisfactory explanation, only the excuses, lies, evasions, and utopian promises" (Ehrenfeld 1978, 229). The attack comes not only because of human reason's apparent inability to solve problems, but also because of the tendency to identify reason with scientific rationality (Relph 1981). From the humanitarian viewpoint, too, there has been much disillusionment. Contradictions between ethos and structure in many "aid" programs and missionary endeavors have stirred political will to handle social problems in a more "positive" way via public rather than private sponsorship. Voluntary action was to become morally suspect in settings where State-run welfare and union definitions of work spread their Faustian mantle over the human condition.

More than forty years ago, Heidegger noted that ever since Roman times the *humanitas* of *homo humanus* was determined from the view of an already established interpretation of nature, of history, of *Weltgrund,* or being in its totality. Hence humanism was caught in its own metaphysical stance. "Humanism does not ask . . . for the relation of Being to the essence of man, it (humanism) even impedes this question" (Heidegger 1947, 211). He pleaded for a return to those broader issues of being and becoming which were missed out in a knowledge enterprise steered by such anthropocentric biases. He called for a sensitive, caring, patient listening to reality—letting reality reveal itself in its own terms—rather than seeking to grasp reality in the language of preconceived models. Heidegger's critique of Western humanism roundly satirized the inherited separation of epistemology and ontology (of knowledge and being) of the intellectual and moral dimensions of thought and action.

As Nietszche, Marx, and Freud in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, so Husserl, Heidegger and Habermas in the twentieth have voiced perhaps the most radical critique of Enlightenment legacies and sought most earnestly to elucidate the hopes and hazards of humanism. Of the many issues raised in their work, those most relevant to the practice of geography included (a) the fragmentation of knowledge and the question of foundations, (b) the human subject, agency versus structure, and (c) language and communication.

(a) A keenly felt dilemma in the latter half of the twentieth century, and perhaps the most dramatic legacy of Enlightenment Faust, has been that of functional specialization and ul-

timately fragmentation of knowledge. Approaches to this challenge reveal some of the ideological impasses between "humanist" and "anti-humanist." The Frankfurt School, still clinging to a faith in Enlightenment values, articulated its brilliant critique of "instrumental reason" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1947), exploring integrated approaches to the theoretical, technical, and practical aspects of knowledge, and emphasizing the cardinal function of communication (Marcuse 1972; Habermas 1979). Others, more Kantian in their diagnoses, sought epistemological foundations for a more integral understanding of reality (Cassirer 1944; Schrag 1980). Several practical steps were also attempted. Programs of "humanistic studies" were initiated in many American universities during the 1970s with the explicit aim to reestablish contacts among researchers in diverse fields and also to render the humanities "relevant" for elucidating problems in modern society. A lively exchange did occur between humanists and social scientists, for indeed among some—psychologists, anthropologists, geographers and historians—there was already a turning away from scientism beginning in the 1960s. Conversely, humanists showed a greater interest in the social or contextual aspects of their work. Thomas Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions offered alternative perspectives on intellectual history and literary critics showed a growing curiosity about context in the unfolding of classical *chef d'oeuvres* (Kuhn 1970). The correct interpretation of texts was no longer regarded as a matter for the author or any individual reader, but rather for a community of readers tuning themselves into the larger "conversation of mankind" (Fish 1981). Classical texts should be read as "people's attempts to solve problems, to work out the potentialities of the languages and activities available to them . . . by transcending the vocabulary in which these problems were posed" (Rorty 1982, p. 9). Humanists and scientists could meet in their common concern about the human condition (Frye 1981). Knowledge was to be regarded as a social artifact rather than a mental construct. Disciplinary practices should be understood ethnographically, as ways of life, rather than simply ways of thinking (Geertz 1983).

(b) On the protracted debates over humanist versus scientific modes of knowing, the ideological tensions between freedom and determinism played itself out in the battle royal between positivists and existentialists. During the 1960s, however, some of the basic assumptions of both camps came under attack. The issue for Levi-Strauss was "not to constitute but to dissolve man," to eliminate "particular, finite, historical subjectivity" (Levi-Strauss 1966, 365). Mind would be spared—disembodied mind, no doubt, but "human mind, unconcerned with the identity of its occasional bearers." "We can only know something about man," Althusser preached in the heady 1960s, "under the absolute condition that the philosophical (theoretical) myth about man is reduced to ashes" (Althusser 1965, 2:179). The structuralist wave from the late 1960s on brought agnostic attitudes toward such classical assumptions as personal authorship, intentionality, and meaning. Other qualities of human nature, such as freedom, responsibility, and compassion, were also satirized. Platonic foundations for reason yielded to Heraclitean notions of flux and unpredictability. "Plato's conception of Reason and his realistic conception of Objective Truth," Rorty claimed, "are both forms of what Nietzsche called the 'longest lie'—the lie that there is something beyond mankind to which it is our duty to be faithful" (Rorty 1982, 2). Philosophy should be abandoned and theory of science embraced.

(c) Language, as metaphor for reality as a whole, has long been central to the structuralist position. Inherited notions of correspondence between symbol and reality were ultimately to be undermined (Foucault 1966; Kunze 1984). More than a century ago, Mallarmé sought to dramatize the non-correspondence of words and the objects to which words referred with the metaphor "le coup de dés" (roll of the dice).[9] Wittgenstein noted that the language *in* which one made propositions *about* language was but an elaborate rule-system which could be changed at any time. Concerns about "foundations" for knowledge were eventually to be rejected as just one other feature of a tradition which was caught up in its own unexamined presuppositions (Feyerabend 1961; Elzinga 1980). Rorty traced the movement away from epistemology to hermeneutics in twentieth-century approaches to knowledge (Rorty 1979). Yet even within the hermeneutic movement the late 1970s witnessed fundamental antinomies with respect to humanism. For some the central puzzle was that of evaluating interpretations and reaching toward mutual under-

standing (Gadamer 1965; Geertz 1983, 147–166). For others it seemed more important to decipher the architecture and physiognomy of those very language structures which held prison guard over human discourse. "A voyage of nothingness and to nothing" is how Steiner characterizes late twentieth-century stances on language and reality, "an echo in both science and the arts, in exact theory and in poetics, of the proposition that 'nothing shall come of nothing,' a statement about the final, incomprehensible, but *expressible* mystery of energy in and out of absolute zero" (Steiner 1987, 22).

The faces of post-Modernism are many, some weary, some hopeful, but all in one way or another expressive of Narcissus. Reflections on the two decades since 1968 have revealed the many irreconcilable ambitions of a would-be Phoenix generation, the cooptation of young idealists into national bureaucracies and bourgeois clubs (Hocquenghem 1986), successful marketing of structuralism among the ranks of former idealists, radical position changes by those who set out to guillotine the human subject (Lyotard 1984; Dreyfus and Rabinow 1984). From the humanist vantage point, the most heartening signs are those of longing for emancipation from the encrustations of inherited forms of dogma and practice (Frye 1981; Kohak 1984; Steiner 1987; Kearney 1988). Within the home of structuralism the human subject returns, and a mellowing of dogmatic positions of the 1960s (Ferry and Renaut, 1985). "Poets sing of the absence," Heidegger once remarked, "for they have been touched by presence." What emerges from the deconstruction and claustrophobic cries is a sharper sense of *the absence*—of creativity and hope, of anything that might transcend the frameworks of a Frankenstein world.

The prospectus for the humanities in the late twentieth century thus reechoes those classical tensions between Gnostics and Socratics, between images of reality as being in perpetual flux versus images of self-aware human subjects seeking rational understanding of the world. As before, such tensions can scarcely yield a creative outcome until broader horizons for knowledge and life can be perceived by both. The present global crisis, and the daring images projected by GAIA, may well be the catalysts for such an expansion of horizon. Neither the inherited divisions between intellectual and moral realms of discourse nor those academic fences between "humanities," "divinities" and "natural science," block creative imagination today (Eco 1986). Education for moral reasoning, Harvey Cox claimed, could be a central function for the humanities to "nourish human beings capable of passionate imagination, rigorous reflection, reasoned choice and moral courage" (Cox 1985). Clarion call of Clairvaux?

As the traditional anthropocentrism of Western humanism is attacked from various corners of the academic world and environmental issues hover in public press and debate, the famous Baconian slogan, *natura nisi parendo vincitur* (One only conquers nature by obeying her) had already taken on a new complexion in the 1970s. "Human nature," the "forgotten paradigm," according to Morin, cannot be understood without understanding the complex interplay of culture and nature through history (Morin 1973). Exposing the inadequacies of a knowledge enterprise comprising specialized sciences of man and nature—biologism, anthropologism, psychologism—he sought to unmask the persistent counterplay of rationality and irrationality (*homo demens* versus *homo sapiens*), order and disorder, trial and error in human history. Pelt, with more explicitly environmental concern, claimed that humans would never discover their own nature until they rediscovered the essential reciprocity of sociality and ecology (Pelt 1977). And Réné Passet, focusing more directly on the tensions between economics and biology, noted the cardinal differences between mechanist and organicist principles of organization in all elements of the biosphere, including humanity (Passet 1979). Common among such recent authors is the concern to evoke awareness of what is lacking in conventional stances on life and knowledge on the one hand and a plea for more holistic, yet open, perspectives on the other. Georg Henrik von Wright, reflecting on the consequences of the twentieth century's contextual turn, still defines humanism as a basic stance on life, one which might again restore integrity and wholeness to the understanding of mankind, nature, and history (Wright 1978).

Twentieth Century Humanism in American Geography

The stirrings of contextual awareness in geographic thought and practice has echoed, to

some extent, that profound transformation in twentieth-century approaches to knowledge generally: the movement away from "spectator" to "participant" stances (Rorty 1979). The "humanist" element in American geography, as noted earlier, was evident in the writings of historically-oriented scholars. Evidence of philosophical reflectiveness was rare, but in the long run seminal (Barrows 1923; Sauer 1925; Hartshorne 1939; Wright 1942/1966). The mainstream pressed on with empirical field research and occasionally argued over methodological preferences for formal or functional, pattern or process (James and Jones 1954; James and Martin 1979). Tensions grew between those who emphasized the *areal differentiation* of the earth's surface and those who would emphasize *functional dynamics* of spatial systems, tensions which were no doubt heightened by wartime experiences and the Faustian prospects of postwar development and planning (Buttimer 1983; Gould 1985).

Prior to the 1960s, most geographers would have positioned themselves in an "observer" stance on reality, aiming to achieve objectivity in their representations and explanations of phenomena. Issues of geographical knowledge (*logos*) were, by and large, dealt with *epistemologically*. By the early 1960s, there was a growing awareness of how human perceptions of reality had been filtered by different cultural groups, by different research instruments, and by different practical agenda (Lowenthal 1961; Kates and Wohlwill 1966; Wright 1966). The "social construction" of knowledge was to become a burning curiosity among historians of geographical thought (Stoddart 1981; Ley 1981, 1983). Simultaneously queries arose about what or whose interests were actually being addressed: managerial or popular, professional or client, elite or folk (Kates 1969; Hägerstrand 1970; Zelinsky 1970; Buttimer 1974)? This led to debates about power, language, and conflicts of interest between "insiders" and "outsiders" in particular situations ("*The Best of Antipode*" 1985). Some sought to identify *positivism* as arch villain in a plot which had led the discipline fairly and squarely into the clutches of managerial interests (Samuels 1971; Seamon 1979). There were conceptually-grounded arguments too. Following upon a few centuries of *ceteris paribus* orthodoxy, no doubt the time was ripe for those strong pleas from existentialist, phenomenological, pragmatist and other sources that *ceteris,* for all practical purposes, were never *paribus* (Hägerstrand 1970; Buttimer 1974). In geography, too, *epistemological* questions yielded place or became transposed to *sociological* ones; the "foundational" concerns of the earlier (observation) phase yielded to "dialectical" ones.

By the late 1970s, a third phase was dawning. Geographers, like other social scientists, became aware of the fact that we were all participants as well as observers, all to some degree "insiders" or "outsiders" to different settings. Awareness also increased about the myriad ways in which conventional thought and practice had been filtered through the complex orchestra of Western social experience. Reality would become construed by some as an arena of events, of mirrors and masks, of texts reflecting contexts: a theatre in which the antinomies of subjective and objective, normative and descriptive, internalist and externalist interpretations of science would be deemed anachronistic (Gregory 1981; Sugiura 1983). Some expressed the need for languages and symbols which could facilitate a more open dialogue among different civilizations, while others polished ever more sophisticated arguments about the futility of such a dream.

This wave of hermeneutic concern continues today but the late 1980s had also witnessed a return to observation and a heightened (humanitarian) concern about ethics and intervention in the course of public life. The enormous scale and urgency of environmental issues and global change, dramatic realignments of demographic and political patterns, again challenge the geographer. Rapid advances in analytical technology, computer-based information systems and satellite images beckon on the research horizon for the potential Leonardo da Vinci. As the philosophical strains of realism and pragmatism again recapture audiences, disciplinary orthodoxy too becomes less important than theoretical salience (Rowntree 1988; Ley 1989) and eventually problem resolution (Kates 1987).

Throughout these various transformations, the most consistent stream of humanist endeavor in American geography has been evident in historical and cultural branches. The notion of landscape as text, to be decoded in terms of the values of its human occupants, has long been a *leitmotif* in European geography. Since the 1970s there has indeed been a re-

newal of this *genre* (Salter 1978; Meinig 1979; Rose 1981; Sugiura 1983; Lewis 1985; Rowntree 1986). Landscape seen as the "sedimentation" of diverse forms of discourse allowed room for interpretations of various kinds (Olwig 1981; Duncan 1987; Daniels 1988, Berdoulay 1988). It could invite inquiry into culturally-varying modes of symbolic transformation such as those inspired by Vico or von Herder (de Dainville 1964; Mills 1982) as well as semiotic inquiry into landscape texts and signs as products in their own right (Marchand 1982; Choay 1981).

It has surely been on questions of language and power, semiotics and symbolism, that latter twentieth-century geographers have found the most challenging moment of interaction with structuralists (Gale and Olsson 1979; Gregory 1981; Dematteis 1985; Rose 1987). The deconstruction of inherited meanings, as suggested in the work of Derrida, deliberately sought to reveal the multiple and conflicting readings that could be made on particular texts (Derrida 1972). In the 1980s, Gunnar Olsson sermonized eloquently about modernity's *malaise* in human geography: "Thing yields to process, stability to change, certainty to ambiguity, noun to verb, being to becoming" (Olsson 1984, 73). In sharp contrast with the previous generation's deeply-held convictions about epistemological certainty and images of the world as complex mechanism, this *cri-du-coeur* sought to unmask the extent to which *la condition humaine* "is one of the predicaments lived behind prison walls" (Olsson 1984, 84).

It may well be premature to attempt an evaluation of the emerging harvest from this humanist wave in geography. Its impact has been felt not only in terms of cognitive styles and choice of substantive foci of research, but also in modes of vocational meaning. One of its major results has been a reaffirmation of *poesis,* and the critically-reflective element, long overlooked or trivialized in a profession which unequivocally favored scientifically-based approaches to *logos* and *ergon.* Ontological issues are again discussable; modes of discourse themselves have become matters for critical reflection. Substantively, there has been a renewal of research curiosity about relationships between humanity and environment, the meanings of place and landscape for human creativity and health. Flowing from this, environments themselves reassume significance as contexts of life, cultural identity and historical legacy: a long overdue rediscovery after a few generations which reduced it to a *tabula rasa* on which diverse models of economic or technological rationality could be tested. Within the span of a few decades, even mainstream approaches to *logos* and *ergon* have changed. Those blithely naive confusions of descriptive and normative discourse which characterized some postwar ventures in applied geography are now less palatable to audience or sponsor. The harvest may not yet be ripe, but at least there are certain fruits of new (or rediscovered) awareness evident among practitioners of human geography today, and these bear profound implications for future research on humanity and its terrestrial home:

—**Geosophy**: awareness of cultural relativism in the ways in which human groups construe "nature," resources, society, space, and time. Curiosities about differences through time and space in the "geographical sense" of various peoples eventually yielding a rich body of literature on environmental perception and behavior.
—**Temporality**: awareness of the inextricable bonds of time and space in all phases of geographical curiosity. Quite distinct from the historical geographer's traditional insistence on the "contingency" surrounding human events, there has been a renewal of interest in the different temporal scales involved in everyday experiences of environment.
—**Relativity**: awareness of the "inevitable ripple" between observer and observed (Heisenberg/Bohr) has heightened consciousness of how research instruments themselves—conceptual as well as analytical—selectively focus inquiry.
—**Agency versus Structure**: awareness of the social dimensions of academic lifeways has led to explorations in the history and sociology of disciplinary practice, to discussions about paradigms, and definitions of science, normal and extraordinary, and perhaps most significantly, awareness of "mirrors and masks" in the conduct of everyday life in Academy as well as in the market place.
—**Hermeneutics**: awareness of cultural biases in the design of research as well as in the conclusions derived from them has led to debates over ideology, knowledge, and power, or, for some, acknowledgments of the hermeneutic circle. The researcher has begun to acknowledge his/her role as *participant* rather than *observer* of reality.
—**Global Concern**: awareness of the interdependencies among nations and regions, not only in economic and technological terms, but also in the bioecological consequences of inherited lifeways. Extension of intellectual horizons in space as well as in time, concern about the past and also about the future.

Stimuli for these new kinds of awareness have come from interactions between geographers and scientists, philosophers, and historians of

ideas. Thus far contextual approaches have held stronger appeal among human than physical geographers. For those who have endeavored to incorporate these new kinds of awareness in their practice, there still remain certain challenges. Of these, three call for creative energies today: first, how to construe the Protagorean motto "The proper study of mankind is man," second, how to relate humanistic narratives on "events-in-context" or on "landscapes as texts" to the wider issues facing humanity and world; and third, what potential message does the Western world have to offer on the present-day global crisis in the interactions between anthroposphere, biosphere and geosphere.

The challenge of bridging insight on the experiences of individual persons and/or places on the one hand, with that on the more general experiences of regions and cultures on the other, remains a fundamental dilemma for the humanist (Daniels 1985, 1988; Rowntree 1988). Some still regard the aims of *wissen* and *verstehen* to be forever irreconcilable, while others have found the bridges offered by social science to be quite palatable. The impasse over the One and the Many, the ideographic and the nomothetic, lingers strongly within human geography today (Ley 1989).

Among the potential advocates of "contextual" approaches, too, a key distinction could be made among those who emphasize *events,* and define contexts in terms relevant to those events, versus those who would prioritize *contexts* (physical, ecological, functional) and seek a potentially universal grid or explanatory theory to explain all possible events. In a sense, the old distinction between the spirits of Ptolemy and Herodotus has taken on a new significance today. On one side stand the would-be guardians of local cultures and the integrity of places who would abhor any prospect of universal laws of context. On the other side there are would-be managers of universal systems to guide and plan human behavior and activities on our fragile and threatened planet. An emerging central ground is being cultivated by enthusiasts for structuration theory. Yet on the horizons of post-Modernism, texts reflect texts in a world of Heraclitean flux, or a Borgesian *Book of Sands.*

The "contextual" approach has yielded its best results when the focus of inquiry rested on particular events or periods. It allows one to appreciate the complex intertwining of ideas and practices with general societal and environmental circumstances in which they are "disciplined" and implemented. One gains much better insight on particular "nows," but one simultaneously risks losing the threads of historical flow or possibilities for cross-cultural comparisons and contrasts. While the humanist spirit would rejoice at this growing contextual sensitivity, it would also seek to affirm the values of cross-cultural understanding and historical depth (Harris 1978; Daniels 1985; Folch-Serra 1989). Finally, like their colleagues in social science and humanities, geographers have also tended to define "context" in anthropocentric terms, to focus on the humanly constructed reference frames of laws, structures, and artefacts surrounding events. Vico's appeal for a New Science has indeed been heard. How to now incorporate nature and the bio-physical environment in one's descriptions of context, yet avoid resuscitating the ghosts of environmental determinism, remains one of the most demanding challenges for the humanist today.

Phoenix, Faust, Narcissus: Hopes and Hazards of Humanism in Geography

Each fresh discovery in humanity's geographical understanding of the world has heralded changes in its self-images, hopes, and fears. Phoenix moments in Western intellectual history have been those when new levels of understanding humanity and its terrestrial home have beckoned on the horizon. Classical Greece explored the nature of creation as a whole, observing interconnections between mind, society, nature, and the gods, and proclaiming *reason* as the distinctive quality of humanness. The Renaissance raised a liberation cry about human dignity, celebrating *man* as microcosm of the universe, and rational scientific inquiry as capable of explaining it, unleashing the bonds of ecclesiastical dogmatism and the geographical confines of Medieval Christendom. Romanticism rediscovered *nature* as primeval and sacred force, rebelling against the scientific rationality of the Enlightenment. The twentieth-century contextual turn would echo many previous turnings to the here-and-now, revealing the intricate interweaving of thought and life and noting particularly the role of *society* in

steering relationships between humanity and world. Thought itself, and products of intellectual endeavor, would come to be regarded as a social product. By century's close scholars could no longer consider themselves as mere observors of reality, rather, they were to regard themselves as participants in it. In each of these periods there was a clearly identifiable emancipatory *élan,* often aiming at deliverance from confining orthodoxies or structures of thought, politics, or material conditions, at times uttering a prophetic note about future possibilities. Each, too, witnessed a will to build structures and institutions, bequeathing its own legacy of Faustian forms and unresolved tensions to its offspring. And in the subsequent attempt to understand and transcend those structures during those dark moments before the dawn of a new Phoenix, there was the ardent longing of a Narcissus.

Might one not then characterize the challenge of humanism in late twentieth century in terms of the "ardent longing of Narcissus"? Frustrations over those (Faustian) fences which today surround thought and life, disillusionment over the ironic contradictions of word and action in many idealistically-motivated social movements of the twentieth century, and maybe a lingering fear about those Spenglerian prophecies about *The Decline of the West,* have all been catalysts for critical reflection. Given such an inheritance, one should naturally expect expressions of vulgar narcissism, well justified outpourings of satire and brilliantly articulated autopsy on "realized ideals," but the experience itself somehow thirsts for another "face" for Narcissus: that of the pilgrim, already open toward horizons which could reveal a new Phoenix. For this retrospective glance bears undeniable evidence of progress in the human understanding of earth and world, of resilience to disaster and prostitution to the structural imperatives of various eras, and of the malaise felt, especially in the twentieth century, over all that impedes the free circulation of thought and life. Having passed through a reflective and Narcissist phase, the humanist spirit again utters a liberation cry, beckoning toward a more global comprehension of things from the heart of the atom to the mysteries of the universe.

In retrospect, Phoenix moments for human thought, illuminative stars in the noosphere, have burst through the Faustian fences and frameworks within which managerial interests sought to contain them: fresh understanding of mankind's terrestrial home has led to fresh understanding of mankind itself. In defiance of the traditional Kantian limits to their vision, geographers have dared to look inward, exploring cultural differences in environmental perceptions and experience, while colleagues in the humanities dare to look outward, freely exploring ground traditionally trod only by natural science and divinities (Matthiessen 1979; Lopez 1986; Eco 1986). The occasion for joint exploration into the mystery of human creativity and wisdom in humanity's modes of dwelling has come. "New alliances" between physical and biological sciences and between them and the human sciences are taking shape within the academic world (Lovelock 1979; Prigogine and Stengers 1984). One can scarcely again consider "matter" as dead or nature as a complex of blind forces; rather, one is discovering the complex and dynamic wisdom written into the nature of the universe (Lovelock 1979)[10] and the basic bonds between humans and fellow living creatures on the earth (Kohak 1984; Lopez 1986). What kind of Phoenix then, or in what realm of the human experience on its terrestrial home, might one anticipate it? In the light of this narrative, the question might be posed metaphorically: what or where could a "mediterranean" occur in the twenty-first century?

The late twentieth-century map of humanity shows that Euro-America and its legacy of Hellenic and Mediterranean models of *humanitas* is but one corner in an evolving noosphere. Yet the analogies with pre-Renaissance Mediterranean worlds is surely striking, as noted so eloquently by Umberto Eco (1986). Today's world map of power and politics has taken on radically new dimensions due to transformations in technology and trade. The explosion of information and trans-continental circulation of people, commodities, and ideas raise exciting new possibilities for thought and life, if we dare transcend our inherited orthodoxies, or at least critically reflect on the tensions between their spirit and their letter. It was just such transformations which leant wing to the imaginations of Renaissance pioneers, many of whom were jack-of-all-trades poetic types (Fig. 6), and thereby eager to stay abreast of new developments in all realms of human becoming. What the retrospective glance deems as "revolutionary" could scarcely have been pos-

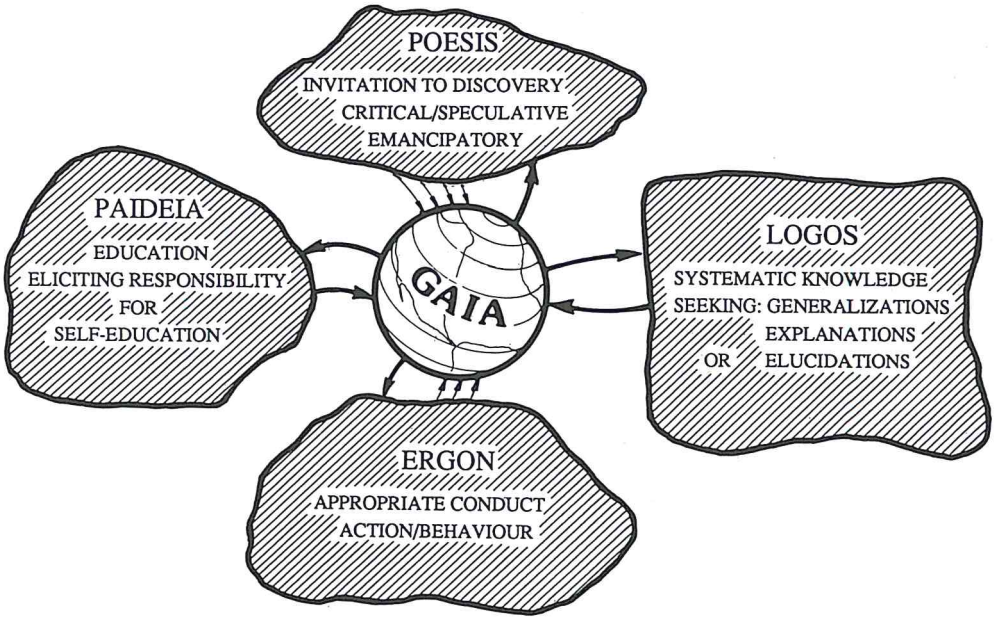

Figure 7. *Gaia*: Global challenge for the practice of geography.

sible if these diverse aspects of humanness had not been capable of mutually enriching one another, either in dialogue among human individuals, or within the individual person.

Implications for the practice of geography today are obvious. While each of our practices demands its own level of specialization, so, too, does it need to be orchestrated with the others (Fig. 7). Inherited Faustian forms and externally-imposed priorities may shed light on how our present fragmentation of effort has come to be, but to suggest that only structural changes are needed to clear the way for tomorrow's styles of practice would surely betray a lack of imagination. The humanist's emancipatory hope would be that as a scholarly community we begin at home, as it were, critically evaluate the priorities which have been inherited, and bravely experiment with new ways to orchestrate our energies. Communication and mutual understanding, the very tissue of the *noosphere,* is one of the greatest challenges facing human geographers today. And this involves emotion and will, quite as much as cognitive brilliance, technical ingenuity or the design of media. Ultimately it redounds to an expansion of heart and spirit to embrace the twofold challenge facing humanity's dwelling in its terrestrial home in the late twentieth century: *sociality* and *ecology*. Sociality, one of the highest art forms of *zoon politikon,* faces the challenge offered today by the spatial juxtaposition of culturally-diverse peoples: to let these often involuntary movements and convergence of humans become the springboard for new creativity in politics and social life, rather than problems to be solved by social engineering. Ecology also, in the original meaning of the term, calls for a sense of how life as a whole functions. Today's chorus of protest against environmental destruction has indeed been heard, but the Faustian fashion in which problems are being addressed often serves more to fragment rather than to unify efforts toward ameliorative action. Geographers have much to offer by way of more cross-cultural and historical evidence from mankind's experiences in sociality and ecology. Attuned to the emancipatory role which humanist thought has played historically, too, they could reiterate at least the essential message that human reason cannot function without hope. Gaia's human envelope, the *anthroposphere,* needs to be understood as a drama more complex than simply as battleground

of ecological versus economic rationality, but rather as **oecumene**, potential home for mankind, a species which urgently needs to rediscover the art of dwelling.

Much spleen has been vented on the Western world's anthropocentric perspectives, critics usually implying alternatives such as the deification of nature, of the social collective, or the reification of ideologies playing out their purposes with humanity and nature. Perhaps the West, far from overestimating *humanus,* has grossly underestimated it. The recovery of the human subject, the recognition of human agency as integral part of the lived world, and the creativity again apparent on peripheral and previously marginalized regions, are all seen as fresh potential for human geography today (Folch-Serra 1989). One is challenged to not only regard humanity and earth in global terms, but also to understand the ecological and social implications of a world humanity now "planetized." The need for cross-cultural and comparative research implies an extension of time horizons on the history of the earth and human occupants to date, but also reflection on the potential future of Gaia (Needham 1965; Fraser 1975).

And "humanistic geography?" Perhaps this heralds a potential Phoenix, emerging from the ashes of former tyrannies—methodological, epistemological, or ideological—in any or all facets of geographic inquiry. As stance on life, humanism is one which welcomes the challenge of discerning the creative potential of individuals and groups to deal with the surface of the earth in responsible and co-responsible ways. Nor is human creativity confined to the intellectual sphere: it involves emotion, aesthetics, memory, faith and will. As Phoenix, then, the humanist turn in geography should refuse to be contained, named and claimed by Faustian structures. It can inspire practitioners of physical, economic, cultural or social geography, and should perhaps not invest too much energy in staking claims for becoming a special branch of the field.

Humanism, this paper argues, should more appropriately be considered as a leaven in the dough rather than as a separate loaf in the *smorgasbord* of geographic endeavor. The emancipatory élan recuperable even from our Western traditions could enable geography itself to perform as leaven in the mass of contemporary science and humanities. The Renaissance of humanism calls for an ecumenical rather than a separatist spirit; it calls for excellence in special fields as well as a concern for the whole picture. It beckons sensitivity to what the "barbarism" of our own times might be, and challenges all to seek ways to heal or overcome that in responsible action quite as much as in elegant rhetoric. Fragmentation of thought and life, built into the social fabric of university curricula today, is not overcome by (printed) appeals to Medieval utopia or eulogies on the *uomo universale.* The late twentieth century needs its own Phoenix.

Notes

1. The substance of this article will appear in a book provisionally entitled *Geography and Humanism,* to be published by the Johns Hopkins Press.
2. The Gaia hypothesis, in Lovelock's definition, "postulates that the physical and chemical condition of the surface of the Earth, of the atmosphere, and of the oceans has been and is actively made fit and comfortable by the presence of life itself" (Lovelock 1979, 152).
3. Classical proclamations about the nature of humanness (the expression *homo,* "man," intended here, as throughout the paper, in the generic sense) included *animal rationale* = the rational animal, *homo sapiens* = the wise or intelligent one, *homo demens* = the insane or irrational one, *zoon politikon* = the social creature, *homo faber* = the maker, *homo ludens* = the playful or pleasure-seeking one.
4. There are, of course, various versions of this basically Promethean myth. Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* projected a far more fatalistic outcome than Goethe's *Faust.* Both could find echoes in the history of geographic thought and practice. Elements of the Marlowe version are surely discernible in some contemporary pronouncements about environmental crises. The Goethe version, being more open-ended, seems more inspiring for Western humanity today.
5. There are other reasons for the reflective turn which is apparent in many knowledge fields today. The 1980s may well be remembered as the decade of "Centennials," commemorating the foundation of many societies, unions, and universities.
6. These clusters of vocational meaning have been discerned from scrutiny of autobiographical accounts (Buttimer 1983, 1989).
7. In Aristotle's *polis,* of course, barbaric elements included not only humans deemed less civilized than Greeks, but also animals and the gods.
8. "Erasmus is an enemy of all religion," Luther inveighed upon the *Manual of the Christian Soldier,* "he is the true adversary of Christ, a perfect replica of Epicurus and Lucian. Whenever I pray, I pray for a curse on him" (cited in de Santillana 1956, 27).

9. Mallarmé thus reawakened the Heraclitean notion of a world in perpetual, unpredictable and potentially meaningless motion. In stark contrast, Einstein's well-known phrase: "God does not play dice" used a similar metaphor to convey his conviction about an absolutely meaningful, i.e., eventually explainable universe. These two opposing positions on the prospects for human reason and truth are often overlooked in discussions about relativity and relativism (See Steiner 1987).
10. The Gaia Hypothesis certainly refutes the inherited view of life adapting to terrestrial conditions as it and they evolved their separate ways (Lovelock 1979, 152).

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