Regionalization as a Symbolic Process

Albert Z. Guttenberg
Department of Urban and Regional Planning
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Urbana, Illinois 61801

Introduction

Anyone who has looked for stable meanings in the language of regional studies must agree that it is a bit like trying to pin down the "cholers", "vapours", "humours", and "biles" of medieval physiology. I have in mind terms such as "regionalism", "regionalization", "regional planning" and "regional science". In 1938 the sociologist Howard Odum identified no less than forty-one concepts of "regionalism" (as he called it), and if the range of meaning has narrowed since his day, I am not aware of it.

The prime example of ambiguity is "region" itself. What is a region? This is the perennial question that thus far has resisted all attempts to deal with it adequately. Regional scholars have responded in diverse ways. On the one side are those who appear satisfied with a single or a few meanings of "region" appropriate to their purposes, neglecting all the rest. In effect, they turn their backs on the problem. On the other side are the pluralists who, although they are alive to the variety of meanings inherent in "region", are content simply to refer to that variety without any great concern about their apparent miscellany. There is a third approach. Rather than foundering on the Scylla of the one meaning or the Charybdis of the many meanings, it seeks, like Ulysses, to steer a middle course through the dilemma. This is the definitional strategy followed in this paper. It consists in uncovering the hidden system of related functions that underlie this single word "region" and whose various parts account for the observed semantic variability of the term. Thus, the unity of the concept "region" is saved without the sacrifice of its multiple meanings.

How to demonstrate the hidden order in the multiple meanings of "region"? This was the purpose several years ago at the Regional Science Conference in Toronto, where the author introduced an experimental taxonomy of regions based on a behavioral-linguistic model called modal classification. It showed that the act of delineating regions on a map as practised by geographers, planners, regional scientists and others involves a variety of linguistic modes or language functions, and that these modes correspond to identifiable spatial entities or "modal regions". Additional linguistic concepts, such as tense, were also introduced as a basis for the classification of regions. The present paper carries the analysis further. The subject is the processes, largely symbolic, whereby a region in one mode gives rise to one or more regions in the same or different modes. A brief review of the major categories of the modal classification of regions follows.

Modal Regions

Regions are not natural objects. They are, to use Derwent Whittlesey's term, the products of "areal interests", entities for purposes of thought (Whittlesey 1954). At the root of these entities are behavioral-linguistic functions: (1) the strictly cognitive function of pointing to (that is, referring to) an event or object; (2) the function of reacting to the object by ascribing a value to it in terms of human welfare; (3) the function of influencing action towards the object—the control function (Morris 1946); and (4) the function of evoking new kinds of events and objects as by poetry, prophecy and prayer. These last linguistic functions attempt to go beyond (that is, to transcend) the existent (Guttenberg 1977).

The correspondence between linguistic functions and types of regions is indicated in Table 1. *Referential regions* are spatial entities for the purpose of describing the structure of the world apart from any concern with the significance of this structure for human welfare. The relevant phenomena in this mode are natural and cultural variations in space. Examples are the arid and humid areas and the Anglophone and Francophone areas of North America. *Appraisive regions* are spatial entities for the purpose of ascribing a value in human terms to spatially variable cultural and natural phenomena. The Ozarks, one of the regions established under Title V of the Public Works and Economic Development act of 1965, is an example. Other examples are natural hazard regions such as Florida (hurricane) and California (earthquake), and regions of man-made hazard, for instance areas subject to acid rain. A *prescriptive region* is a spatial entity for control purposes. These are the "thou shalt" and the "thou shalt not" regions. Examples are the

National Parks, the Bureau of Land Management Grazing Districts, Coastal Management Zones and Indian Reservations. Certain regions exist to state a territorial ideal persuasively. An example is geographer G. Etzel Pearcy's 38-state United States. Other regions are themselves ideals (holy lands, holy districts, holy cities). Following the nomenclature of I. A. Richards, I have termed both types *optative regions* (optative = "expressing a wish or desire", according to Webster).

Table 1
MODAL REGIONS

Mode	Basis of Regional Definition	Relevant Spatial Phenomena	Examples
Referential	Disinterested observations	Past, present and future natural and cultural features	Physiographic regions (e.g. Great Plains) Economic regions (e.g. Corn Belt) Projected urban regions
Appraisive	Evaluations	Territorial quality of life indicators (economic, social environmental) poverty pollution natural hazards	Poor regions (e.g. Appalachia) Polluted regions Regions of seismic or other natural risk (e.g. California)
Prescriptive	Special remedial or preventive rules of action	Types of territorial control exercised or proposed, e.g. preservation conservation reclamation	National Forests National Parks Grazing Districts Managed coastal zones Wilderness areas, etc.
	General regulation	Governance	Cities States or provinces Nations
Optative	Aspirations	Types of ideal territorial order (aesthetic, moral political) envisioned	Pearcy's ideal 38-State United States
		Sacred Regions	Various holy lands or cities

Region-Generating Mechanisms

The mere act of delineating a region in one mode often gives rise to another region of the same mode or of a different mode. Five processes whereby the delineation of a region generates one or more additional regions are shown in Table 2. These are: verbalism, optative projection, inversion, hypostasis, and paradigmatic change. Each process, moreover, results in a definite type of spatial relationship between the original and the generated regions. In the case of verbalism the relationship is tangency. In the case of projection the relationship is treelike or hierarchical. In the case of inversion it is congruency. Region formation is often a compound process linking several of the individual mechanisms in a series of distinct phrases.

Table 2
REGION-GENERATING MECHANISMS

Region-Generating Mechanism	Interregional Spatial Relationship	Examples
Verbalism-positive and negative	Tangency	"Rest of the world" "Treeless Regions" "Outback", "Down Under"
Optative projection	Hierarchy	"Europe" and the local communities
Inversion	Congruency and hierarchy	Unigov and Minigov
Hypostasis	Congruency	"Samaria" and "Judea"
Paradigmatic change	Congruency	Nation as neighbourhood v. Nation as family

Verbalism

Consider a territory of any size. A region carved out of that territory will always result in a complementary region of the same mode. If Illinois is the territory, then the delineation of the referential region "Chicago" will automatically produce a complementary referential region, "rest of Illinois". The complementary region is positive when it is regarded as a spatial entity in its own right, with its own name. It is negative when it is viewed as a mere residual, a leftover without any identity of its own. An example is Australia's "Outback". The colloquial epithet for Australia, "Down Under", is itself an instance of negative dichotomization.

This propensity to name one region in terms of another is called verbalism by the historian-ecologist James Malin. He notes that "because the civilization of Western Europe and Eastern America developed in a forest environment, the prevailing geographical terminology is that of the forest or high-rainfall climate." Forest man moving from Pennsylvania onto the plains and prairies called them "treeless and subhumid", names which have stuck, although it hardly does justice to the ecological nature of this great region (Malin 1984, 22). Malin deplores verbalism as a distorting factor in regional geography.

The foregoing are instances of verbalism in the referential mode. Verbalism can also occur in the appraisive mode. In his study of how neighbourhoods defend themselves, Gerald Suttles provides an example of appraisive verbalism: "[S]ome communities have well-defined boundaries because all the adjacent communities disclaim their residents. *The residential enclaves acquire an identity simply because they are left out of others*" (Suttles 1972, 44; emphasis added). The identity thus acquired is a negative one. Many areas called "slums" owe that bad name to verbalism. However, certain scholars have helped to rehabilitate "slums" by pointing out the positive functions that they perform for their inhabitants (Seeley 1971).

Optative Projection

To explain the mechanism of optative projection one must begin with prescriptive regions. Prescriptive regions are spatial entities for control purposes. There are two kinds of prescriptive regions. *Unifunctional regions* are one-function regions such as land use zones, soil conservation districts, drainage districts, sanitary districts, mosquito abatement districts, and coastal management zones. *A multi-functional region* is a prescriptive entity whose reason for being is to contain and regulate the relations of the one-function regions. It is a region of regions. An example is the Reedy Creek Improvement District in Florida (otherwise known as Disney World), which has the following functions: drainage control, "reclamation, irrigation, mosquito abatement, airport and highway construction, parking, recreation, fire protection, utilities, mass transit, and land use", and in addition has the powers of owning and leasing property and of eminent domain (McClaughry 1980; 376-7). Only police protection is lacking. But this type of region, which stops just short of being a full-fledged polity, is exceptional. The typical multi-functional regions in the U.S. are the city, the state, and the nation—full-fledged legal-political units.

By optative projection is meant the propensity of each type of legal-political region to give rise to two ideal (that is, optative) regions, one smaller than itself and which it wholly contains (a micro-region)

and the other larger than itself and by which it is wholly contained (a macro-region). The force behind the projection is the persistent notion that a nation's official and duly constituted political subdivisions, as well as the nation itself, are arbitrary and artificial units that need to be supplanted by entities that are whole and natural. It is their putative naturalness and wholeness that constitutes the ideality of the new projected units.

Optative projection from a North American perspective is diagramed in Figure 1, where squares represent prescriptive (that is, established legal-political) regions and circles represent optative regions. The city projects two types of optative region: the neighbourhood—a micro-region, admired for its supposed basicness and simplicity; and the metro-region, a macro-region whose ideal feature is its functional wholeness. The American state or Canadian province, the next higher prescriptive region, also projects two optative regions: the metro-region, a fundamental and unitary constituent of the state; and the river basin or some other natural region, of which the state or province may be only an arbitrary fragment. Finally, there is the nation, the highest order prescriptive region, which stands between two natural regions—the river basin and the planet itself. Thus, the whole earth is organized as a hierarchy of alternating prescriptive and optative units, Figure 1. The macro region at one scale is the micro region at the next higher scale.
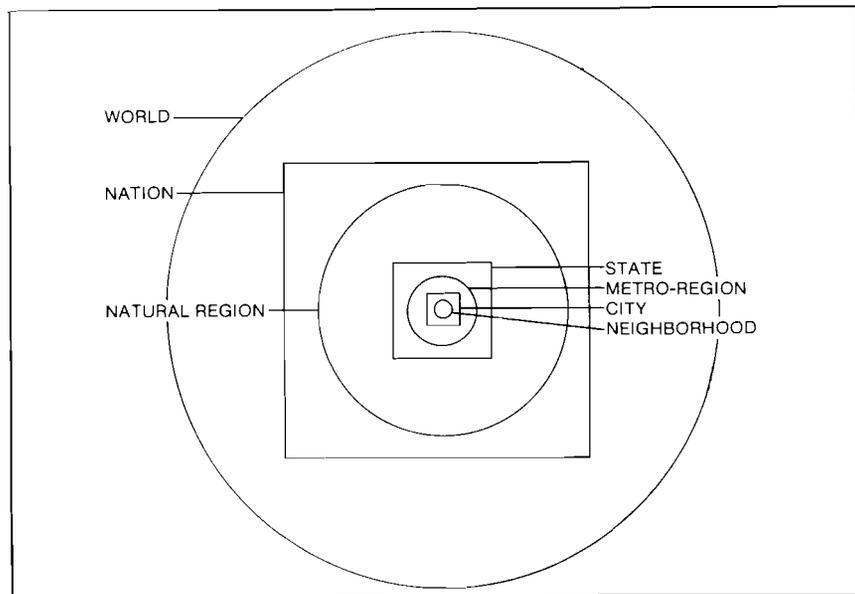

Figure 1

OPTATIVE PROJECTION

In the United States, corresponding to the hierarchical spatial ordering of the two types of region, there has also been a temporal or historical ordering consisting of alternating prescriptive and optative regions, reflecting prevailing social and economic conditions. In the depression decade of the 1930s, it was the city, state and nation that were the ascendant entities. In the 1960s, by contrast, what counted was the neighbourhood and the planet, while the official units and their boundaries seemed to blur. When times are hard society falls back on its "real" tools, its duly constituted and legal regions, to implement remedial measures. In good times the human imagination is free to conceive better worlds.

Among the American established legal-political entities—city, state, nation—the city has been the most prolific projector of idealized entities. This is the result of the low esteem in which American intellectuals have traditionally held the city (White 1962). In the realm of politics the anti-city ideology has generated both a neighbourhood government movement and a metropolitan region movement. Despite their different spatial scales, the two movements are twins, and often allies. Both seek to supplant the city as the prime local political territory with other spatial constructs. The objectives of the neighbourhood movement are to restore the presumed benefits of pre-urban and pre-industrial organization: nearness of nature, opportunity for neighbourly association, protection of the home from the intrusion of alien values. The objectives of the metropolitan region movement is to promote efficiency and equity by gathering all local urban functions and problems within the reach of a single jurisdiction.

In Europe, by contrast, the leading generator of ideal regions is the nation. The opposition to the nation has been described by Carl Friedrich as evident in an institution called in France the *jumelage* (*gemallagio* in Italian, *Verschwisterungen* in German). The *jumelage* is an elective pairing of two or more towns, cities or communes in different countries. Lyons and Frankfort comprise a *jumelage*, as do Aubenas in Switzerland, Zelzate in Belgium and Swarzenbach in West Germany (Friedrich 1963, 36).

On the face of it, the purpose of a *jumelage* is quite practical—the exchange of products, personnel, and experience among local communities with similar problems. Actually, the *jumelage* has symbolic functions as well. One is to celebrate the principle of local self-determination. The other is to assert the ideal of European unity. Both purposes are evident in the following oath sworn to by the mayors of the twin towns on the occasion of the formation of a *jumelage*:

On this day, we take the solemn oath of maintaining permanent ties between our cities, of encouraging in all spheres the transactions between their citizens for the purpose of developing by means of a

better mutual understanding the living sentiment of European fraternity, of combining our efforts in order to contribute with all our means to the success of that necessary enterprise of peace and prosperity: The Union of European Peoples (Friedrich 1963, 36).

Local self determination and European unity? The contradiction is only apparent. The principle that reconciles the two purposes is antinationalism. Just as the nation is seen as stifling the towns, so, too, it is regarded by some as blocking the path to the peaceful repossession of the common European heritage, which includes local autonomy. The towns and Europe are allies—optative regions against the nation.

Inversion

Inversion is the two-phase process whereby erstwhile optative regions become established legal-political units and the former legal-political units, now surpassed, are converted into optative regions; that is, they are romanticized, a form of idealization.[1] Using our geometric symbols in Figure 1, one might say that the circles are squared and the squares circled, Figure 2.
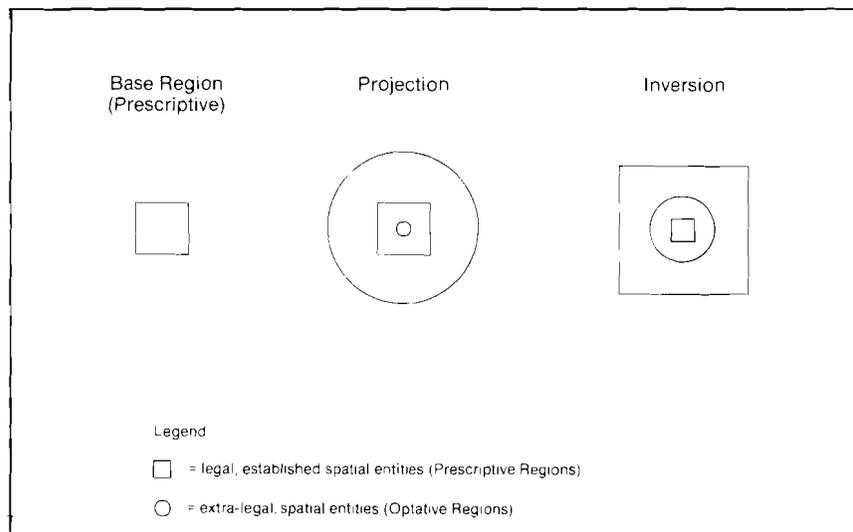

Base Region
(Prescriptive)   Projection   Inversion

Legend

☐ = legal, established spatial entities (Prescriptive Regions)

◯ = extra-legal, spatial entities (Optative Regions)

Figure 2

PROJECTION - INVERSION SEQUENCE

[1]The verbs "become" and "are converted into" are used here to avoid an awkward but more precise formulation. The logic of this analysis should require us to say that an optative region generates a congruent prescriptive region of the legal-political type and that a surpassed legal-political region generates a congruent optative region.

Marion County, Indiana, is a place where both optative projection and the inversion process went a certain distance before they stalled. For many years there had been a growing conviction on the part of some that the "problems and concerns" of Indianapolis "were not confined by city limits" (Willburn 1976), that Indianapolis was only one piece of an ideal functional whole, the metropolitan county. On the other side were those who believed that what was required was a devolution of power in favour of the city's neighbourhoods. These two movements represented the optative projection phase of the cycle. It was followed in the 1970s by an inversion phase: Under a Republican administration Indianapolis was expanded to include the whole of Marion County, creating a new congruent prescriptive entity called Unigov. Unigov had its counterpart in a plan to create 54 community council areas (Minigovs), each with a modicum of self-government. What Unigov was to the metropolitan community, these Minigovs were to be to the city's "natural neighbourhoods": realizations of an ideal—the conversion of optative regions into official legal-political entities. A Minigov Bill was passed into law in 1971 in the Indiana General Assembly. Eventually, the idea petered out. Resistance came from many Indianpolis councilmen, who feared the scheme was a threat to their established councilmanic districts.[2] The legal creation of Unigov (and the establishment of Minigovs, if it had actually taken place) is what I have called the squaring of the circles—the superimposing of a congruent prescriptive region on an optative region.

Inversion includes the circling of the squares. When a prescriptive region is supplanted by another larger prescriptive region (as Indianapolis was by Unigov) it may become an idealized object of nostalgia. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem . . .!", "O Rome!, my country! city of the soul!" are some poetic examples. Think also of the antebellum South, the Confederacy, the romance that has been made of them. But one need not go so far in time or so far from home to observe the importance of nostalgia as a factor in the organization of space. With the expansion of American cities a myriad of surpassed old towns have been romanticized: Vieux Carré, Old San Juan, Georgetown in Washington, D.C., Pullman, Illinois, are some instances. But even this does not constitute the last step in a process of symbolic regionalization. Such entities soon give rise to the "historic district", a special type of prescriptive region:

Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Galena, Jo Davies County, Illinois, as follows, to wit:

Section 1: All areas, places, buildings, structures, works of art and other objects individually and collectively, whether owned or pri

[2]Telephone conversation with Michael Carroll, September 12, 1984.

vately controlled or by any public body located within the part of the City of Galena commonly described as "the original city" and recorded as the city limits in the Court House of Jo Davies, State of Illinois, on the 28th of March, 1838, and all subdivisions added to the city prior to the 31st day of December 1859, are hereby designated as areas, places, buildings, structures, works of art or other object having a special architectural, community, or aesthetic interest and value. (City Council of Galena, Illinois 1965, 1).

Thus, many surpassed regions end up mummified, or as prized antiques.

To summarize, region formation in the United States is often an automatic process linking several of the individual region-generating mechanisms in a kind of chain reaction. A prescriptive region, usually a city, projects two types of optative region: a metro-region and a set of neighbourhood regions. All regions are then inverted. The optative regions are legitimized to become duly constituted government units (prescriptive regions), while the former prescriptive region, or part of it, is romanticized or otherwise idealized. A final step occurs when the now idealized city undergoes a further metamorphosis as a special historic district. Thus, in the temporal dimension, as in the spatial, the process of region formation consists of a series of alternating prescriptive and optative regions. As seen in the case of Indianapolis, actual events or particular circumstances may intervene to prevent the full working out of these processes, but they are nonetheless present as powerful region-generating tendencies within the North American metropolitan system.

Hypostasis and the Reverse Logic of Planning

A region, most briefly defined, is any quantity of space or time treated as a unit (Boulding 1985). The term referential region denotes those spatial units that are mainly the results of scientific inquiry. Here "scientific" signifies that the relevant areal interest is to discover non-human order in the environment, as distinguished from attempting to reshape the environment in line with human values.

The search for order may yield natural and cultural regions. It does not necessarily result in the discovery of nature-*given* and culture-*given* regions, meaning regions that exist independently of, or prior to, human interest. A climatic region, for example, is a natural region in the sense that it is an abstraction from natural phenomena that corresponds to a particular scientific interest. Some might argue that it is a region that scarcely exists apart from that interest. The case for *a priori* regions appears much stronger when the subject is large homogeneous masses—oceans or continents; Australia, let us say, or Green-

land. However, a region based on *material* concreteness-solidity, spatial compactness, separations in space from like objects, and so forth, is no less a mental construct than one based on meteorological considerations. Whether, beyond humanly-defined regions, there are, indeed, nature-given regions, in the sense of spatial entities that cohere on the basis of some principle other than that they correspond to a human interest (for example, the interest of a supreme knower), is a question for metaphysicians. This much may be said, however; the idea of scientific truth implies faith in the existence of an objective world totally independent of man but knowable by him. And among the products of this faith are regions that are regarded as true nature-given regions, not mere abstractions. Since our concern here is with the search for natural order as a distinct "areal interest" and not with the validity (that is, the truth value) of its results, such regions must constitute a part of the list of referential regions.

Referential regions are those that are believed to exist independently of human purpose. Scientific inquiry is the principal but not, however, the exclusive producer of referential regions. Certain other regions in the same mode have their source in one of the other grand *motifs* of regionalization—valuing and acting. For lack of a better term, they are here called "hypostatic" regions. They are noteworthy because they help answer the questions: Where do regions come from? What are the forces behind their generation and proliferation? What symbolic functions do they serve?

Hypostasis is the noun form of a Greek word whose verbal form in English is hypostatize. This verb means "to make into, or regard as a separate and distinct substance; also to assume as a reality" (Webster). As used here hypostasis denotes a process whereby an appraisive region indirectly generates what is assumed to be a "real" region; that is, a referential region either of the natural or of the cultural variety.

To explain hypostasis and how it becomes a phenomenon frequently observed in planning and politics, we must now add two more terms to our graphic vocabularly. In Figure 3 the irregular polygon represents any referential region and the shaded patch an appraisive region. The square, as previously defined, stands for a prescriptive region. In what manner do planners relate these spatial entities? In what sequence? There are two answers to these questions, corresponding to two radically different models of planning. The first is represented by the following sentence: "Something is wrong; let us correct it." Here, "something" corresponds to reference, "wrong" to appraisal, and "correct" to prescription. According to this model the planner begins with a "something"—an object assumed to be given by nature or history. He or she evalutes it (it is "wrong") and acts ("corrects"). Expressed in spatial terms, a referential region leads to an

appraisive region, which in turn leads to a prescriptive region, Figure 3a. This is the classic model. It follows the stepwise course laid down by Patrick Geddes (1949): first a regional survey to get the facts, then a regional plan comprising the functions of appraisal and prescription. This model is based on the idea of the primacy of an *a priori* objective world, a created world, independent of human interest, whose structure is open to human discovery, description and action.

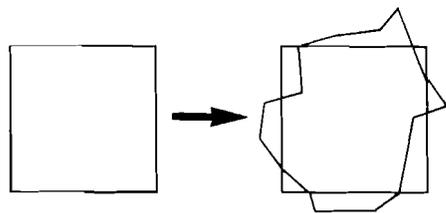**The Orthodox Model:** Reference precedes action
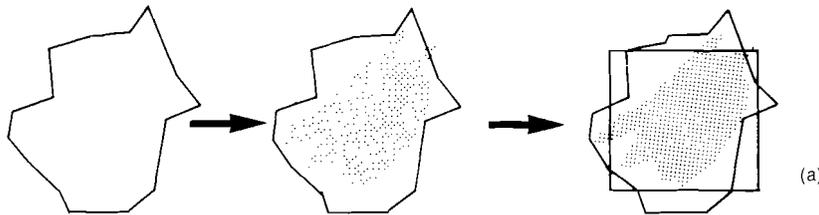
Hypostasis: Action precedes reference
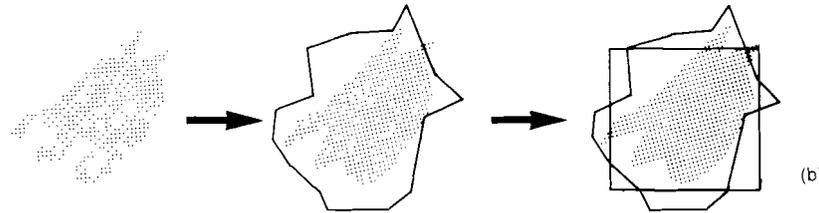
The road from an appraisive to a prescriptive region sometimes passes through a referential region.

Hypostasis may also proceed from a prescriptive base.

Figure 3
TWO MODELS OF PLANNING

But planners and politicians are not primarily scientists or historians. They do not necessarily begin with given natural or historical objects. Typically, their first impulse is to do, to act, to change; not to know. Therefore they often start at the other end of the chain. Just as science begins with nature, and planning with human action, so the logic of this kind of planning is the reverse of the logic of science. Correspondingly, an alternative model of the planning process might read: "Since we are correctors correcting, something must be wrong or (giving it an ethical twist) something is being wronged. What is it? Where is it?" Once posed, these questions are not long in discovering or inventing a corresponding object. Here, action precedes reference. Absurd? No more so than the existentialist proposition that existence precedes essence. In this model regional planning is man-centred. Its referential regions are products of politics, not of scientific inquiry. Planners use them to justify their interventions. They bank upon the pious public sentiment that what nature or history has created must be respected and deserves support. It is for this reason that the route from an appraisive to a prescriptive region often passes through an invented or invoked referential region, whose function is mainly, if not totally, tactical, Figure 3b. For example, the "discovery" of a cultural fossil, a piece of old British America, lent the force of sentiment to the establishment of the Appalachia Regional Commission in the 1960s. That entity owes more to the reformist energies of the New Deal and the Great Society than it does to cultural geography. But the sword cuts two ways. Hypostasis can be used to block action as well as to stimulate it. In the same decade, while urban renewal planners were busy characterizing certain city areas as slums so as to justify tearing them down, their opponents were countering with appraisals and prescriptions of their own that led them to discover "ethnic villages" and other not-to-be-meddled-with cultural regions underlying these areas.

Past or suppressed referential regions of the cultural variety lend themselves very well to resuscitation by means of hypostatic projection and are used by contending parties to gain or retain a diplomatic or military edge. Consider the case of modern Israel. It began as an optative region, partly of the prophetic, partly of the romantic variety. In 1948, a congruent prescriptive region was added, the State of Israel (inversion). Recently, in part for political reasons, two sub-regions were hypostatized: Samaria and Judea. Meanwhile, Israel's arch-enemy Assad has been doing some hypostatic maneuvering of his own, viewing Lebanon and, one must presume, Israel itself, as two provinces of "Greater Syria", the heir of the ancient Assyrian empire.

Hypostasis can also be used to exploit a potential eonomic advantage. Scottish nationalism, for example, has never been extinct, but it

experienced a strong resurgence several years ago with the discovery of the North Sea oil, much of which, if Scotland were an independent nation, would have been within her territorial waters. Dead natural regions are also revivied, often with political programs behind them, the "prairie", for example.

Paradigmatic Change

As noted, optative regionalization denotes the delineation of a spatial entity considered to be naturally or culturally whole, such as a river basin, a linguistic region, and so on. It often includes the envisioning for that entity of some type of ideal order. The ideal may be ecological, political, functional or social. In fact, there are as many models of ideal order as there are societal institutions to be idealized; the family, the farm, the factory, the city, the neighbourhood, the nation are some examples. Each is a design for living, working and governing that at some point has been idealized and held up as a model for territorial and social organization.

Paradigmatic change occurs when one model replaces another as the organizing principle for a territory, an event that is not to be understood apart from the operation of certain all-encompassing global events, usually cataclysmic, such as war or depression. To point to the exogenous influences leading to paradigmatic change is not to gainsay the dynamic stemming from the models themselves, the tendency of one type of model to generate a model of another type. The model may suggest a related but in some respects a subtly different model, or it may even suggest its opposite. Thus, the idea of the region as an impersonal, urbanized metropolis may call forth the counter-ideal of the region as an intimate neighbourhood. From the neighbourhood ideal it is but a short step to the image of the region as a great family. "City", "neighbourhood", "family" are, in this context, metaphors, but that does not mean that they are devoid of practical force. The energies of statesmen, politicians, and administrators and the budgets of governments have frequently been engaged in the fashioning of regions based on these metaphors, and the history of U.S. regionalism is in large part the story of the interplay among them. The following is an account of a portion of that history as the interplay of optative regions.

At the turn of the century, it was the city that dominated the American mind; not the city as the corporate entity but the city as a social ideal, an ideal region. "Within the city", wrote Frederick C. Howe, "the game of life is played and there are many prizes. Here opportunity and fortune are to be found. Here business centres." By

comparison, Howe thought the farm "barren of great possibilities. The city is El Dorado, the promised land which fires the imagination" (Howe 1914, 24).

As much as the progressive reformers felt the lure of the city, their fear outweighed the fascination. A generation of social workers strove to subdue the unruly immigrant neighbourhoods in order to make them safe for their own values. This was the ideal behind the settlement house movement. Community planners were arriving at similar conclusions and were experimenting in their own fashion with the idea of reorganizing urban life along neighbourhood lines. Out of these efforts came a kind of social invention called the Neighbourhood Unit, an arrangement of streets, dwellings, playgrounds and schools that would provide a haven for family life in the thick of the commercial city. The design, when enlarged to town scale by Henry Wright, became Radburn, New Jersey. Reformers looked forward to a time when the metropolitan region itself might be refashioned, to use Lewis Mumford's words, as a great "framework for neighbourly association".[3]

Our account thus far explains the process described earlier as optative projection and diagramed in Figure 2. The city, a political region, is to be supplanted by two ideal regions—the neighbourhood unit and the regional neighbourhood.

The spread of the neighbourhood ideal did not stop with the metropolitan region. In the 1920s it was well on the way to becoming a model for the nation itself when it was suddenly eclipsed by another model. The Great Depression diverted attention from the building of the framework for neighbourly association to fixing the broken economic machine. Earning a living, producing, distributing and consuming became the dominant themes. This change also marked a turning point in American regional planning thought. The space between neighbours is closer than the space between citizens, but it is still public space to be bridged and infilled by public works. The space between producer and consumer, on the other hand, is economic space, separating not two sovereign families but different members of the same family or even two activities of the same individual. In short, with the depression, the family replaced the neighbourhood as the basic social model, with a corresponding change in the meanings of "planning" and "nation". Henceforth, to an increasing extent, planning would mean economic planning, a subject beyond the competence of the community planner as it was beyond the architect and engineer, and nation would mean the great common home in which family-type rights and responsibilities prevail.

[3]Interview with Lewis Mumford, February 5, 1971.

In time the depression began to lift, but the family as a model for the planning and the organization of space remained. Indeed, it was greatly reinforced by economic nationalism and the approaching war. Here is Stuart Chase's Swiss Family Robinson image of the nation in 1942:

> The family has passed over a range of mountains in the southwest, let us say, and comes to rest finally in a fertile valley. Essential tools and seeds are in the covered wagon, and livestock has been driven over the mountain trail. Here are Ma and Pa and the sturdy sons, younger children, assorted relatives and some Mexican helpers. All the natural resources for survival are at hand—a stream of pure water, timbered slopes, rich bottom lands. Assume the family to be cut off for the time being from all contact with the outside world. Life depends upon their own labor and skills (Chase 1942, 27).

Erstwhile neighbours had become members of a single family, a national family, and America, their region, had become a family ranch. On Pa's and Ma's ranch everyone works. "The children contribute to the family budget almost as soon as they can walk. The duties of every man, woman and child are clear. There is game to be hunted, fish to be caught, corn to be raised, a house to be built, firewood to be fetched, meals to be cooked, wool to be spun" (Chase 1942, 27). In return, every family member receives goods and services according to his or her need.

Contemporary American social history is in part the story of the continuing attempt to substitute the nation as family for the actual families of the nation, and the resistance to that effort. It is the struggle for and against the welfare state with its parafamilial institutions—day care centres, nursing homes, public housing and the like. The nation as Great Family, however, has its rivals, some of them creations of the millenarian sixties. As the conditions that undergirded the national family idea (depression, economic autarchy) receded, the way was cleared for the resurgence of earlier themes—neighbourliness, free trade and commerce, care for the future. These were now projected at a world scale and provided the basis for a fresh set of optative regions. In a sense they are but different aspects of a single model of world unity.

The "Global Village", a supranational region, named and made famous by Marshall McLuhan, is the neighbourhood enlarged to planetary size. Like the *jumelage*, it signifies the rejection of the subordination of neighbourliness to nationality. McLuhan held that the means for accomplishing the revolution is already at hand in the shape of new transportation and telecommunication technology. These would act as the solvent of all existing regions, including the nation (McLuhan 1964).

The global neighbourhood has its counterpart in the global production unit, or, as some of its theorists have named it, "the geocentric firm", popularly known as the multinational firm. According to Howard Perlmutter", (t)he ultimate goal" of the geocentric firm, "is a world-wide approach in both headquarters and subsidiaries. . . ." It signifies the denationalization of production and the emergence of the world as ultimate industrial and commercial region (Perlmutter 1970, 74).

"Spaceship Earth", a third anti-national optative region, stands for planetary resource management. Its distinctive feature is that it is a temporal as well as a spatial entity. It represents a union of the interests of the past and the future, the dead as well as the unborn, and not merely the interests of all the living.

Summary and Conclusion

What is a region? Geographers, regional scientists, planners and social scientists of every stripe have argued the question for decades (Gore 1984, 1-11). One of the motors that keeps the debate going is the perception, a correct one, that a phenomenon belongs to (is the intellectual property of) that science or discipline that can impose its definition on all the rest, with all that implies for material and non-material rewards. In other words, there are "turf" issues involved in phenomenon definition, a fact that does not make "what is a region?" as a scientific question any easier to handle.

Interdisciplinary politics aside, however, it makes little sense to argue for the correctness of one definition vis-à-vis all the others. For what the parties to the dispute often overlook is that "region" is first of all a word, and that words are variables whose precise values are very much a matter of the systems of thought that employ them. To put the same idea in a slightly different way, words are points where diverse systems of thought intersect, a fact that explains their ambiguity.[4] The greater the number of systems of thought that crowd through these words, the more ambiguous they become. To extend the metaphor, comprehending these words, managing these complex nodes of meaning, is a bit like directing a number of different parades through a busy traffic circle. It comes down to moving, while keeping integral and distinct, the several cross-cutting and opposing flows from one side of the intersection to the other, where they can then push on to the next crossroads; that is to say, to the next ambiguous term.

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[4] I first encountered these views on the nature of meaning and its relation to words in the teachings of Professor Ivor A. Richards.

The characteristic of the approach taken in this essay, and in the earlier one of which it is an extention (Guttenberg 1977), is that it is an exercise in comprehension of the many senses of the term "region" rather than of its definition, which connotes a narrowing down of meaning. Needless to say, this approach has generated its own distinctive view of what regions are and how they are related to each other.

A region is essentially a behavioural phenomenon. Modal regions represent different facets of the adaptive human act, of man adapting to his environment. They are the spatial correlates or projection of that act in its various phases: referring, valuing, prescribing, and so on. Accordingly, modal regions are related to one another as the different phases of behaviour are related.

First of all they occur in sets, each set actually or potentially composed of a referential, evaluative, prescriptive and optative region. Together, these regions constitute a behavioural whole composed of complementary parts.

Temporality is a second characteristic of modal regions. The different members of the set tend to appear sequentially in time, although sometimes they may also appear simultaneously. Also variable is the order of appearance. A prescriptive region, for example, often follows an evaluative region, but sometimes the reverse is true.

A third distinctive feature is the source (not the character) of their spatial relationships. Modal regions owe their spatial patterns to the mechanisms that produce them, and these patterns are in some cases invariant and in others almost so: verbalism always produces contiguity, optative projection always results in a hierarchical pattern, an appraisive and a prescriptive region of the same set either overlap or they are totally congruent, and so on.

Fourth, the relations that obtain among modal regions of the same set are to some extent automatic. That is to say, a region in one mode tends to evoke or call into existence its complementary regions in the same or other modes, a result that follows either from the organic nature of modal regions or from geometric law. The following are some of the region-generating automatisms:

1. Delineating and characterizing a region automatically creates a contiguous region of opposite character.

2. Political regions—wards, cities, states or provinces, and nations—automatically generate idealized shadow polities at a scale both larger and smaller than themselves. This effect contributes to societal dynamism. The shadow polities press for legitimation. Superceded official regions repackage themselves as museum pieces.

3. Appraisive regions frequently lead to prescriptive regions. Sometimes they trigger the discovery or invention of natural and cultural

(that is, referential) regions to support a reform agenda and to induce policy movement.

Metaphors shape spatial relations by construing those relations in terms of familiar, easily-grasped images with policy implications. When metaphors change (paradigm shift) spatial relations change. Metaphors are subject to sudden change due to catastrophic events, such as depression or war. But there is a subtle dynamic at work, independent of external events and stemming from the metaphors themselves. For example, when a region composed of a group of U.S. southern and western states was dubbed "The Sunbelt", it was all but inevitable that a complementary region, "The Frostbelt", should automatically come into existence—thus far an instance of verbalism. However, partly on the basis of similar sound, "Frostbelt" soon suggested "Rustbelt". Or consider that region of the world called "developed nations". This semantic act first yielded a complementary region with an uncomplimentary name, "undeveloped nations", which was later moderated to "developing nations". Such appellations make a difference in how the regions and nations affected are understood and, understand themselves and, consequently, in how they behave.

This analysis, if correct, is also useful. Modal regionalization is a reflection of intelligent adaptive behaviour. At the same time, as a result of the automatisms involved in this form of regionalization, unintended consequences often occur along the way. To the extent that we can identify such mechanisms, what was formerly mechanical becomes conscious and amenable to control. By learning how regionalization takes place, we need no longer be totally at the mercy of automatic regionalization.

A final conclusion pertains to the policy of the discipline. Regional science is obviously a house with many mansions. Therefore, no one view of what regions are ever can, ever should, prevail; which is to say that inclusiveness, not exclusiveness ought to be the principle that guides the search for understanding. Each mansion must be explored. Beyond that there is the question of how the mansions are related to each other, the architecture of the structure. The present essay is one attempt to describe that architecture.

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