

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Culturescape: Self-Awareness of Communities

A community is like a shattered mirror. Each person possesses a piece that is large enough to see his or her own reflection. However, no one has a piece that is large enough to provide a reflection of the community as a whole.

A culturescape is a tool that enables people everywhere to participate in putting the shattered mirror of the community back together again.

Communities are fascinating places.¹ Ranging in size all the way from small towns to sprawling cities, they are filled with endless panoramas of sights, sounds, smells, textures, tastes, shapes, structures, mysteries, and intrigues. As such, they provide residents and visitors alike with infinite possibilities for experience and delight. Yet, communities everywhere are in deep trouble. Due to the rapid population expansion, the shift from rural to urban areas, uncontrolled pollution, traffic congestion, overcrowding, the nature of contemporary technology, and the excesses of economic systems, there is the mounting danger that many of the more pleasurable and rewarding aspects of community life

¹ This article is based on a highly exploratory study the author directed for Ontario's Ministry of Culture and Recreation. The study, which involved in-depth probes into four communities in Ontario, was published under the title *Explorations in Culturescapes: A Cultural Approach to Community Development*. The author wishes to thank the Ministry for permission to draw on this study in the preparation of this article. In addition, the author also wishes to thank the editor of *Cultures*, Dr. G. S. Métraux, for several valuable suggestions concerning the development of this article.

will disappear. In fact, if the proper precautions are not taken, and taken soon, community living could quickly and easily become a nightmare.

If local life is to prove pleasant rather than painful, two developments are imperative. First, we must begin to treat our communities as total rather than partial environments, since this is the only way we will be able to make effective calculations of the various costs and benefits involved in change. Second, we must create tools which allow citizens to articulate their needs and participate fully in shaping all aspects of local life. We must adopt a cultural approach to community development. Fortunately, the culturescape process satisfies these two imperatives for future living most admirably.

Communities as Total Environments

In historical terms, the approach to community development has almost always been partial rather than total. As such, community life has usually been dominated by a single, specialized activity, thereby limiting the perspective from which community development was viewed.

In the Middle Ages, the approach was primarily religious. As a result, the church became the focal point and dominant institution in the community. Not only did all roads lead to and from the church, but also, in sheer physical terms, the church towered over the community, thereby creating a sense of psychic dependence among the resident population. Even the sonorous ring of the church bells played its part. It defined the outer limits of the community. To live within reach of the sound of the bells was to live within the community; to live beyond its reach was to live outside the community.

During the Renaissance, the approach was predominantly social. In a purely physical sense, the square replaced the church at the core of community life. Whereas the church was sacred, the square was secular. Whereas the church was designed to serve religious functions, the square was meant to serve social functions. Not only was the square an important place to meet friends and pass away the time of day, but, like the church, it was designed to uplift and inspire people. Through its use as a place to enact rituals and celebrate communal occasions, it brought people into close contact, thereby strengthening the social bonds between them.

In our own time, communities have been designed to serve economic functions. Their primary object is to satisfy the needs of industry, trade, and commerce. Even the terms we use—terms such as *industrial zone*, *residential district*, *ghetto*, *worker's tenement*, *middle-class* or *bourgeois*

neighbourhood—betray the economic shadow which hovers over contemporary perspectives of the community.

Unfortunately, the negative effects of this exclusive economic orientation are mounting daily and are threatening everywhere to run out of control. People are swarming to large and small communities looking for work, particularly as economic opportunities disappear from the hinterland due to the onslaught of technological change. The result is a great deal of overcrowding, and its attendant problems of sanitation and health. In order to reduce transportation costs and profit from locations in close proximity to expanding urban markets, more and more companies are locating in urban environments, thereby creating major zoning problems and tightening an industrial knot around the centre of most communities. More industries mean more traffic, since more trucks and vans are needed to haul produce. The result is an astronomical increase in traffic on city streets, causing maintenance costs to soar, traffic congestion and major transportation and communications problems to appear. Due to the tremendous expansion of all types of vehicular traffic and the urban location of industries, severe pollution problems arise. A layer of film is added to buildings and a solid band of smog settles over community skies, thereby permitting less and less sunlight. At the same time, pollution affects the aesthetic appearance of the community and causes it to deteriorate. Nor is this all. Increasingly, the community becomes segregated, as one economic class attempts to protect itself from the effects of industrialization or the steady encroachment of other economic classes whose fortunes have been less favourable. The effect? The community becomes compartmentalized and fragmented, which leads to a serious deterioration in its emotional make-up and moral fabric. Alienation reaches alarming proportions, as an increasing number of people lose touch with their environment and become faceless people in a lonely crowd. And what replaces the church or the square at the physical core of community life? In all probability, it is a factory, a smokestack, or the head office of a bank, an insurance company, or a multinational corporation, towering over the community and stretching halfway to the heavens.

Of course, the problem here is that there are numerous side-effects to economic growth which are seldom taken into account in planning community change. Too often, the calculations are exclusively economic in nature. If economic benefits are expected to outweigh economic costs, change takes place regardless of sensory, aesthetic, social, or human consequences. What is too often overlooked is the fact that the relationship

between people and their environment is interactive and reciprocal. People's actions have a profound effect on the environment; at the same time, the environment affects people. In effect, actions invite retaliation. If people treat their environment with disrespect or fail to take the environmental effects of change into account, the environment will strike back by affecting people in some adverse way, as polluted environments do by destroying the mood and morale of people and the aesthetic quality of community life. Obviously, what is required here are cost-benefit calculations which stretch across all dimensions of community life. These are not the traditional calculations of cost-benefit analysis; on the contrary, they are new calculations which treat communities as total environments. Fortunately, the culturescape process provides a basis for such calculations since it treats communities as total entities constituent of many diverse social, political, economic, aesthetic, religious, and human components.

Interactive and Participatory Methods. If communities are to achieve desirable states of development, it is critical to evolve integrative and participatory methods which can be used by citizens and professionals for the collective betterment of society. However, those interested in the practical, methodological side of community development will be struck by two principal considerations: first, by the lack of effective methods which can be used by citizens at large for participatory purposes—to this extent, the average citizen is presently locked out of community development; and second, they will be struck by the comparative wealth of scientific methods which can be applied to community development compared with the paucity of methods available in the artistic domain which can be used for similar purposes.

The lack of effective methods which can be used by citizens at large to promote community development is understandable—community development is a comparatively new field of interest. In more established fields of activity, such as in economic, social, educational, or political development, methodological techniques tend to be in far greater supply as well as substantially more developed. Here, the challenge is often to apply existing techniques to specific situations in order to learn from the results. In contrast, the challenge in community development at the moment is to fashion a set of innovative methods capable of integrating the many diverse elements of local life as well as stimulating active citizen participation in the process.

The adverse imbalance that exists between the availability of scientific as opposed to artistic methods poses an equally serious problem.

In general, techniques which have been shaped in the scientific domain—such as observational analysis, experimentation, sampling, directive and non-directive interviewing, time-budget and expenditure studies, attitudinal surveys, and opinion polls—are already in a high state of sophistication. Unfortunately, however, they are largely descriptive in nature and are far better suited to describing problems than providing solutions. In consequence, they contribute little that is of sustained value in coming to grips with community needs. A huge gap still remains between knowing what the problem is and dealing with it. In addition, they are largely designed for professional use; they preclude all but a very limited number of researchers, experts, and specialists from participation in the process.

In broad comparison, techniques which have been shaped in the artistic domain are still in their infancy. In an historical sense, it is true that many artists have been highly sensitive to the aesthetic quality of communities and have devoted important segments of their works to depicting different aspects of this life in detail. In this connection, Brueghel with his scenes of lively Dutch social celebrations and peasant life, Canaletto and Guardi with their colourful presentations of Venice, Zola with his portrayal of the vivid colours and pungent aromas of Paris, Turgenev with his incredible descriptions of Russian life, and Renoir and Whistler with their captivating street scenes and cityscapes come quickly to mind. Why, the English composer Coates even used a musical composition to immortalize three English communities—Covent Garden, Westminster, and Knightsbridge! Nevertheless, while artists generally have been successful in capturing the aesthetic character of different communities for posterity, they have failed to fashion the artistic methods which are urgently needed to evaluate the aesthetic state of communities—methods which might also be used by citizens to improve the aesthetic quality of their surrounding environments. In short, artists have not extended the arts sufficiently into the environment so that they can begin to affect the attitudes of people and the decisions of politicians. The arts remain imprisoned behind the institutional walls of galleries, museums, theatres, concert halls, and cultural centres, thereby failing to become an integral ingredient in the planning process as they should be. As a result, the aesthetic state of most communities is nothing short of abysmal and the prospects for the future are not good. This tragedy is compounded by

the artistic experiences of most citizens. Although many citizens have their artistic sensibilities destroyed in school, all citizens have artistic tastes and are constantly making aesthetic judgments throughout their lives. The problem here is that these tastes and judgments are bottled up and remain hidden from view. What is required is the development of methods which can provide an outlet for these tastes and judgments, especially for people who have little intention of becoming involved in the institutional side of the arts. Why is this so essential? Precisely because the aesthetic character of our communities will not change until it becomes every citizen's business, and this will not happen until ways and means are created which permit the large majority of people to participate in the aesthetic transformation of community life.

If new methodological techniques are to be created which can be used effectively by citizens, civic authorities, planners, and professionals to raise community consciousness to new and loftier heights, it is as essential to fuse the scientific and artistic components to form a methodological whole as it is to promote active citizen participation in the process. Here again we encounter the advantage of the culturescape. It acts as both a catalyst and synthesizer. As a catalyst, it prompts people everywhere to get involved in the design and development of their environmental habitats. As a synthesizer, it provides the common ground for science and art to unite for the cultural enrichment of community life. The reason for this is that the culturescape process possesses three properties—the properties of exploration, education, and discovery—which are fundamental to all artistic and scientific activity.

Culturescape Constructions

There is nothing mysterious about the idea of a landscape. In effect, a landscape is a visual exposition of the natural and man-made sights of an environment. It exposes the way in which the eye surveys an environment, sometimes stopping to focus on distinctive features, often roving rapidly over features it takes for granted, but always snapping mental pictures and making selections as it moves.

Nor is there anything mysterious about the idea of a soundscape. A soundscape is the ear's answer to the eye. It is an aural exposition of the different sounds of an environment. It reveals the way in which the human ear samples natural, mechanical, and human sounds, opening wide to sounds which are soothing and closing off sounds that are unsettling.

It follows from this that a culturescape is an exposition of all the

different cultural features—natural, historical, sensorial, social, economic, political, aesthetic, and human—of an environment. It is an environment assaulted by all the human faculties—an explorer's curiosity set loose on the incredible panorama of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, textures, institutions, activities, and events encountered in daily life.

Landscapes and soundscapes cut down into environments. They are discrete notions, designed to look at environments through the vertical lenses of specialization. As such, they are structured to explore similar facets of life. In contrast, culturescapes cut across environments. They are integrative, horizontal notions, designed to reveal the infinite and inter-related nature of many diverse facets of life. They are structured to bring things together, not set things apart

One of the most fascinating characteristics of landscapes and soundscapes is the way in which they can vary so much from individual to individual. What may be significant for one person may be quite insignificant for another. Two artists can paint the same landscape and the attention given to layout, detail, colour, shading, and overall composition can be so varied that an observer would swear that two different landscapes have been portrayed. Two composers can listen to the same sequence of sounds and hear entirely different compositions. In much the same way, two people selected at random can be exposed to the same landscape and their eyes will settle on entirely different natural and architectural features. Or they can be exposed to exactly the same sound series—vehicular traffic, human voices, different languages, or orchestral music—and react very differently to these sounds.

Like landscapes and soundscapes, culturescapes can be highly personal affairs. They can be simple or complex, conscious or intuitive, depending on the amount of detail that people's sensory and intellectual faculties have chosen to record. Two people can spend three days exploring Paris, London, Mexico City, New York, Marrakech, Istanbul, Calcutta, or Beijing and their experiences will be totally different. Whereas one person will be highly sensitive to sights and sounds, the other will be highly responsive to smells and tastes. Whereas one may be extremely curious about the history of the city being explored but rather indifferent to its natural features, the other might be wildly enthusiastic about its parks, conservation areas, and topographical features but completely bored by its historical accomplishments.

Such experiences reveal much about the different phases which comprise the culturescape process. First, there is the absorptive phase in

which people soak up many details about the surrounding environment. Next, there is the evaluative phase where people imprint their likes, dislikes, and habits on the environment. This is the highly subjective part of the process. Finally, there is the responsive phase where individuals respond to the mental blueprints they tuck away in their minds. These three phases usually happen so instinctively that they form a continuous process. But how does the process get started? How does it gather momentum? More importantly, how does it become an integral part of local life, a tool for community improvement?

Building a Sensory Profile of the Community. Respecting citizens for the important contributions they can make is the key to successful initiation of the culturescape process. Through respect for each citizen's contribution, more and more people will be anxious to participate in the process. When this happens, every community becomes a hidden treasure with all sorts of fascinating gems sunken just below the surface. But, as citizens, how often do we take the time to dig into our communities to become acquainted with their treasures? How often do we take our communities for granted, assuming that we know what services they provide as well as what programs are available to enrich local life? How much do we really care about the aesthetic state of our communities—their captivating or disturbing sights, sounds, smells, textures, and tastes? Perhaps we assume too much and explore too little.

Given the strong visual orientation of contemporary life, as soon as we commit ourselves to in-depth exploration of our communities, we will probably find that the visual aspects will predominate. Every community contains an endless array of visual images—flowers and trees, parks, homes, gardens, factories, stores, office buildings, billboards, halls, malls, and shopping centres. Our eyes may instantly fasten on many of the larger visual attractions—homes, buildings, and offices. However, this should not be allowed to overpower many of the smaller visual delights of the community—lights, benches, flower pots, kiosks, clocks, gables, and pieces of sculpture—or lack of them. At the same time, the eye would also be well advised to pay particular attention to the floor of the community—its pebbles, cobblestones, cut stones, bricks, asphalt, soils, grids, and drains—as well as to the roof of the community—the daytime or night-time silhouette it etches against the eternal sky.

Visual exploration of the floor, roof, and street furnishings of the community should help train the eye to focus on larger visual patterns:

simultaneous movement systems of people and vehicles, city blocks, communal squares, street furnishings, landscaping, and planning arrangements. At the same time, aesthetic faculties should be called into play. Not all of the sights will be pleasing. In fact, many will be disturbing: traffic congestion, obnoxious signboards, commercial strips, jungles of wires and poles, littered streets, run-down store fronts, shortages of people places, and the surfeit of splashy advertising enticements.

The strong visual overtones of the community should not be allowed to obscure other sensory characteristics—textures, smells, tastes, and sounds. The satisfaction derived from visual exploration and discovery should help to activate interest in the other sensory dimensions of the community.

At the same time that the community possesses a fascinating admixture of sights, so it also contains an incredible assortment of textures, each calling out to be caressed. For example, take the building materials of the community. What a vast array of different woods, metals, stones, and bricks abounds everywhere—some of these materials are smooth and fine; others are rough, granular, and full of interesting indentations; some are highly finished; others are left in their natural state. Each ready to reward the tactile explorer with their intimate secrets.

Are the community's smells and tastes any less important than its sights and textures? Yet, how indifferent we tend to be to the various smells of the natural and man-made environment, primarily because pollution has dulled our sensory faculties. However, it would not prove overly difficult to piece together an olfactory profile of the community. Such a profile might include the enchanting scents of favourite flowers in the local park, the intoxicating smells of various perfumes and colognes, the gaseous vapours of exhaust fumes, the distinctive scents of spring saplings or decomposing fall leaves, the pungent odours of local industries, or the beckoning aroma of the local pastry shop.

A visit to the local pastry shop to sample its oven-fresh pies, cakes, breads, or rolls should help to open up the world of taste. This may be followed up at home by experiments which expand gastronomic knowledge of different vegetables, meats, wines, sweets, spices, and herbs. Here, the emphasis may not be on what is habitually pleasing to the taste buds, but rather on what needs to be known about the incredible diversity of tastes. Families of spices and herbs—cinnamon, mace, nutmeg, and cloves, or basil, thyme, marjoram, oregano, and tarragon—will be sampled in succession to expand culinary awareness. New vegetables, such as

chicory, escarole, endive, garbanzos, leeks, and parsnips, will be added to salads to enhance their taste. Questions will be asked in local supermarkets about the need for artificially produced tastes or prepackaged foods. More requests will be made in local restaurants for regional specialities and home-cooked delicacies. Slowly, prepackaged, plastic tastes may even yield to local, indigenous tastes as more and more residents express their demands for culinary reform.

The sensory side of the culturescape composition is not only scored for sights, smells, textures, and tastes. It is also scored for sounds. No less an authority than John Cage contends that music is sound, the sound we hear around us, whether inside or outside the concert hall. An increasing number of contemporary composers share this conviction.

A group of composers connected with the World Soundscape Project believes that there is a soundscape of natural, human, and mechanical sounds which corresponds to the landscape of physical and architectural sights. They contend that the soundscape of the world is in reality a vast musical composition which has been badly orchestrated in the present century. There has been an imperialistic spread of many of the most grotesque and taxing sounds imaginable. The hard-edge sounds of modern technology—from power tools, lawnmowers, factories, machines, cars, trucks, planes, motorcycles, and other mechanical devices—have masked out almost all human and natural sounds in many parts of the world. In pre-industrial and rural cultures, natural and human sounds account for up to 95 per cent of all sounds, with the sounds of tools and technology accounting for the remaining 5 per cent. In industrialized and urban cultures, the proportions are virtually reversed. The sounds of machine technology account for an alarming 70 per cent of all sounds—and at progressively higher and higher decibel levels. This has brought in its wake two concomitant developments. First, it has caused increased deafness and impaired hearing. Second, it has turned most communities in industrialized societies into sonic sewers. By promoting improvements in noise abatement legislation and aural acuity—through “ear-cleaning and ear-training” exercises, sounds museums, and sounds walks—the World Soundscape group hopes to inspire a universal movement for a better world soundscape—a soundscape which will prove vastly more satisfying to ear and mind.

Determined explorers will not allow the local soundscape to pass unnoticed. Rather, they will store sounds away in the bank of memorable acoustical experiences—wind rattling against metal, birds singing at dawn,

rain drops on a tin roof, train whistles, fog horns, factory sirens, revving motors, church bells, and the clatter of horses' hooves on pavement. Like the composers of the World Soundscape Project, committed explorers will soon discover that many of the most beautiful sounds are disappearing, due to the rapid onslaught of technological sounds and the lack of effective noise abatement legislation. This too will be added to the expanding sensoryscape of the community.

A Constellation of Community Profiles. At the same time that some residents will be contributing to the building of the sensory profile of the community, others will be involved in the piecing together of other types of profiles—natural, historical, scientific, institutional, human, and aesthetic. Each profile will possess its own peculiar characteristics.

Some citizens may become interested in fashioning a natural profile of the community and its environs. Here, probes will be conducted into the topographical contours of the community: its hills, valleys, rivers, streams, embankments, and overall geographic setting. Parks and conservation areas will be studied in detail for their scenic appeal, flora and fauna, fragile botanical systems, and distinctive ecological features. Others may be interested in painting an historical portrait of the community which illustrates why it was originally settled, how it grew in response to different types of needs, and when it underwent periods of profound change. To do this effectively, it may prove necessary to draw on museum holdings, archival material, old photographs, library records, and newspaper clippings. Through this, an impression will be gleaned of the different layers of culture which combine to form the overall cultural composition of the community. Still others may be interested in preparing a scientific profile of the community. This will entail probes into transportation and communication systems, changes in climatic conditions, meteorological studies, and the activities of different research agencies.

Active interest in the institutional profile of the community may result from visits to different community resources, such as museums, libraries, social agencies, government offices, factories, banks, insurance companies, commercial enterprises, boutiques, community centres, concert halls, and sports arenas. Standing behind this complex network of institutions are the myriad individuals and organizations responsible for the numerous programs and services which are offered in the community. How unaware we tend to be of the various programs and services which are available to us either as residents or visitors to communities. How

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little knowledge we have of the real functioning of our numerous institutions. Travelling down this path is essential to the crystallization of a comprehensive community culturescape. Not only is there exposure to the inner workings of the community as a dynamic and evolving entity, but also much more is learned about the way in which complex decisions are made—decisions which affect the planning, design, and development of all our communities.

People who are determined to probe to the very depths of the cultural experience will be anxious to learn as much as possible about the human profile of the community. Initially, a probe into this area may start when an individual becomes interested in his or her own cultural patterns. Eventually, it will probably fan out to encompass an interest in the cultural patterns that are traced by others.

It is often said that human beings are the products of habit. Plotted over time, these habits form cycles; some of which—eating, sleeping, and working—are necessary for survival; while others—watching television, enjoying hobbies, reading, or attending meetings or parties—are highly optional. One of the best ways of documenting these cycles is to keep a cultural diary. A cultural diary differs from a general diary in that it is intended to record in systematic fashion that amount of time or money spent on life's different activities, rather than to chronicle those special little events and experiences which highlight the day. As such, a cultural diary breaks a given period of time in two ways: first, into minutes, hours, and weeks; and second, into different types of activities. Records are then kept of the actual amounts of time or money spent on these different activities. When these separate recordings are aggregated and plotted graphically on maps of the community or on charts, cycles are revealed which expose the extent to which all individuals are the products of different types of cultural habits and trace different patterns on their environment.

Cycles of human activity often act to highlight fundamental problems in community development. Much of the concern of cultural development—for greater human fulfillment in life, a more responsive environment, better conservation of resources, more citizen participation in decision-making, and a higher level of awareness—can only be accomplished by reinforcing or breaking with these established patterns of human activity. Simultaneously, new cycles are created; cycles which bring people closer to real satisfaction in their daily lives. Creation of these new cycles may require higher occupational turnover, variations in working

hours, reduced consumption of goods and services, more recreational and artistic amenities, more effective urban renewal or abatement legislation, better control of water or air pollution, greater regulation of business and industry, and more democratic forms of decision-making. Such can often be the effects of cultural change.

To achieve a full understanding of the human profile of the community, excursions into the land of individual habits should be complemented by probes into the habits of friends, relatives, neighbours, and more distant residents. Although people often betray signs of similarity in external terms, in internal terms, their lives are very diverse, reflecting their different ethnic backgrounds, religious beliefs, upbringing, education, and personal preferences. A little friendly curiosity usually brings its own rewards. Often probing in this area reveals significant differences in the way people choose to live their lives, approach jobs, practise hobbies, celebrate events, cook dishes, observe holidays, and utilize leisure time. A rich human mine exists in every community and is always ready for the tapping.

If the door starts to swing open the moment the human profile is probed, it is thrust open wide as soon as the aesthetic profile is exposed. Here is where preferences run strong and feelings cut deep. The aesthetic experience is an exceedingly personal affair. Whereas one person may detest the sound of motorcycles, planes, or trucks, another person may revel in such sounds. One person may find billboards offensive; another may find them satisfying. Some may feel that the city core needs a facelift; others may be content to leave it alone. Unfortunately, we know very little about the aesthetic preferences of people: far too often they remain hidden from view due to adverse educational or social experiences. However, since they represent one of life's realities, they should be brought out into the open and confronted for what they really are: illustrations of the infinite spectrum of likes and dislikes which comprise all communities. Herein lies one of the real strengths of the culturescape process. By allowing many sides of an issue to surface, it knits many aesthetic preferences into the cultural fabric of society.

Culturescape Choreography

As material related to the constellation of community profiles is collected, it can be choreographed in different ways to yield different results. For example, factual information about the various sensory, natural, historical, scientific, institutional, human, and aesthetic profiles can be

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classified according to the cultural sector it represents, thereby making it possible to prepare cultural inventories. Information in this form can be used as a basis for time-budget and expenditure studies or to undertake public opinion polls or attitudinal surveys. Or it might be transformed into symbolic form and used to prepare maps, walks, tours, itineraries, and exchanges which can be extremely valuable for administrative, animation, planning, and policy purposes. In one form or another, all this information relates to the supply and demand for community services. Synchronizing supply and demand in such a way that it meets the real needs of citizens and communities still constitutes the supreme challenge of all development.

Cultural Inventories. During the absorptive phase, the culturescape process acts like a sponge. It soaks up as much information as possible about community life—information which leads to a keener and deeper appreciation of the intricate interrelationships as well as the strengths and shortcomings of all community life. For purposes of administration and planning, it is possible to classify this information according to different sectors of culture. Taken separately, each sector has an identity of its own which results from the many institutions, facilities, programs, and services which comprise it. Taken together, these sectors combine to form an extremely valuable profile of the community as a total environment.

Artistic culture:	music, opera, ballet, drama, art, sculpture, concert halls, theatres, art galleries, craft shops, etc.
Folk culture:	festivals, fairs, carnivals, circuses, ethnology museums, community celebrations, etc.
Media culture:	newspapers, publishing houses, printers, radio and television stations, archives, libraries, film centres, cinemas, etc.
Recreational culture:	football, gymnastics, polo, hockey, stadiums, rinks, gymnasiums, etc.
Environmental culture:	parks, conservation areas, historic sites, streets, shopping centres, malls, residential districts, etc.
Scientific culture:	research institutes, meteorological stations, laboratories, etc.
Educational culture:	elementary and secondary schools, technical schools, universities, educational associations, etc.
Religious culture:	churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, religious organizations, etc.

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Political culture:	national, regional, and local governments, political associations, etc.
Social culture:	pubs, cafes, restaurants, clubs, veterans' associations, legions, Rotary, Kiwanis, and other service organizations, etc.
Economic culture:	commercial establishments, banks, insurance companies, factories, industries, service stations, multinational corporations, etc.

Given the highly personal nature of each individual's contribution to the culturescape, it is highly unlikely that in combination they will contain enough factual information to build a comprehensive cultural inventory or present a picture of the community as a total environment. As a result, more systematic measures may have to be introduced to insure that each sector is fully represented in breadth as well as in depth. This may necessitate the collection of comparable data for each sector on the number and nature of organizations, the size and composition of memberships, funding patterns, the character and use of facilities, and the availability of programs. Such data is a prerequisite to intelligent planning and decision-making, since it sheds light on the supply side of the equation.

Like inventory data, data on the amount of time and money residents spend on different types of activities will not be provided in sufficient detail to provide a composite picture of how the community as a whole makes its various allocations. Where individuals have chosen to keep cultural diaries in a systematic fashion, these diaries will form the basis of larger community time-budget and expenditure studies. When conducted on a sample basis which is large enough to be representative, these studies will reveal the relative allocations of time and money for the various sectors of culture, thereby providing invaluable information on time distributions and financial transactions. Information on the distribution of time between work and leisure as well as expenditure on such things as books, radio and television sets, cinema attendance, admissions to theatres, concerts, galleries, sporting events, food, clothing, and shelter will help to fill in the demand side of the equation.

Attitudinal surveys and opinion polls can also make extremely valuable additions to the culturescape process. In one form or another, both techniques get residents thinking about the character of their own lives as well as exchanging ideas about how the community might be improved from a cultural point of view. Every resident makes a fundamental decision by choosing a place to live and a line of work to pursue. The factors affecting



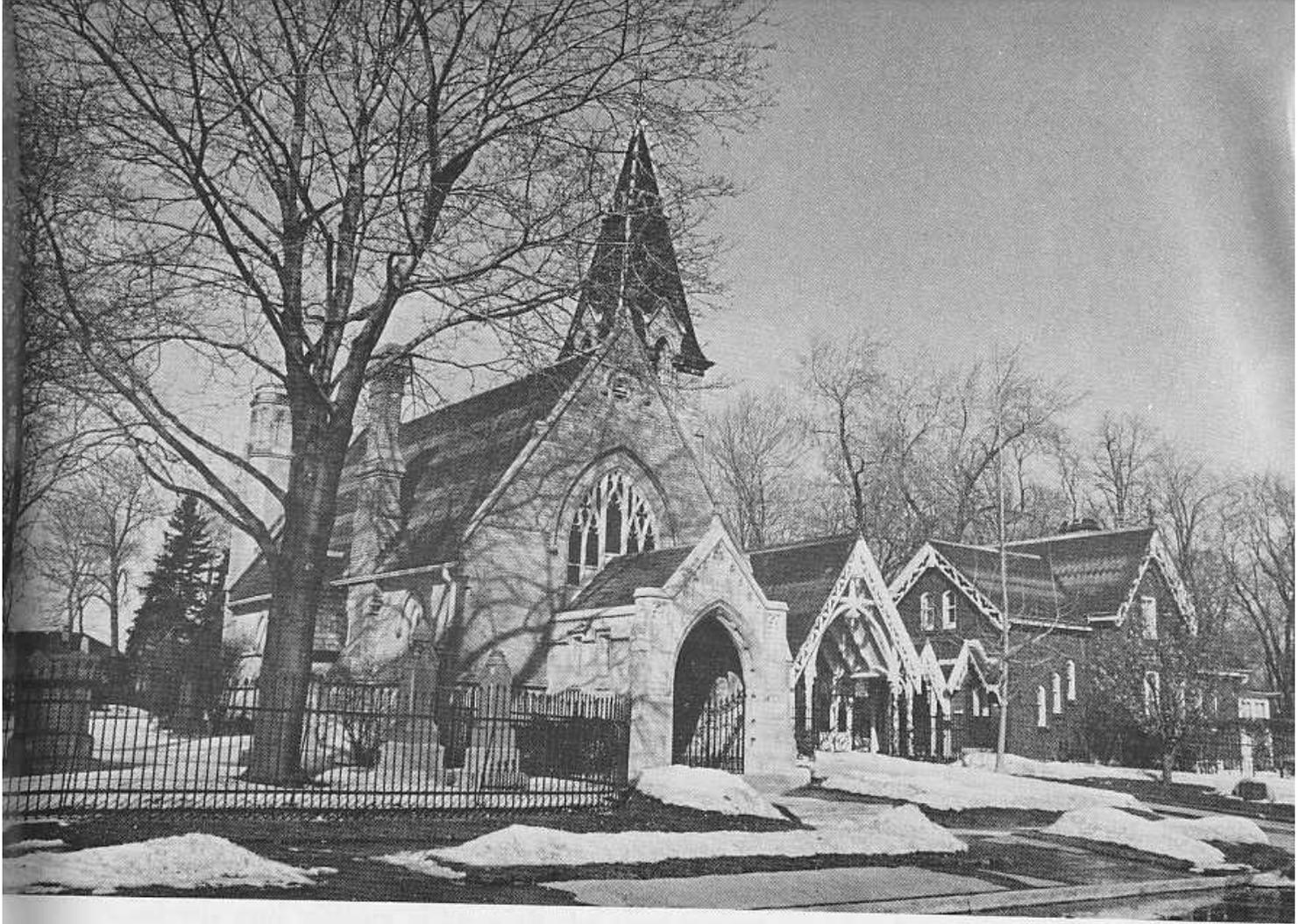
1. Natural profile, Hespeler, 1975. Ph. X.
2. Pollution, High Park, 1975. Ph. X.





3. ▲ The town-roof and
4. ▼ visual pollution in the country, Hespeler, 1975. Ph. X.



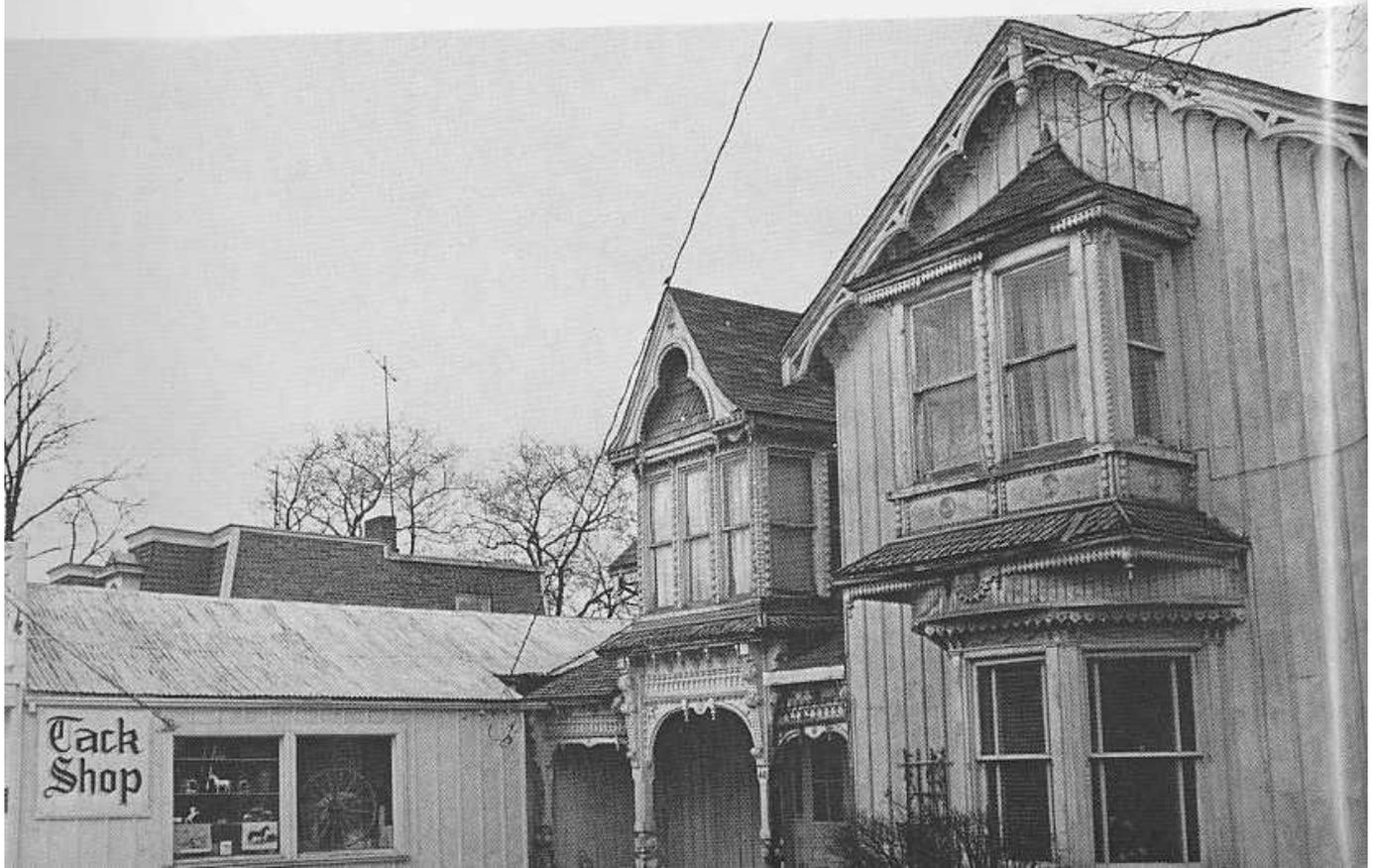


5. ▲ Historical profile and
6. ▼ visual pollution in the town, Don Vale, 1975. Ph. X.





7. ▲ Marklam, 1975: historical profile and
8. ▼ cultural layers. Ph. X.



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these decisions vary considerably, depending on the nature and location of the community, employment opportunities, proximity to nature, and the availability of social and artistic amenities and shopping facilities. Often surveys and polls which involve discussion of these factors help to bring individuals to new levels of awareness about why a particular community was originally selected or how it might be improved or utilized to better advantage. These discussions can easily lead to conversations in adjacent areas: what residents think of their community; what they like or dislike about it; how they propose changing the undesirable aspects of local life; or how they feel political authorities can best serve them in meeting their real needs. This is what makes the non-directive interview so valuable for detecting actual and latent needs. Through unstructured discussion, citizens are often pressed into closer contact with their own deeper desires.

One of the real strengths of the culturescape process is its susceptibility to mapping. Depending on the problem at hand and the symbols used, it is possible to prepare culturescape maps for informational, administrative, planning, policy, exploratory, or animation purposes.

It does not prove difficult to picture the numerous possibilities. For general purposes, it is possible to prepare inventory maps which depict the different sectors of culture as well as the various resources that are available within each sector. Visualize a community map in which different colours are used to denote the different sectors of culture—say blue for the political culture, red for the artistic culture, and green for the recreational or environmental culture—and different symbols are used to designate different kinds of resources—an actor's mask for a theatre, books for a library or school, a musical instrument for a concert hall, a greenhouse for a botanical garden, and so on. When the community inventory is plotted on such a map, an interesting graphic profile of the location and character of community resources takes shape. This type of map can be extremely useful in helping to acquaint residents and visitors alike with the vast inventory of cultural resources which is available to enrich local life.

With slight alterations, this inventory map can be transformed into administrative, planning, and policy maps which can be extremely valuable in pinpointing certain problems or plotting future directions. For example, by overlaying demographic statistics, transportation grids, and capacity data on an inventory map of this kind, it is possible to identify inequalities in the physical distribution of resources, persistent deficiencies

in programs, capacity limitations on facilities, and transportation and parking problems with respect to accessibility to resources.

Inventory, administrative, policy and planning maps all share one thing in common. They all use objective “data”—such as physical locations, organizational types, user information, time allocations, expenditure patterns, and recorded responses—as their point of departure. Much of this data will have been systematically collected and recorded to provide an external portrait of community life. But there is another equally valid approach to culturescape cartography—an approach which grows out of the subjective side of human nature. It takes as its point of departure people’s personal reactions to their environment and uses the frequency with which people refer to different likes and dislikes to arrive at an “objective” portrait of community reactions which is in reality an aggregation of many “subjective” impressions.

Suppose residents were asked to list their major likes and dislikes of a community. Now, picture a map on which these likes and dislikes are overlaid one on top of another. What begins to emerge is a highly impressionistic map which reveals at a glance many of the collective likes and dislikes of community residents. By denoting likes which have been referred to with the greatest frequency by spoked circles and dislikes which have been referred to with the greatest frequency by rectangular bars, a portrait of collective likes and dislikes quickly emerges. These impressionistic maps—which may reveal such things as favorite restaurants, special haunts, well-travelled streets, noisy intersections, obnoxious odours, traffic irritations, grotesque buildings, disturbing sights, and satisfying sounds—can be extremely valuable for planning and policy purposes. In fact, they may be the most salient planning vehicles of all, since they do not represent the attitudes of a few highly specialized, professional planners but rather the collective reactions of residents at large. To this extent, they help to explain those strong and often unexpected reactions which come from citizens when planners decide to change some aspect of the environment which citizens cherish very highly. Getting information about these reactions out in the open in advance helps to avoid needless confrontations among citizens, planners, and politicians.

In a sense, inventory and impressionistic maps represent dialectical approaches to culturescape cartography. Between these extremes, different types of maps can be produced which help to illustrate the constellation of possible culturescape profiles. For example, it is possible to produce maps which depict the range of sensory characteristics of the

community, such as its sights, sounds, smells, textures, and tastes. These maps can be extremely valuable in prompting people to explore their surrounding environments, as well as in identifying aggravating sensory irritants. In much the same way, it is possible to prepare maps which reveal the different natural, historical, institutional, human, and aesthetic dimensions of community life.

Like landscaping, culturescaping describes a process which involves selections as well as collections. It draws information together, sifts and sorts it, and selects the information which most satisfies the objectives involved. Suppose the objective is to prepare a community walking tour. Using the inventory approach, information from the inventory can be used to identify prominent cultural monuments. This information can then be written up in capsule form, symbolized, and plotted on a map of the community. The result is a highly interesting walk which directs people to specific resources and special landmarks. Most guide books are prepared in this way. Through the collection of a vast amount of inventory information, they rank or star selective sights and provide a descriptive itinerary which is broken down according to the varying amounts of time that residents or visitors have to devote to a particular community. Research undertaken in connection with the development of this culturescape methodology reveals that this approach tends to highlight the monuments and institutions of the community—its art galleries, museums, community centres, old buildings, historic sites, festivals, fairs, theatres, factories, and athletic facilities. What is particularly significant is the fact that a much different walking tour results when the impressionistic approach is used. Much more emphasis is placed on the “magnetic cultural forces” which residents cherish about their local life—an interesting gable, an old dilapidated building, a pub, a city block of contrasting sights and sounds, the aroma of a favorite restaurant, a special haunt from which to view human interactions, a curio shop, or perhaps a mural in a building. These items reveal the more intimate character as well as the collective preferences of community life. By identifying, describing, and linking these together, a very different kind of tour is produced.

Discrepancies between the two approaches show up most clearly by asking residents to compare their own preferences with things they would recommend to visitors or friends who express an interest in getting to know their community better. Most often, residents’ own preferences are subjective and impressionistic, often tinged with a touch of nostalgia. What is recommended to friends and visitors is usually much more ob-

jective and systematic. A curious difference? How often do we find ourselves in the position where we are in a strange community longing to know it the way residents know it, only to find that we end up religiously following a guide book of systematically prepared cultural monuments? How often have we found ourselves in the position where we have recommended tours to visitors and friends that have not even been remotely connected with the cultural experiences which bring joy and happiness into our own lives?

As far as the culturescape process is concerned, what is required here is a synthesis of the inventory and impressionistic approaches—a subtle blending of the best features of both approaches to form a fascinating excursion which exposes the “monuments” and “magnets” as well as the macrocosmic and microcosmic dimensions of community life. Here is the point where science and aesthetics fuse to form the art of culturescape choreography. Great care should be exercised to insure that many audio, visual, and verbal technologies—tapes, photographs, slides, sketches, written commentaries, and miniature replicas of the community—are brought to bear on the realization of this necessary synthesis. Extreme caution should be exercised in planning the character and extensiveness of maps, walks, and tours so as not to overload or overdefine them.

Maps, walks, and tours of the community should really be designed to promote curiosity and exploration as well as education and discovery. Curiosity and exploration are needed to uncover the richness of resources; education is needed to expose the fullness of community life; and discovery is needed to raise the community to new levels of consciousness. How are these best accomplished? Perhaps by using a little creative imagination in the preparation of various maps, walks, and tours. For example, if a visitor is interested in taking a tour, rather than laying out a prescribed route, possibly the visitor should be given a series of photographs which expose some of the more unusual details of the community—an unusually shaped eavestrough, an ornate gable, an old verandah, a small piece of sculpture. This should prompt an active search for those special items and objects which enrich all communities. These photographs might even be arranged in degrees of difficulty such that the visitor progresses from photographs which depict macro details to photographs which depict micro details. Very often, more can be learned about a community through an active search for its hidden treasures and small details than through in-depth documentation of its major monuments and historic sites.

Itineraries and Exchanges. Just as every person has a different set of likes and dislikes with respect to the community in which they are resident, so each person imprints a different pattern on the environment. Spurred on by unquenchable curiosity, some people explore environments in great depth. They are not satisfied until they have overturned many stones, thereby tracing out intricate patterns of movements and probes into many facets of local life. Others trace out much simpler patterns; patterns which reflect needs that are more habitual in nature. Nevertheless, all are valid, since all expose the infinite variety of human needs—needs which vary markedly from person to person. Close inspection of these needs reveals in the minutest detail how each person lives a life that is without duplication elsewhere. It is often said that every person has a double living somewhere else in the world. While this may be true for people's physical appearance, it is certainly not true for the cultural patterns they create.

As a result of these differences, another fascinating possibility in the field of culturescape choreography is to ask people to record their likes and dislikes of the community. These may be recorded in the form of itineraries which range all the way from “all likes” to “all dislikes” to various combinations of the two. These itineraries can be designed to take a morning, a day, or several days to complete. The advantage of having itineraries prepared in this way is that they can be exchanged one for another, thereby providing people with an opportunity to experience their community from perspectives that are different from their own. The act of exchanging itineraries is not dissimilar to the act of trading secrets about unusual wines or unique restaurants except that it is organized on a much larger and more formal scale. An interesting possibility in this regard is to ask school children at different levels of the educational system to prepare “culturescape itineraries” of their community. What is particularly revealing is how their perceptions of the community differ from the perceptions of adults not only in terms of their likes and dislikes, but also in terms of their most cherished cultural attractions. This is not really surprising. Remember as a child how many secret hiding places you had in the community where you could let your private thoughts take hold and your imagination roam. Another possibility along the same lines is to ask a group of adults to prepare similar itineraries. These itineraries are then exchanged and experienced by others. Following this, the group is reconvened in order to discuss the results. Here again, it is amazing what

is learned about the values and perceptions of others as well as about the reactions of people to their environment and the richness of community life. What emerges is a dimension of the human personality which is seldom revealed in group therapies and encounter sessions, since it is based largely on reactions to the external rather than the internal environment. At the same time, this approach has the distinct advantage of sensitizing people to the quality of their environment and arousing their interest in community improvements.

Housing the Culturescape

Every individual possesses something unique to contribute to the community culturescape. In all probability, these contributions will take different forms. For some, they will be itemized itineraries of daily or weekly events. For others, they will be recordings of likes and dislikes. For still others, they may be actual objects, such as old photographs, artefacts, tapes of oral histories, antiques, maps, records, or other memorabilia of community significance. In any event, as the culturescape process takes hold and these contributions grow, facilities will be required to house all this burgeoning activity.

There is no prescribed home for culturescape activity. It will vary from community to community depending on a variety of factors: the extent of participation, the nature of citizen contributions, the availability of suitable space, the level of public commitment, the existence of special skills and audio-visual equipment, and the unique character of the community itself.

In some communities, activities which form part of the culturescape process are being carried out by various institutions under different names. Museums collecting and classifying local artefacts are engaged in one aspect of the process. Universities or colleges involved in taping oral histories of long-time residents are engaged in another aspect of the process. Likewise, centres dispensing information about basic services are also engaged in a prominent part of the process. By undertaking these functions, each of these institutions is making a valuable contribution. As such, each of these institutions would make a suitable home for the community culturescape.

Nevertheless, when all this activity is added up, it will be discovered that the most important part of all is missing. At the present time, there is virtually no community in the world that has a central source to which residents can bring their different contributions; through which they can

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become actively involved in planning the development of their community as a dynamic entity; and from which they can acquire information that has been choreographed in different ways to expose the diverse dimensions of community life. What is urgently needed is the establishment of Culturescape Centres in every community which are devoted to the collection and presentation of interesting community memorabilia; the orchestration of many different types of maps, walks, tours, itineraries, and exchanges for in-depth use by citizens and visitors; and the utilization of miniature replicas and planning models which illustrate how proposed and actual changes affect the sensory, economic, social, political, aesthetic, and human character of communities. When this happens, citizens everywhere will have an opportunity to weigh for themselves the relative costs and benefits of different changes on community life. Moreover, they will also have the necessary vehicles to express their discontent with certain types of proposed changes, as well as the tools to actively participate in future community improvements. In this way, community development will be shaped less and less by the desires of a few politicians and specialized planners and will be channelled more and more in directions which reflect the real needs of the citizenry at large.

What facilities, equipment, and skills are needed in these Culturescape Centres to accommodate the multifarious activities? These will vary according to local circumstances. A large, free, comfortable space, capable of hanging billboards and maps, displaying models, recording feedback, storing memorabilia and artefacts, and dispensing recommended walks and tours would be perfect for such purposes. This space should be complemented by people who possess special skills, such as photography, mapping, documentation, classification, exhibiting, and tour preparation. Local artists, craftsmen, librarians, historians, photographers, audio-visual experts, municipal mappers, and museum curators would be particularly useful in this connection. Where it is not possible to have a Culturescape Centre in its own right, suitable space should be provided in a museum, a library, an arts centre, a sports complex, or a community hall. However, given the enormous importance of this activity, an independent home in or near the centre of the community would be preferable, even if this home is not constructed specifically for these purposes. In fact, a deserted factory, an old warehouse, an abandoned building, a boarded-up shed, or a dilapidated railway station would all make ideal homes for piecing together the community's mirror image of itself.

Patterns of Development

As microcosms, all communities are unique—they make collective statements which reflect the myriad events and activities which comprise them. In terms of minute details—in the naming of streets, the location of shops, the design of parks, the laying out of transportation systems and subdivisions as well as the celebrating of special events—no two communities are alike. Yet, as macrocosms, many communities exude similar patterns of development and betray routine ways of ordering the different aspects of daily life. By far the most prominent of these patterns of development are the imposed, the imitative, and the indigenous. In one way or another, most communities settle for one of these three patterns of development.

The imposed pattern traces out the most familiar design. On an international scale, it is most easily identified as the product of imperialism, the process whereby some communities, due to their superior economic, political, or military power, are able to subject other communities to their will. In such cases, values, institutions, and technological practices which originate in the dominant community are imposed, either through physical force or subtle suasion, on subservient communities. This pattern may result from forces that are external or internal to the community. It may result from the actions of governments or large corporations which, through the use of enticements or sanctions of various kinds, manage to impose their desires on communities with strategic locations or favourable resources. Or it may result from outside experts who are imported into a community with the express purpose of implementing pervasive programs. Or it may be the product of actions by a mayor or the local authorities who are determined to see the community benefit from a particular project.

Regardless of whether it emanates from forces without or within, the imposed pattern usually is the result of a vision that is shared by only a few people who have powerful positions inside or outside the community. This is not to say that it is necessarily subversive or counterproductive. Due to the lack of techniques to detect real community needs, local leaders often find themselves in the invidious position where they are compelled to make assumptions about needs as best they can or to proceed with programs that are highly uncertain in their ultimate outcome. Often, their decisions are made with the very best of intentions. Nor are the results always undesirable. An examination of many of the world's greatest accomplishments reveals that many contributions have been made by

leaders who imposed their visions on an unwilling citizenry—visions which were once extremely unpopular but which now enjoy great popular support. A survey of the development of many great cities confirms this. No, the real problem with the imposed pattern of development is not that it is subversive or counterproductive. Rather, it is almost always non-participatory; it excludes most people from active participation in the process.

Whereas the imposed pattern is tinged with exclusion, the imitative pattern is tinted with conformity. In effect, the imitative pattern involves copying what already exists elsewhere, often a place in close geographical proximity. Like the imposed pattern, the imitative pattern also has its strengths and shortcomings. It would be a mistake to assume that what happens in some other community does not have value or relevance, or that a community will necessarily suffer from duplicating what has proven successful elsewhere. A good part of the developmental process involves learning from the successes and failures of others. Moreover, the imitative pattern can also produce unexpected results. What starts out as inferior imitation can also end up as superior innovation, as any cursory examination of Japanese technological progress since the end of World War II will verify. Nevertheless, such experiences are rare. More often than not, communities that follow the imitative pattern fall into a trap. One of two things happens. Either duplication yields foreign matter—matter which never quite fits the new environment as well as the original environment which gave it birth. Or it proves to be too simple, thereby usurping the more creative urge that might better have come from within. In either case, the effect is often surface, rather than substantive, development.

Whereas imposed and imitative development often seem artificial, there can be little doubt about the stamp of authenticity which marks indigenous development. However, indigenous development can take its toll. By digging deep into the soil of the community, as well as by opening up all the nooks and crannies of local life, indigenous development can turn a town topsy-turvy. It can cause strife among various groups and hostility among different factions. In consequence, of the three patterns of community development, the indigenous pattern produces the greatest amount of change, change which can be exceedingly painful at times. This is what makes this pattern by far the most infrequent as well as the hardest to achieve. Nevertheless, once achieved, it can also be by far the most rewarding. Not only does it come closest to meeting the real cultural needs of citizens and communities, but also it necessitates maximum

public participation in the process of development. To this extent, it does not really represent an alternative to imposed or imitative development. By leaving no stone unturned in its search for genuine answers to pressing problems, it merely digs deeper than the other approaches to development. It involves greater risks but promises more substantial rewards.

In addition to responding to the real needs of communities and encouraging maximum citizen participation in the process, indigenous development solves several other pressing problems as well. In the first place, it satisfies the need for self-identity which underlies much of the current demand for cultural development. It is far from coincidental that much of the contemporary literature on cultural development is filled with demands for greater decentralization and more self-assertion. In one way or another, both these demands relate to the need for indigenous development: the demand for decentralization in terms of the need to create decision-making structures which respond to forces from within rather than without; and the demand for self-assertion in terms of the need for more authentic expression. Concurrently, indigenous development also satisfies the quest for diversity rather than conformity which forms an integral part of the contemporary literature on cultural development. Due to the accumulating power of modern technology and the pervasive influence of the mass media, the world is in danger of becoming a uniculture—an homogeneous culture in which consumer products, food-stuffs, clothing styles, architectural designs, and lifestyles look more and more the same. The uniform, plastic world of this uniculture looms more and more frightening in the human imagination as time goes on. In contrast, by placing emphasis on the unique, the authentic, and the creative, indigenous development promises to provide a world that is richer as a result of its differences and more humane as a result of its integrity.

Towards a World Culturescape

Over the last few decades, it has become obvious that communities are destined to play a prominent role in determining the future quality of life for the large majority of the inhabitants of the globe. Already, well over half of the population of the world is living in communities of varying shapes and sizes. Moreover, as population increases, and as technologies are invented and applied which release more and more people from rural areas, communities, from towns and hamlets to major urban centres, are

destined to grow steadily in importance as they have done virtually without interruption from the dawn of recorded time.

It is a cliché to say that people get the governments and political systems they deserve. However, what holds true for governments and political systems also holds true for communities. People will get the communities they deserve and whether these communities prove to be sources of joy and inspiration or deprivation and misery will depend fundamentally on the collective ability of people to make intelligent use of spaces and effective decisions about changes in their communities.

It is often said that people's homes are their castles. In what sense is this true? Surely it is true in the sense that regardless of wealth or their station in life, most people get highly involved with their homes. This involvement takes many forms. For the wealthy, it means working with architects on the physical layout and design of the home, supervising builders on the actual construction of the home, and sharing with interior decorators the task of selecting home furnishings. For the less fortunate, it means anything from rearranging furniture, planting a small garden, hanging a picture, using a craft object to enhance a special space, or employing a carpet to warm a room, to sweeping floors and scouring walls to keep the home free of dirt and troublesome insects. In most cases, however, people take pride in their homes. By arranging and rearranging the objects in their domestic environment, they find an outlet for their creative energies. Their environment responds to care and attention by becoming a place where it is possible to find tranquillity, comfort, security, and most of all happiness.

What has been true for the home in the past and at present must be true for communities in the future. In effect, communities must become people's castles; they must be known with the same intimacy and cared for with the same affection and attention to detail. For it is only in this way that it will be possible to create decent and agreeable living arrangements for the world's rapidly expanding population. This is why the culturescape process is so essential. It strikes at the very heart of community problems. At the survival level, it examines and reports on the basic conditions of human habitation, ranging all the way from sanitation, sewage, and the adequacy or inadequacy of accommodations to basic transportation and communications requirements. At the sensory level, it documents the dangers arising from excessive amounts of visual, aural, olfactory, and tactile pollution. At the aesthetic and human levels, it exposes major shortcomings in the quantity of services and the quality of life. But the

critical eye of the culturescape not only pinpoints problems. It also signals the way to solutions. By getting people involved and committed to their surrounding environment, it creates the necessary groundswell for a collective assault on troublesome problems. By paving the way for more realistic cost-benefit calculations, it helps to prompt action—action which can cancel out many of the irritants and reinforce many of the pleasurable aspects of local life.

Commitment to the culturescape process carries with it one other significant advantage. It can help to promote greater international understanding and respect for different cultural traditions. It is obvious that if the culturescape process was applied to four or five communities in various parts of the world, the results would be totally different. This is due to the fact that the emphasis placed on different sensory capabilities and cultural values varies markedly around the globe. In some cultures, such as the Western cultures, sight predominates. In other cultures, in Africa and Asia, sound plays a more important role. Hence the significance of the oral tradition and the escalating desire to preserve it. In still other cultures, in the Middle East, for example, smell may play a stronger role. Like the great oral tradition, the olfactory tradition, which is perhaps best epitomized by the pungent aromas of a Middle Eastern market, betrays a different sensorial dependency. What is true for sensorial dependencies is equally true for all the other cultural ingredients—natural, scientific, historical, social, economic, political, and aesthetic—which together comprise the culturescape process.

On an international scale, surely all these cultural and sensorial variations are worth preserving and extending. What we must move away from is the belief that there are inferior and superior cultures. What we must move towards is the realization that cultures are not better or worse, but merely different, and it is precisely because they are different that they are worth respecting and preserving. By highlighting these differences, the world culturescape gives stature to all communities and all cultures, regardless of their size, status, or geographical location in the world.