INSIDENESS AND OUTSIDENESS IN HUMANISTIC GEOGRAPHY

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Description

The unit introduces students to the concept of "insideness" and "outsideness" developed by the humanistic geographer Edward Relph in his PhD thesis "Place and placelessness" published in 1976. Based on the distinction between the two epistemological categories of "space" and "place" used in geography, Relph introduces different types of "insideness" and "outsideness" to distinguish different degrees of emotional attachment of human beings to specific places.

In this unit students will get to know the three dimensions of place - material, social and symbolic - and learn to reflect their own emotional attachment to specific places they have been to. In a second phase, school and university are conceptualised as "places" and students are invited to reflect upon the schools they have attended themselves in terms of - material, social and symbolic - "places" as well as to analyze a specific learning environment.

Objectives

- introduce students to humanistic geography and its development from the specific academic and social context in the 1970s and 1980s
- familiarise them with the main representatives of humanistic geography (Yi-Fu Tuan, Anne Buttimer, Edward Relph, and Gunnar Olsson)

Students learn...

- to distinguish between the two dominant epistemologies in academic human geography in the 1970s and 1980s: geography as a spatial science and humanistic geography, represented in the two concepts of "space" and "place"
- about the conceptualisation of emotional attachment to place as different degrees of "insideness" and "outsideness" developed by the geographer Edward Relph in "place and placelessness"
- to apply these concepts to their own personal experiences and different places they have been to, such as their hometown, cities or countries they have lived in, places they travelled to and the city where the course takes place
- to conceive the schools they have attended themselves as three-dimensional places and apply personal experiences of insideness and outsideness to their own school experiences
Expected Learning Outcomes
At the end of this unit the learners will have...
- ...more awareness towards schools, universities and other learning environments as learning environments with specific material, social and symbolic settings
- ...become more sensitive to the complex interrelations between the three
- ...become able to analytically reflect on the emotional attachment of pupils and students to the schools or universities they are currently attending
- ...transferred this experiential knowledge to the materiality of the built learning environment they are currently studying or working in (school, university, other learning spaces)

Applied Methodologies
- Reading – Students are asked to read the introductory chapter on the idea of insideness and outsideness from Edward Relph (1976) "Place and placelessness".
- Lecture – The introductory lecture, based on PowerPoint slides, introduces students to humanistic geography, its social and academic context, its main representatives, the distinction between the basic theoretical concepts of "space" and "place," as well as Relph's ideas on identity of place, identity with place, insideness and outsideness.
- Mapping exercise – Students are asked to draw one of the schools they have attended and map places of insideness and outsideness. They are asked to single out the specific conditions which made these places special to them.
- Exploration and reflexive photography – Students are asked to explore with their cameras (mobile phone cameras) the building or the campus in order to find specific places they consider adapted for their own learning. They present the picture and explain, what makes these places so specifically adapted for learning.

Working Material
- Electronic Presentation
Further Reading

- Relph, Edward (1976): Place and placelessness. London: Pion (Research in planning and design, 1).

Further Watching

- Edward Relph (2014): "The paradox of place and the evolution of placelessness"
  Keynote lecture at the "Place & Placelessness in the 21st Century City" symposium hosted by the Built Environment | People & Place Research Cluster at the University of New South Wales (UNSW, Sydney).
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gXqkq3Zt5k
- Edward Relph (2014): "Place and Placelessness in the 21st century"
  Interview at the "Place & Placelessness in the 21st Century City" symposium hosted by the Built Environment | People & Place Research Cluster at the University of New South Wales (UNSW, Sydney).
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjvdgM730jc
- Yi-Fu Tuan (2011): "Home as Elsewhere" - Lecture at the University of California
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jnyJeV1RAA
  Lecture on the relation between emotional attachment to places and the nature of humans to migrate.