

Restoring our Sense-of-Place

By Palace

The inherent perceptual relationships we have with the physical environment are undergoing increased displacement as we move further into a non-human mediated existence. The consequence of being metropolised moves us into a unknown paradigm whereby we don't know where we are. Poignant but ongoing resolutions in technology have been the catalyst for this change in our development. We are not only engaged in a fight to preserve and cultivate our very reality but we are now wagering a Nietzschean struggle to restore our sense-of-place in it. Contributing to this is a broad miscellany of forces, spawning from what we know as a metropolis. A conscious perceptive reclamation can only occur on the part of the individual's invention and spontaneity, exhibitive and letting Architecture and investigations in the eutechnical future: responsibilities that ask almost a polar change for each. The disoriented and captivated, will render themselves absens haeres non erit, without wealthy, earthly inheritance.

The two-thousand-year-old domain of European sphere thinking provides ground for modern re-interpretation, a development beyond the concept that God is a sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. The individual of the modern metropolis realises and now lives through this dictum. Peter Sloterdijk, whose thought-figures of spheres and conjoined spheres, foam constitutes his creation of an "ontological constitution" that would incorporate all beings—humans, animals, plants, and machines. Spheres, Sloterdijk says, represent spaces of coexistence, space that people fail to see that are integral to the understanding of the human. Varying scales and relationships of these exist and conclude with foam, the thought-image that represents the completely exhausted term, society.

The physical definition of foam is described as a multichambered system consisting of spaces formed by gas pressure and surface tensions, which restrict and deform one another according to fairly strict geometric laws. Construe this as a representation of metropolis living and you have an analogy that is formally and structurally indicative. This modern metaphor, although Sloterdijk denies it is as being one, creates a rhetorical picture of thinly-walled bubbles, importantly individual, yet probably connected by machine-mediated communication vectors that leaves us a part of a conformed semi-rigid system. It might just be a familiar way to describe how we are living, but it also represents concisely how we talk about milieu. Sloterdijk confirms that previous natural languages were developed for a world of weight and solid substances. We now articulate the experiences of the modern and post-modern with words of lightness and seamlessness which evidently construct a world based on mobilisation and the easing of burdens.

Nietzschean struggle: The core of Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche's (1844-1900) teaching took part in the establishment of the human sense and the destruction of God - this is Nietzsche's struggle.



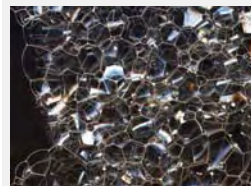
Eutechnical: Deriving from the body.

Absens haeres non erit: The absent one will not be the heir.

Sphere thinking: private, public, bourgeois, Boullée, Cénotaphe a Newton, personal.

Peter Sloterdijk (1947-): Contemporary German pop-star philosopher. Co-hosts his own television show. His magnum opus is Sphaeren III - his hypotheses evokes a neat translation to what architects call form.

Foam: Sloterdijk's thought-image (not metaphor) of Society. Can be added to and be easily broken apart. A very complex composition of individual bubbles. No voids exist between the bubbles, only within them.



Milieu: French for 'environment'.

Natural Languages: Refers to the language that human use in many forms.

The seemingly inventive thought-images that Sloterdijk provokes are in fact borrowed from the ecological expression of units. Ecological units exist in **physiological, social, psychological, and behavioral realms** and are defined as being self-generated, having a time-space **locus** and a boundary between their internal characteristics and occurrences and their external environment. They each have a relational position, defined as an ecological niche, and a feature or quality of space to perform, defined as an affordance. It is then through the relationship of the ecological niche with its affordance that the reciprocal relations between different levels of nested or related phenomena occur. Hence the sites of our spheres are by location related, analysed by contextual understanding and time-based change, and the aesthetic or performance factor of our spheres is the **architecture or spatial dimension**. Sloterdijk says that our **houses are built immune systems**, and that the apartment and the sports-stadium - mass containers - are the most important architectural innovations of the modern age.

Sloterdijk is relating these two as functions familiar to all of us, but more importantly as functions that define both ends of the **atmospheric installation spectrum**. Both of these are defined as extremes when understood in units of established or potential relationships formed. This understanding of our own proxemics is solely an unconscious occurrence. Environmental psychologist pioneer **Edward T. Hall** defined this as, ". . . the study of how man unconsciously structures micro-space - the distance between men in the conduct of daily transactions, the organization of space in his houses and buildings, and ultimately the layout of his towns." Sadly it is those with harnessed knowledge that have understood the mind as the motivation of behavior and have developed manipulative spaces for commercial gain at the expense of our own **unconsciousness**. It is the haven of our own **connected isolations** where we are minorly liberated from spaces created, managed and relying on **psychology, original research, focus groups, and direct observation**. This displacement from our own sense-of-place in what should be considered our ecological niches is made more evident with these manipulations, however more disguised to the masses. What has become more threatening to our mental state now is not our ecological niches, but rather the problem of preserving an autonomous existence whilst dealing **overwhelming social forces and the commercial rat-race**. These forces have come about through the creation of metropolis' and a **globalised** modernity.

First the universe was globalised with the help of geometry, then the earth was globalised with the help of capital and now **with each crossing of the each street**, we try to keep up with **the tempo and multiplicity of economic, occupational and social life**. The foam that are our metropolis' house, the **money economy** validate our social interactions by worth and gain. 19th Century scholar **George Simmel** compares rural-life where **the rhythm of life and sensory mental imagery flows more slowly, more habitually** than with the **arithmetic problem** of a metropolis. Thus the modern mind harbors **punctual, calculable and exact** traits only **forced upon life by the complexity and extension of metropolitan existence**. This pressurises our sense of place and develops an existence of **A to B functionality**. The metropolis becomes of series of high-speed **vectors** punctuated by **nodes** of importance or necessity. Sloterdijk's foam adopts a thought-image of a dense web of **people with such differentiated interests** trying to form a **punctual integration of all activities and mutual relations into a stable and impersonal time schedule**. This breeds a metropolitan who is completely atomised internally: maintaining their punctualities, evaluating and balancing their social relations, and engaging in impersonal transactions. All these responsibilities provide the ends of the vectors. The vector itself, the city fabric, sends manipulated, coded messages, consumed at high-speed and presents a **bodily**

Locus: Latin for 'place'.

Immune System: One only has to look at the 'Castle Doctrine in the US' or 'Make-my-day-Law' to notice that still in 31 states that a land-owner can kill an illegal trespasser or violent attacker. It may be defended as 'justifiable homicide'.



Edward T. Hall (1914-):

Anthropologist. The creator of the concept of proxemics, polychronic and monochronic people and high context culture and low context culture.

Unconsciousness: Caused by the Gruen transfer and scripted disorientation.

Connected isolations: Phrase used by Thom Mayne 15 years ago in Morphosis: Connected Isolation Academy Editions (April 1993)

Globalised: Single society.

Money economy: Try to adopt a minimisation of more-is-better. Simple living, voluntary simplicity and quality time are terms you should familiarise yourself with.

Georg Simmel (1858-1918): Rich kid who had a friends in high places. His Die Grosstädte und das Geistesleben is a timeless document. All of the issues we are dealing with now he penned in 1903.

Arithmetic problem: wall street, wall clocks, speed limits, calculators, weight, height, gravity, geometry...



Punctual, calculable and exact: See **arithmetic problem**.

A to B functionality: Cars, planes, running, modern walking. Blurs the what is perpendicular to the vector it occurs on. Arrives at the node, with no memory of the procession of the vector.

Vectors: The fastest way of getting to the nodes.

Nodes: Places to be, appointments, necessities.

Die Grosstädte und das Geistesleben: Translates to the Metropolis and the Mental Life. Written in 1903. See Georg Simmel.

Psycho geography: Collection of

proximity and narrowness of space that makes the mental responsibilities only the more prominent. This nature disorients our body to its surrounds and reduces us into a transient state, focussed only on the end destination. What links these metropolis' is plane flight, which provides a birds eye relationship with the earth's surface. As we are born flightless our bodies connect through a window not big enough for us to fit our shoulders through - one of a plethora of non-physical forms of travel.

Simmel concludes *Die Grosstädte und das Geistesleben* tellingly with as a cell, belonging only as a part, it is not our task either to accuse or to pardon, but only to understand. Despite the numerous and possibly timeless citings, his precis however overlooks the contemporary paradigm of recentralising our geographic bearings (which is a result of us living a more technologically-mediated existence). Our very sense-of-place has always been defined by our bodies with movement being defined by an exertion of muscular power. Contemporary novelist of *Psychogeography*, Will Self, describes his world comprised similarly of scattered micro-environments - or islands - of which are internally disoriented with no connections and separated by a travel that doesn't involve the capability of the body and its range. Since mitochondrial eve until the inception of the steam-engine midway through the 19th Century, the body has engaged in a fortified relationship with its physical output/input. The body-never-lies dogma is fast declining to the body-doesn't-know. If it is mass-containers that increase our potential to interact mediated by means of other humans, herein lies a method of restoring our sense-of-place - *psychogeography*.

The key psychogeographic epiphany is to engage in that very restoration - an excursion across a city that is aimless to destroy it. In the era of its inception it was formulated as a mechanism to tear apart Paris, a means to cut through the Hausmannian lines of civil oppression. Guy Debord, a theorist, whose field of operations was 1950s-Paris, lead a group of Marxist communist revolutionaries that believed our kind of societies created a spectacle - an illusion in which we live. His landmark book, *La Société du spectacle*, a known catalyst for the May '68 riots, documents a kind of micro-environment as evidence of that. Napoleon's urban-renewal project was, as *The Situationists* observed, devised to disorient them and very reality of knowing where they were would be considered a dangerous and rebellious act. The original psychogeographer's purpose was to destroy their own isolated sphere and to break open the permanent curfew whose form is geometry. This reason still exists however, today the major, evident contributor to our displacement is our machine-mediated existence.

Self describes the enormous commercial inducement that exists in residing in these micro-environments now - flight companies, travel agencies, cabs, computers, the internet, media - our pre-define interface with information. It was the automobile that was allowing "land-of-the-free" Americans to realise their dreams - now, the car is not a means of freedom - the turn of the steering wheel gives one an allusion of choosing where to go and only defines the boundaries of our micro-environments as more rigid. Slowly and jaggedly navigating our unified connobations, through what we ironically know as wind-screens heightens our re-active instincts yet displaces our body even more potently. Those whose psyche is day-by-day engaged with virtual environments are, again ironically, going places. They are simultaneously jumping through cyber-spheres and sporadically referring to real-time, real-world space, perhaps to make a coffee or chat to a colleague. The term WYSIWYG or now refers to something the eyes can register but the body cannot touch or sense - a GUI. There is no existing interface with a computer that

essays that Will Self wrote for The Independent. Contains a liberating piece, Walking to New York where Self walks from his apartment in South London to Manhattan's Crowne Plaza.

Will Self (1961-): Satirical novelist, former heroin addict and old-boy of Exeter College, Oxford. His nationality defines him less than his shoe size.

Mitochondrial Eve (mt-mrca): Confusingly, she is not Eve from the bible but rather the most-recent common ancestor of all humans alive on Earth today with respect to matrilineal descent. It's not a theory; it is a mathematical fact. It tells us that we can all be traced back to a woman living in Africa approximately 200,000 years ago.

Steam-Engine: The first successful template for the modern 'locomotive' was Stephenson's Rocket built by Robert Stephenson and Company in 1829.

Output/Input: Physical effort (input) used to be rewarded by movement or propulsion (output).

Epiphany: John woke up in the morning and realised that, "Hey, they have been wiping the floor with me for three years. Why don't I just bring that knife Jeff gave me to work today."

Destroy: Freedom.

Hausmannian: Georges-Eugène Haussmann (1809 - 1891), Napoleon's civic planner. He converted what was previously a medieval city, into one that was capable of handling the demands of modern living.



Civil Oppression: The Haussmannian renovation has some say was designed to 'control' the citizens of Paris and its demographics. There are two factors - wide streets for easing of open-fire on rioting crowds and the increase of rent in the city centre - forcing the poor out.

Guy Debord (1931 - 94): Law school dropout, lifelong drunk who shot himself in the heart. His image-laden film *La Société du spectacle* is his most important work.

May '68 Riots: Student and worker protests to reform the "old society" and its education system and employment. Responsible for replacing religion, patriotism, respect for authority with equality, sexual liberation, human rights.

allows us to have a natural spatial experience. The reference of a webcam feed - your mind is spending time in the location that is fed to you - however you have no knowledge of your bodily parameters or limitations there.

Certain re-active tools such as the photo-camera, play an important role in initiating spontaneous drifting. Writer Susan Sontag referred to photography as a tool for re-understanding our personal space in her 1977 essay, *On Photography*. The photographer is an armed version of the solitary walker reconnoitering, stalking, cruising the urban inferno, the voyeuristic stroller who discovers the city as a landscape of voluptuous extremes. Adept of the joys of watching, connoisseur of empathy, the flâneur finds the world 'picturesque' (Sontag, pp. 55). The city-dweller has reason to engage with it's urban milieu. The tools and machinery designed for tomorrow should be devised with an eutechnical approach. Our bodies, should be fully-engaged in the desired production and made imperative in its objective. It is not the limits of human effort that should be exploited but rather a spatial awareness should be resolvable.

Additionally, certain methods allow for the breaking open these atomised worlds. Self says we have to go back to an eutechnical form of travel to open these micro-environments. His abidance as an evangelical modern-day psychogeographer has been crystallised because there are an awful lot of forces in his life that are encouraging him to live in a different kind of spatial awareness. This territorial confinement in which we live calls for a re-enactment of what Baudelaire describes the existence of a botanist of the sidewalk, the act of the flâneur. Walter Benjamin's unfinished *Passagenwerk* provided Parisians more open however Capitalistic framework become fully-oriented habitants. Sloterdijk believes in its exemplariness for today's cultural theory because it already anticipates almost everything that was to become important later - the passion for the archive; the "micrological" examination of the detail; media theory; discourse analysis; and the search for a sovereign viewpoint from which one can grasp the capitalistic totality. The now architectural and urban implications in the construction of our houses of beings should repel such capitalistic ventures yet contain program for interaction and movement. Open-source and structuralist architecture. The architect should merely provide the inventive spatial distribution of the given program and the structure that it exists in. Sloterdijk continues by remarking what we need today is an "air-conditioning project" for large social entities or a generalised "greenhouse project." He condemns that Benjamin placed the historically outdated architectural type of the arcade at the center of his analysis... Sports stadiums, Reconvocation centers, large hotels, and resorts would have been far more worthy of Benjamin's attention. Also something of a mixed-use edifice with minor debate on aesthetics and critical dialogue concerning the inner-workings. What was the capitalist success brought on by this project sees the post-Benjamin effect of architecture as brand and architects performing signatures - subsequently making it more difficult to purify the intentions outlined.

A conscious perceptive reclamation is something can easily be achieved. On different levels and in occupations, we have a responsibility to question our sustainable outputs so that they conform to the body and its extents. Comparatively the method in which we use them can be reinvented. Personal decisions about the necessity of restoration for spatial understanding comes from what already existing or not existing. Simmel's metropolis, the connected-isolations and the captivational qualities that the capitalists intend, require the blinded modern city-dweller to re-evaluate their physical relationship.

Napoleon III: Victor Hugo called him Napoléon the small.

The Situationists: I take my desires for reality because I believe in the reality of my desires - Anonymous graffiti, Paris 1968

Geometry: The city.

Cabs: Self tells the reality of mini-cab drivers in London won't take you anywhere unless you have the post-code of your destination so that they can plug it in to their SATNAV and drive without having to know the city anymore. They will be soon replaced by machines.

Americans: The American dream used to be about gaining freedom through hard work. Now it is about class structure, race, ability and hard work.

Unified Connotations: Our cities and their nature to consume green spaces and satellite cities - forming only homogenous blobs.

Wind-Screens: Almost shaped with the ratio of the 70mm film format. A good indication of the relationship we have with the environment when we are in a car - detached, with no bodily sense of the displayed space.

Virtual Environments: A paradigm where your mind is moving though a series 'cyber-spheres' not registered by the body. Psyche-travelling, some call it surfing.

Cyber-Spheres: Nodal virtual environments.

WYSIWYG: What You See Is What You Get. Pronounced Wizzi-Wig.

GUI: Graphical User Interface. Xerox PARC prototyped this and it was not developed for the personal computer market. Enter Steve Jobs. With the aid of stolen Xerox PARC employees Apple released The Macintosh in 1984. Xerox would be the world's biggest IT company today if it had done that.

Susan Sontag (1933-2004): Political activist whose career was tarnished by her quote, 'The white race is the cancer of human history.'

Flâneur: French for 'to stroll'.

On Photography: A collection of essays that generated many oppositions by noted critics and writers. Sontag herself issued a refutation of opinions she expressed in it.

Voyeuristic: Didn't people move out of buildings in new Brasilia because the buildings were too transparent? The romantic ideas of open glass architecture were met with curtains and plants to cover-up.

Picturesque: The romantics made

The challenge is the act of realising.

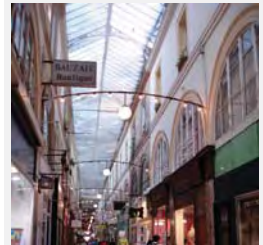
Palace is Valle Medina and Ben Reynolds. A research and production office interested in what we need.

calculated decisions about what should be considered beauty – and subsequently held their empty frames aloft to produce the picturesque landscapes that they saw.

Forces in his Life: Social, occupational, fiscal, relational, and physical to name a few.

Walter Benjamin (1892-1940): Berlin-born logic-based philosopher.

Passagenwerk: Arcades Project. A collection of writings by Walter Benjamin about the Hausmannian idea of arcades and flâneur in 19th Century Paris.



Media Theory: The study of the history and methods of various media. It analyses many other fields to inform and reflect its relational position.

Discourse Analysis: The study of conversation, writing, talk etc. I.e. forms of presenting natural language. See natural language.

House of Being: Language is the house of being. In its home man dwells. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

Open-Sourced: Architecture that is free. The framework is provided and the users simply customise the space with their needs and desires. Democratic spaces.

Structuralist: Similar to open-source architecture in that the framework is the known foundation. Architecture then becomes the user's canvas. Herman Hertzberger has been a proponent of this style.

Greenhouse Project: A good example is the Eden Project by Nicholas Grimshaw. The concept is that it allows a climate for cultivation - of nature, our relationship to nature, and human-to-human relationships.

Mixed-Use: Embraceable term that encourages a diverse building program and usually results in potential for commercial profitability and interesting architectural paradigms. Healthy.

Architecture as Brand: Terms like the abolition of ornament and less is more are terms attributed to the modernists. Now this one and signature architecture define the age of a globalised economy that we are in.

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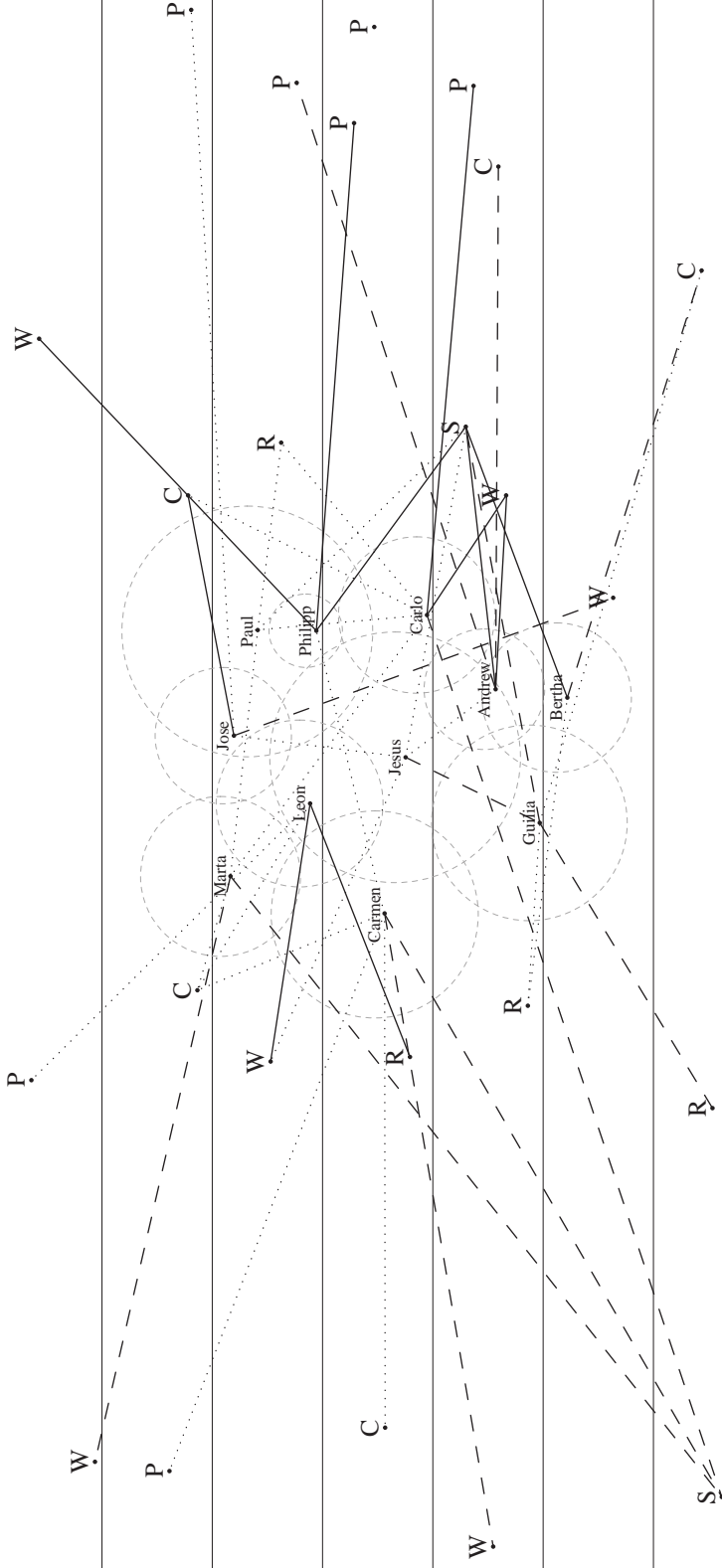
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1. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) Photograph by Gebr. Siebe (a).
2. *Creation of the Sun and Moon* by Michelangelo, face detail of God (a).
3. This image shows scanned foam by André Karwath aka Aka (b).
4. Defense of Habitation citation.jpeg by Piercetheorganist (b,c).
5. iPhone_Image_Viewer.jpg by Ed Schipul (d)
6. Paris, Ile de la Cité. A map based on the 1771 Robert de Vaugondy plan (cf Image:Paris-cite-vaugondy-1771.jpg) and shows in dark blue the buildings, in light blue the public spaces and in red the streets created by Haussmann. Derived on a Gallica pic. (e)
7. Le passage de Choiseul à Paris (France) - Avril 2007 - Photo personnelle (own work) de Clicsours (b)

Our Friends and their Movement

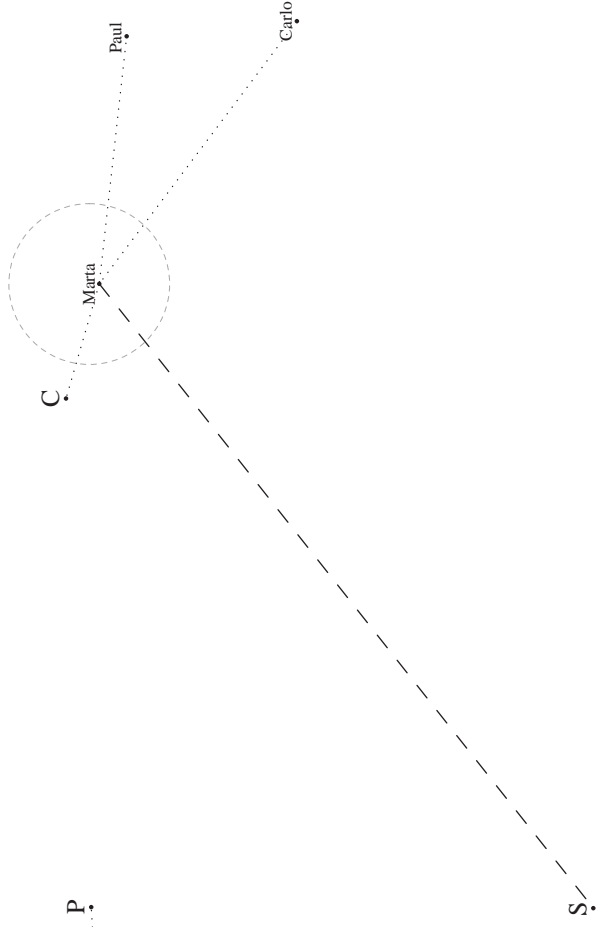
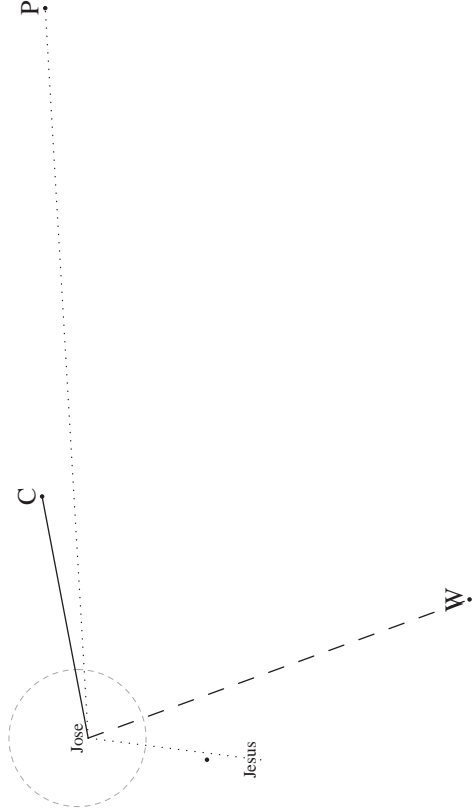
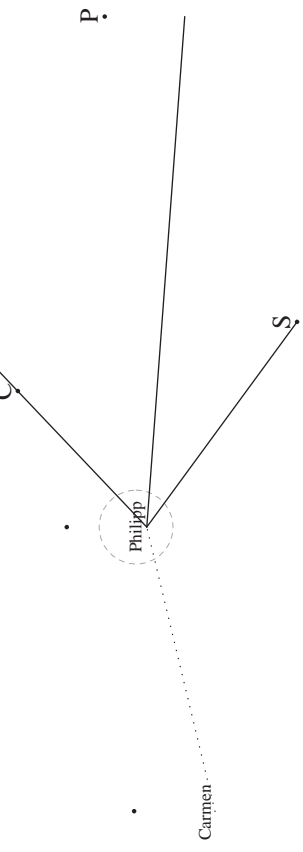
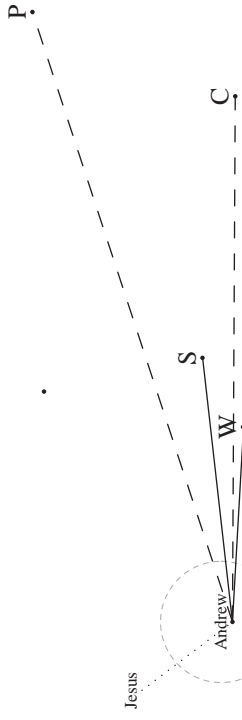
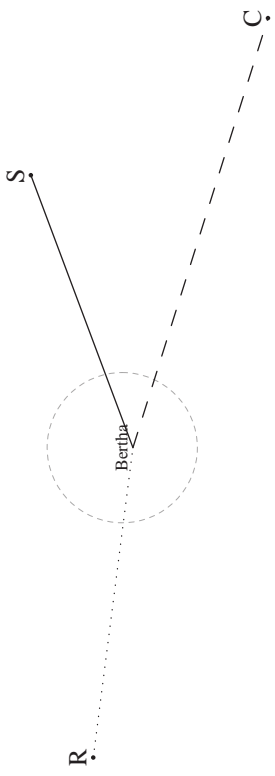
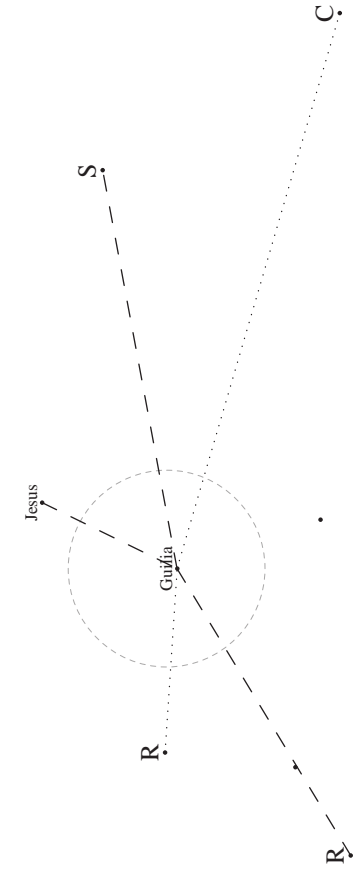


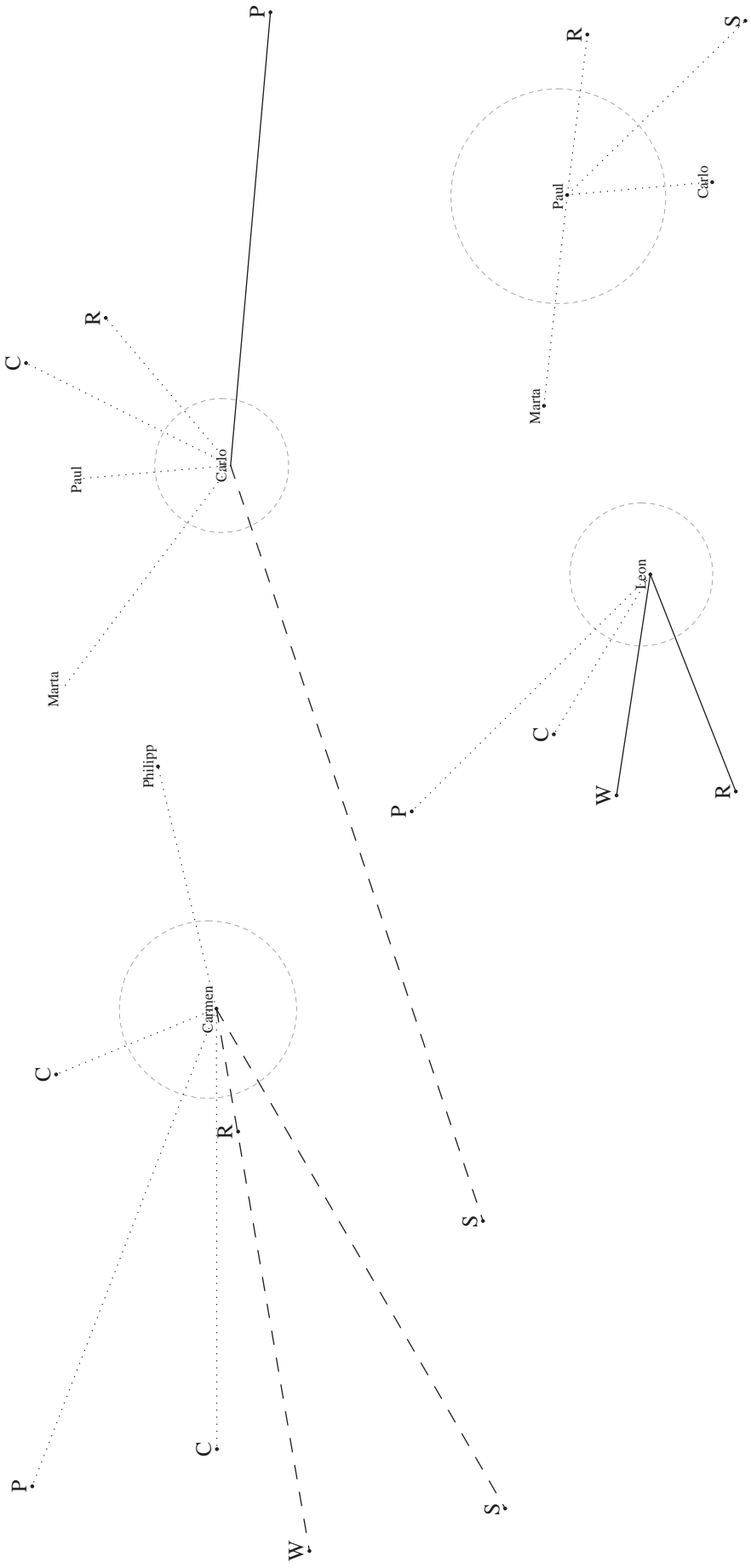
Natives: - The City - Personal Sphere (Scale: Sense-of-Place)

Vectors: - High-Speed - Medium-Speed - Slow-Speed

Nodal Spheres: S - Study R - Recreation P - Parents C - Commercialism W - Work

Our Friends and their Movements





Paul has the most sense-of-place out of our friends.



Connected isolations (spheres)



