graduate brainpower spread through the New England country-
side along Route 128).
7. Are territorial and behavioural studies on animals a guide to
predicting the effects of density, crowding, conflict?

The City: Agora and Underground, Camouflage and Masks
by Adrian Edwards, C.S.Sp.

Professor Markus seems to be concerned with the city as symbol and
as organization. What does the city now mean, and how does it and
might it function? These two questions are very closely related; even
a purely technical system will, if it functions, have various significant
impacts on the aesthetic and ethical levels. And if a symbolic system
really involves efficacious symbols these will at some point cut into
the world of allocations and preferences. If his questions 3 and 4
were to be answered as he would seem to wish, we would be at the
same time well on the way to answering 1 and 2. The really efficient
city where rights and duties were clearly mapped would be thera-
peutic and liberating. I think again he doesn't see this therapeutic
role of the city as something static—rather as being more like a group
psycho-therapy where recovery and discovery are both part of the
programme.

I think though that we must start distinguishing; there is man's
activity carried out under the sign of the city, and that carried out
as man the tool-maker, if you like man the world changer. The city
expressed in the agora, a community of citizens functioning as a
juridical and political unit, is essentially a Mediterranean insti-
tution; of course, there were cities elsewhere, among the Arabs, in
India or China, and for that matter in pre-colonial black Africa.
But these lacked the characteristic patterns of the city-state, centring
round the concept of a body of citizens with specific rights and duties
constituting the polis. Despite the claim of Massignon, the Arab
cities had no real system of guilds; the Hindu cities had activity
which may be called political within the various quarters, but there
were no overall civic democracies, or oligarchies, nor did the Chinese
city have any greater degree of civic personality. However, China did
have to offer a highly developed pattern of integrated thought and
action, which was highly relevant to urban living. China did attempt,
as I shall argue later on, to integrate the man-made, particularly

the architectural, into the organic—to apply a kind of cultural camouflage to the signs of human presence on the earth.

Africa, particularly Nigeria, had a pre-colonial tradition of urban life, but large though these cities could be, the type of society which existed in Yoruba cities or at Benin was not consciously civic in the way in which, as the quotation from Ryckwert suggests, the cities of the classical world were. However, the relatively little-known community of New Calabar or Owame in what is now the Rivers State shows some interesting features of urban life, notably the relative weakness of kin ties, the favourable attitude towards social mobility, and the existence of institutions which enabled strangers to be rapidly, and fully, assimilated. One of these was the *ekine* society, whose members engaged in masquerades which combined religious and dramatic significance. Participation in the *ekine* society was open to outsiders, including slaves, but involved learning the local myths and traditions. Professor Markus has, I think, raised the questions of what masquerades do we have in contemporary cities— is there any dramatic, or quasi-dramatic, form, by which new identities can be gained?

Finally, I have used the word 'underground' to cover another aspect of the city—its romanticism. The classic image of the city is its public face—markets and cathedrals, statues and avenues. The romanticism of the city lies in its potentialities for going underground —literally, down to catacombs and tube trains, metaphorically in the opportunities for losing old identities and for the emergence of new, marginal, isolated, or deviant sub-cultures. What Professor Markus seems to desire is a civic neo-classicism in which we would again see the public face of order and justice; but he also values the romanticism of the city, and seems to feel that it has become an unrelinquishable aspect of human experience.

It does seem to me that human culture is capable of very substantial mutations, human nature in the strict sense being effectively immutable. However, there have been cultural mutations which have been so far-reaching that it can be said they have mutated human nature as it actually exists over very large areas of the globe. Now it can be argued that the very basic elements of human society and culture were present among our hominid ancestors. By these basic elements I would mean a continuing pair-bond between male and female individuals, some division of labour, social groups larger than the elementary family units with an associated territory, some type of leadership, some transmission of acquired information, the purposive use of tools. This list leaves out language, which is surely the point of hominization, involving as it does the communication of concepts, and reflective self-awareness.

I would say then that the gulf is not between 'the brute creation' and homo faber, or between homo sapiens and 'later city man', but between homo faber (tool-using hominid) and homo linguisticus

(speech-using, conceptualizing man). If this is so, then the conceptualizing of technical activity is in a way more significant than the actual activity. Perhaps then it would be proper for me to mention the way in which classical Chinese culture tried to camouflage, or perhaps better, to organicize, the city and the household by cultivating continuities rather than stressing discontinuities.

This was done by the art of *feng-shui* or Chinese geomancy. I follow Professor Maurice Freedman's excellent description: 'It is very important to grasp the idea that in the Chinese view a building is not simply something that sits upon the ground to serve as a convenient site for human activity. It is an intervention in the universe; and that universe is composed of the physical environment and men and the relationships among men. Men are bonded to the physical environment, working good or ill upon it, and being done good or ill to by it. Moreover, when a man puts up a building, he inserts something into the landscape and between him and his neighbours. It follows that risks attend his enterprise and he must take precautions. The physical universe is alive with forces that, on the one side, can be shaped and brought fruitfully to bear on a dwelling and those who live in it, and, on the other side, can by oversight or mismanagement be made to react disastrously. But the very act of siting and constructing a house to one's own advantage may be to the detriment of others, Modifications in the landscapes reverberate. So that in principle, every act of construction disturbs a complex balance of forces within a system made up of nature and society, and it must be made to produce a new balance of forces lest evil follow—*feng-shui* is applicable to any unit of habitation so that from the single house at one end of the scale to the society as a whole there is a hierarchy of nesting units, each with its own *feng-shui*, and subject also to the *feng-shui* of all the higher units to which it belongs.'

To quote from Professor Freedman's conclusion: 'We are dealing with a society in which the development of a sophisticated architecture has allowed men to classify their groupings, and, so to say, objectify their relationships by means of constructions. *Feng-shui* is the ritual of a society not yet overborne by its architectural technology. In industrial societies we have lost the power of making our buildings conform to our social relations. We are not able neatly to order our social relations in space. Chinese I knew in Hong Kong used to say to me that, when you came down to it, what a good *feng-shui* really meant was that you were completely at ease in it.'

The only point made by Professor Freedman on which I would demur is his explanation of why industrial societies are closed to anything like *feng-shui*. He considers that the rapid rate of technological change now makes it impossible to foresee the future. To my mind, the machine age and the gadget age have greatly increased the number of objects which are simply means to an end, rather than

being ends in themselves. Things which are only instruments are not receptive of quasi-personal traits as are things which have ascribed to them some continuing *per se* excellence. Even an atheist may see something appropriate in blessing the new crops; even a Catholic may feel something faintly absurd in blessing a computer. An obvious point to make is that the whole conservationist movement seems to have an underlying philosophy which resembles in certain respects the *feng-shui* movement, and this might be of relevance to Professor Markus' sixth question. I think also reflection on *feng-shui* may lead us to see how if we answer 'Yes' to his seventh question we have immediately to add 'To a degree limited by specifically human factors'.

If I have understood Professor Markus, he desiderates a renewal of the city both as agora and as camouflage. He would like to see a civic democracy capable of really effective use of technology for human needs; at the same time he sees the need for the city to be a sign of reconciliation between man and nature. Can this reconciliation be even attempted without a consciousness of the necessary tension between these two aims—a tension parallel to that between mastery and sympathy, between skill and understanding, between control and acceptance?

To sum up, or rather to try to answer the first question; on the evidence from outside Europe, I don't see that the city is a mutation *sui generis* apart from the general existence of man as world-changer. I think the machine has to a great degree affected the way in which man can render his artefacts 'harmless' in giving them a personal relation to himself and an organic one to nature. Whether it would ever be possible to do so, and what the results for the city would be, are questions to which others can perhaps give some answer.

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For the 'Image of the City' I am influenced in various ways by W. H. Auden, particularly the *New Year Letter* and *Nones*.