

A DRINKING FOUNTAIN FOR ALL PEOPLE

The Contribution of Created Public-Space to Human Development

With Millennium Park as a Case Study

by

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Abstract

There are two related crises today: the environmental crisis and humankind's relationships. In these crises situations, the Artists, the Politicians, and the People of Chicago present Millennium-Park, a public open space, contributing an opportunity, for all people, to experience constants of humanity. Through its landscape-architecture, social behavior and play, people may have a chance to enjoy transformation in fundamental experiences such as self awareness in corporeality and spirit, with limitation and transcendence; environment as an effort towards humanizing the person, with its controversy and integrity; social interaction, gathering in diversity, playing and enjoying the pain of plurality and the beauty of unity; and the proportional experience of religiosity and human utopia.

Created space and human relationship transform a potential to the actual of human salvation.

Introduction

The Topic of this Thesis Project is "The Contribution of Created Public Space to Human Development, with Millennium Park as a Case Study." The approach used in this thesis is theological. Hence the perspective will be from a Christian viewpoint – especially post-Vatican II theology – and a method of theological reflection, drawing upon the Whiteheads' model and methodology. This topic arises from my intuition that in daily life, people live in space, and space itself has a potential for human salvation – which, in a sense, is a hypothesis.

Created Public Space

In this thesis, space is understood as created space.¹ Space is basically formed by the relationship between certain objects (structures, certain natural elements, and vegetation as elements of landscape) and human beings. It is architectural space,² which is created with architectural materials, with floors, walls and ceilings as important ingredients.³ In his book, *Landscape of Architecture*, John Ormsbee Simonds describes space as "use-volumes."⁴ "Each volume or complex of volumes having a shape, size, material, color, texture, and other qualities that best express and accommodate the function for which the space is intended."⁵ Because this

¹ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: the Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University Press, 2005). "Space and place are familiar words denoting common experiences. We live in space." "Space and place are basic components of the lived world." (3.) Answering the question of what space is, Yi Fu Tuan used the experience of Paul Tillich about the meaning of space. For Tillich, who was raised in a small town, i.e., a small, protected and self-contained world, space was experienced as a feeling of openness, infinity and being unrestricted. (4) As to what place is, Yi Fu Tuan cites Niels Bohr's question to Heisenberg when they visited Kronberg Castle in Denmark: "Isn't it strange how this castle changes as soon as one imagines that Hamlet lived here?"

² Cf. Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutic of Sacred Architecture, Experience, Interpretation, Comparison*, volume one (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000) xvii: "Architecture proves to be a new lens through which one can examine the work of prominent philosophers, theologians, historians, and anthropologists"

³ Yoshinobu Ashihara, *Exterior Design in Architecture* (New York: van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1970) 11.

⁴ John Ormsbee Simonds, *Landscape Architecture* (New York, Toronto, London: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 79.

⁵ Ormsbee, *ibid.*, 79.

architectural space is connected with shape, form, colors, proportion and scale, space is primarily perceived visually, although other determinants of this object-human relationship, such as sound, temperature and texture, are perceived through other senses.

A Public Space or a public place is a place where anyone has a right to come without being excluded because of economic or social conditions. For example, no fees or paid tickets are required for entry, nor are the entrants discriminated based on background. Typical examples are most roads, including the pavement, town squares and parks.⁶

Goffman affirms that public space or a public place, traditionally "refer to any regions in a community freely accessible to members of that community."⁷ Usually in this space people have face to face interaction. The features of a public place are its openness to the public with high visibility. "Public places tend to contain public realms."⁸

In this thesis-project, real contemporary human experience will be explored using the Whiteheads' model and method.⁹ For this we need a real place, which is contemporary – a significant symbol of the new millennium; and a public place of gathering where the public behavior of people is expressed and is able to be observed. Since I am writing this thesis in Chicago, I will use Millennium Park as a contemporary public space where I will be able to test the thesis-project.

Humanity and Development

Natural law and the theory of evolution cannot give us any criteria for what is true humanity. All reflection about humanity is not independent of time and space, so there is no "universal" humanity. Structuralism and existentialism do not provide an ultimate answer as to

⁶ Wikipedia free encyclopedia, cf. Erving Goffman, *Behavior in Public Places* (New York: the Free Press, 1966), 9.

⁷ Erving Goffman, *Behavior in Public Places, Notes on the Social Occasion of Gatherings* (New York: The Free Press, 1966), 9.

⁸ Calvin Morill, David A. Snow, and Cindy H. White, Eds. *Together Alone, Personal Relationships in Public Places.*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California, Press. 2005), 14-15.

⁹ James D. Whitehead & Evelyn Eaton Whitehead. *Method in Ministry, Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry.* (Lanham, Chicago, New York, Oxford: Sheed & Ward, 1995).

what is a worthy human being. People think that the specific features of humankind are their reasoning and their sense of history. This history, according to Schillebeeckx, is a history of salvation. "Salvation and humanity, being saved, integrity in a truly human and free way is in fact the *theme* of the whole of human history."¹⁰

Humanity in Christian Tradition

In Christian tradition, the significance of human beings can be discerned. In a theology of creation, we find the human being as created in the divine image.¹¹ A theology of incarnation deals with the enhancement of humanity through grace. A theology of salvation, "soteriology," is concerned with human suffering and salvation.¹² The place of human beings, then, is important in Christian tradition.

Humanity according K.Rahner and Schillebeeckx

This thesis will focus on Christian tradition through the works of two theologians who have done important work since the Second Vatican Council, and who use anthropology as their dialogue partner in doing theology. They are Karl Rahner, who emphasizes "the human person as spirit-in-the-world"¹³ and "the human person as communal" being,¹⁴ and Edward Schillebeeckx, who emphasizes the human being in terms of anthropological constants as the coordinates of salvation. For Schillebeeckx, the human being is not only physical, but also imaginative, being directed toward others and open to relationship with relationship to the environment, nature, time,

¹⁰ Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ, the Experience of Jesus as Lord* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 732.

¹¹ Cf. Genesis, 1:26.

¹² See the introduction of chapter III, about soteriology.

¹³ Stephen J. Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace: Perspectives in Theological Anthropology* (Collegeville Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 268. cf. Miquel H. Diaz, *On Being Human* (New York: Orbis Book, 2001) 96.

¹⁴ Ibid. 281. cf. K. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: an Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 398. cf. Diaz, *On Being Human*, 99.

space, theory, praxis and religiosity.¹⁵ His concern is with a whole system of coordinates in which the human being can really become human. "The synthesis¹⁶ of all this is clearly an 'already now' and a 'not yet'."¹⁷

Speaking of humanity, then, is speaking of development, the process of becoming for the sake of a better life. It is a dynamic process, one not tied to any particular moment.

Thesis to be Tested and the Goal of the Thesis-Project

The main thesis to be tested here is a consideration of to what extent a public space such as Millennium Park, within the multi-cultural context of the United States, can contribute to human development. A corresponding goal of this thesis, through this case study and a practical theological methodology, will be to define and articulate principles regarding how public space in general may contribute to human development. We turn now to a description of each component of this thesis.

Consideration to The Extent

"Extent" denotes a duration of qualities, scopes or levels. With the question of to what extent space contributes to human development, this thesis will test both the quality of space in terms of its effects on people, and the level of human utilization and perception of space. Through observation of the experiences of visitors to Millennium Park, we can arrive at some conclusions about whether human interactions with space are expressive of relationships. We will take note of

¹⁵ Schillebeeckx, *Christ*, 731-743.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 741. It is a synthesis of the six dimensions.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 743.

various relationships, such as with the human body, with other people, with institutions, with nature, with the environment, with time and space, and with religiosity.

A Public Space such as Millennium Park in the U.S. Multi-cultural Setting¹⁸

According to the theory of landscape architecture,¹⁹ Millennium Park as a space has its spatial qualities, size, form, colors, abstract expression, and impact. As a volume, Millennium Park is an open space situated in the downtown section of a high-density district of Chicago, with its many blocks of high-rise buildings. Millennium Park is a space artfully planned to attract and excite people. The spatial impact of Millennium Park may elicit a range of responses including relaxation, dynamism, tension, pleasure or contemplation. An integration of these responses arising from interaction with the space might be experienced as a harmonious relationship, as unity within variety, and as a resultant quality of beauty.

Millennium Park has spatial qualities as a dynamic and open space. It is a space with flowing movement designed to stimulate emotional responses. As an open space it has outward and upward orientation to the lake, to the sky, and to freedom from the high density of buildings. Millennium Park is a place of gathering, and many people utilize it as a playground. They play at Crown Fountain, at Cloud Gate and at the ice rink.

The Millennium Park project has become one of the most important millennium projects in the world. With an unprecedented combination of architecture, monumental sculpture and landscape design, the 24.5 acre Millennium Park includes the artistry of an unprecedented collection of world-renowned artists, architects, planners, landscape architects and designers including Frank Gehry, Anish Kapoor, Jaume Plensa and Kathryn Gustafson.²⁰

¹⁸ "Setting" is used when "Cultures" are multi-dimensional, such as: nation/ race; modern/post-modern; media and high tech; educated; urban/rural; middle class/upper/under; old and young; political/economical. If the term "multicultural" is used in the contexts of nations or race, we will use the multicultural term "society."

¹⁹ Ormsbee, 79-97.

²⁰ Ibid.

The Mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley, enthusiastically refers to Millennium Park as a monument of Chicago, as one important US landmark in this new millennium.²¹ "This is a cultural park as opposed to a recreational park," says Edward Uhler, Millennium Park's project director.²² The artists of Millennium Park use their creative ideas without being arrogant.

Millennium Park is a place where people can enjoy its structure and space immediately by their presence in the park. It is a place that thousands of people who work in the offices and shops or live in the apartments around Millennium Park can observe and enjoy even from a distance. The amplified faces of the fountains and the huge sculpture and pavilion can be viewed easily from the surrounding area. It is also a place that people around the world can observe easily by way of cyber space.

Millennium Park's Contribution to Human Development

Millennium Park's contributions to humanity can be found in the ideals espoused when it was planned and built. It can be seen through the way people are utilizing and perceiving it. Yet it is still too early to definitively describe any precise contribution, because Millennium Park is only three years old. But we know already that Millennium Park, as a public urban park, has been gathering and unifying people from all around the world. Millennium Park is not only decorative, but is also a space where people can imaginatively participate and play in it.

F.L. Olmsted, the American designer of New York City's Central park, emphasized another idea of human beings in pursuing (or seeking) a meaningful life, especially through the benefit of an urban park. It [this idea] is about the importance of social benefit and spiritual progress. S.B.

²¹ Chris Jones, "At last: Opening Day for Millennium Park," in *Chicago Tribune* (July 15, 2004).
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/specials/millennium/chi-millennium-openingday-story,0,6235670.story?page=3>
(accessed: January 24, 2007).

²² Ibid.

Sutton, says that in all Olmsted's parks, Olmsted argues that his design was not as art for its own sake, but for the fulfillment of the physical and psychological needs of city people.²³ Sutton says that although Olmsted rejected formalized religion, yet in his gentle humanism he believed, with his contemporaries, in the spiritual progress of humanity. "As a landscape architect, he tried to civilize the city; his park simulated nature in response to the needs of an urban population."²⁴ For him, a city is an environment where human beings could lead a meaningful life,²⁵ a park as a work of design necessarily supposes 'a gallery of mental pictures,'²⁶ so everybody with their feelings can understand it. It must have a social, moral and physical benefit.²⁷ In the US context, dominated by city planning according to a 'grid system,'²⁸ a system which has created 'abused-space,'²⁹ parks can be experienced as something that interrupts the monotonous grid.³⁰ This open space is an interruption from the architect's playroom where every square foot of space has been given over to buildings that reach to the sky.

As Schillebeeckx writes, the human being is characterized not only by reasoning ability, but also by imagination and love. In Millennium Park we can see the children's imagination and parents' love for their child in helping and teaching them for the first time to step on the ice. Borrowing Pat Kane's idea in his book *The Play Ethic*, Millennium Park can be seen as a place of change from "TINA" (there is no alternative) to "TATA"³¹ (there are thousands of alternatives). It is

²³ Frederick Law Olmsted, *Civilizing American Cities* (New York: Da Capo, 1997), 10.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁸ Kevin Lynch, *The Image of The City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London England: The MIT Press, 2001), 99. Grid system is a specific pattern in town planning or real estate plan, as a network which explains the typical relation between all paths in the set without identifying any particular path. It is a pattern with a strict consistency, whether of direction, topological interrelation, or interspacing. It is a system with mechanical and geometrical domination.

²⁹ The idea of "grid system" for Olmsted is "a simple-minded, unnatural, and dehumanizing method." Olmsted, *Ibid.* 21.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

³¹ Pat Kane, *The Play Ethic , A Manifesto for a Different Way of Living*, (London: Pan Books, 2004), 310.

potentially a place for experiencing human freedom through creative, liberating, and transforming experience.

Rahner opens our understanding about human beings in terms of their relationship to themselves and to one another.

With regard to the presuppositions of the revealed message of Christianity, the first thing to be said about man (human) is that he (or she) is person and subject...What exactly is understood by these terms can only follow from the whole of our anthropology, and hence only after we have treated man's (human's) transcendence, his (her) responsibility and freedom, his (her) orientation towards the incomprehensible mystery, his (her) being in history and in the world, and his (her) social nature.³²

Rather than a positive outline or a clear definition of human nature, Schillebeeckx offers a set of anthropological constants, "permanent human impulses and orientations, values and sphere of values".³³ All are based upon "relationships."

The Ministry and the Intended Audience of the Thesis-Project

Based upon my ministry in creating environments that can be experienced as livable and enjoyable, the first ministerial issue I raise here is to what extent architects or artists, through the structures or art-works they build and through spaces,³⁴ make people feel accepted and welcomed, and able to experience freedom and liberation in their relationship with themselves, with other people, with nature and even with their religiosity. Also, I will explore to what extent the spaces transform humanity.

³² Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 26.

³³ *Ibid.*, 733.

³⁴ When we speak about spaces, they are always spaces that are created through structure, which shapes everything that is built.

Public space is not only a place to be utilized, but also to be experienced as a moment or event of *chaïros*.³⁵ It is where people can encounter the stranger, play together, and share their own personal space with one another, so that they experience a situation of harmony in togetherness as an enjoyable event of community. It is also where they experience a moment or event of liberty, "where the old man or woman can play just like a child."³⁶

For those who work for human development, it is important to help people to be aware that all humans are responsible for building a livable environment, and that all people have the potential to see the value of, or to reflect positively on, the experience they have in living with other people. This reflection can be based upon current or past experiences, such as an experience of childhood when their parent helped them to stand up on ice. This can be a moment of experiencing *chaïros*, an event of the potency of life, and energy for survival as a human being.

Thus the intended audiences for this thesis are those who work for the good of humanity, who are responsible for human development, especially those who hold leading positions in public life as leaders, teachers, government leaders, urban designers and those involved in the liturgical environment.

The Method to be Employed in the Thesis-Project

I will use the model and method of James and Evelyn Whitehead³⁷ with some modifications. In their model, the Whiteheads use three sources of information: the experience of

³⁵ Greek for "time" in a spiritual rather than chronological sense. It is an event of grace.

³⁶ Hugo Rahner S.J., *Man at Play, or Did you ever practice Eutrapelia?* (London: Burns & Oates, 1965), 3.

³⁷ James D. Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, *Method in Ministry, Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry* (Lanham, Chicago, New York, Oxford: Sheed and Ward, 1995), with some additions in their presentation in Core II at Catholic Theological Union on the 18th of April, 2006.

the community of faith, the Christian tradition, and the culture.³⁸ This method moves from listening (attending) to mutual assertion and to pastoral response.³⁹ 'Attending' is a moment of listening to the Christian virtue and to the world. 'Assertion' is a process of correlation between the experience, the contexts and the (Christian) insight.⁴⁰ 'Pastoral Response,' the practical strategies that move the insight to action, is the final part of this method.⁴¹

This thesis-project will use the 'experience' of a community of people in Millennium Park, a public space in downtown Chicago. This thesis-project will consider what the Christian tradition has to say about being human (theological anthropology). For the element of culture, this thesis-project will refer to theories of landscape architecture, sociology and anthropology.

Attending

In 'attending,' this thesis-project will present the following elements: 1) A description of Millennium Park and the activities and behavior of people in Millennium Park. What I mean by people here are: the people who utilize or perceive the park immediately on site. I will use "participant observation," to observe Millennium Park and the behavior and activity of people visiting it. This observation is dealing with the interpretation of space and people, so a 'hermeneutic of space'⁴² will be used. We will observe the existing condition of Millennium Park, the concepts behind it (the ideas of the artists and the owner) and its appropriation by people to day. A camera will be used here to record the moment, event and the atmosphere. 2) With regard to culture, this thesis will make use of concepts from the fields of sociology, anthropology and architecture. From sociological and anthropological approaches, this study will focus on proxemic

³⁸ Ibid., 23-66: see part II : The Model of Reflection in Ministry

³⁹ Ibid., 66-102: see part III: A Method for Reflection in Ministry

⁴⁰ Ibid., 65.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Cf. Lindsay Jones, *ibid.*

theory and play. From an architectural approach, this thesis will specifically explore the landscape architecture. 3). The work of Karl Rahner and Edward Schillebeeckx will be the primary sources in exploring Christian tradition's understanding of what it means to be human.

Assertion

In 'assertion,' this thesis-project will present the correlation between: the experiences of the people in Millennium Park, the concepts of humanity according to K. Rahner and Schillebeeckx⁴³ and the element of culture as seen through sociological, anthropological and landscape architectural approaches.

Blair Kamin, in *Tribune Architecture Critic*, says that "...the park's new emphasis on 'humanizing the spaces' in between its icons means that it offers something more than spectacle and that it is well on its way to achieving its potential."⁴⁴ It is a place where people may enjoy being human in 'unity.' Again, Blair says that Millennium Park is "a great democratic space, a mixing chamber for people of different races and classes, who normally live entirely segregated from one another."⁴⁵ Similar to what Rahner says about "being human as communal." "..... and Blair adds that the fountain, more than ever, is an instant piazza, an urban stage where the players are the children running through the fountain (and getting soaked when the gargoyles do their thing) and the audience consists of everybody else, including downtown office workers who want to be where the action is."⁴⁶

⁴³ In this thesis, the concept of humanity will be limited in scope. Karl Rahner's concept will be focused on two ideas: the human being as graced, and the human being as being for others. Edward Schillebeeckx' concept will be focused on anthropological constants, viewing the human being in relationship to seven human constants.

⁴⁴ Blair Kamin, "The Millennium Park Effect," *Tribune Architecture Critic*. June 26, 2005.

<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/chi-0506260439jun26,0,5753944.story> (accessed: April 28, 2006).

⁴⁵ Blair Kamin, *ibid.*, <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/chi->, *ibid.*, (accessed April 28, 2006).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Millennium Park has the potential to make people feel close to their environment. "They are, in short, interactive rather than unapproachable, appropriately monumental rather than bizarrely colossal."⁴⁷ It is a place where people are able to experience, as Schillebeeckx says, many kinds of relationships; relationship with themselves, with others and with religiosity. "Parks work best when they give people lots of choices about what kind of spaces to inhabit -- action-filled or contemplative, grand or intimate."⁴⁸ Referring to proxemic theory, we will know to what extent this park shapes people in experiencing such relationships. Referring to landscape theory, we will know to what extent landscape elements help people to be more human, as Rahner and Schillebeeckx have encouraged. Whatever the outcome, the "Millennium Park effect" is making itself felt just three years into the park's life.

Pastoral Response

This thesis is open to further development. Audiences may be invited to participate in advancing this thesis. A spirit of love and play can be used effectively for this purpose.

Content of the Thesis Project

The content of this thesis is divided into three parts: Attending, Assertion, and Closing Thoughts.

The first part, "attending," will consist of data collection. Chapter I is about Millennium Park, consisting of its present condition, the original concepts behind it, and popular appropriation (human activity and behavior in utilizing and perceiving structure or space). Chapter II will focus on

⁴⁷ Blair Kamin, *ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

the concept of public space according to landscape architecture and human behavior as seen from sociological and anthropological approaches. We will deal especially with a theory of play. Chapter III will focus on the concept of being human, according to Karl Rahner and Edward Schillebeeckx.

The second part, "assertion," will focus a chapter on the contribution of Millennium Park in experiencing the constants of humanity, i.e., an assertion of tradition, experience and cultural context especially as seen from landscape architectural, sociological and anthropological approaches. We will again ask the basic question: to what extent does Millennium Park, in the contexts of landscape architecture, and especially in play activity, contribute an experience of the "constants of humanity"?

The third part is Closing Thoughts: Some Directions. While the final step of the Whiteheads' method is a pastoral response, their method concerns the need to make a ministerial decision. I'm not in a decision making position here, thus I will not make a pastoral response, but I will offer some directions about that.

This thesis is sustainable and eschatological, always open to broader research. Its present limits can be transcended.