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LOCUS SIGNIFICOLOGY ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LOCATION

- Rich Ottum '74

I have been asked by this publication to report upon investigations into contemporary philosophy. By far, the most intriguing topic I have discovered is Locus Significology. I refer specifically to an article announcing the field, written by Jerry Shaw, published in the Thrasher Philosophical Studies Journal of the Thrasher University Press.

Jerry Shaw is currently a junior at Thrasher University in Lanfost, West Virginia. His work has passed largely unnoticed, excepting official recognition by the National Hockey League. (The reason will become apparent later.) The Thrasher University publication handled his article after it had already seen rejection by Better Homes and Gardens magazine.

Locus Significology is a field of philosophy and science, which denies the necessity of time, in any form, to account for or theorize concerning the functioning of the universe. To call the field contemporary is perhaps inaccurate. The true origins of Locus Significology, as Shaw informs us, date back to the era of Aristotle. These origins had been lost to history, however, until the publication of the Shaw article last year. As father of modern Locus Significology, Shaw acknowledges a debt to an earlier generation. Shaw's triumph is in his independent duplication of the doctrine, before he alone discovered the original presentation. Without the intellectual pursuits of the Thrasher University junior, the field of Locus Significology might have been lost to history forever.

"Locus Significology was the invention of Chronostophennes, a bastard son of Aristotle. Historically, little is known of this neglected philosopher. The only documented entry of his existence, (other than his own writings,) is a court order for his execution by hemlock, issued by the Grecian Committee on Unaristotelian affairs. The writings of Chronostophennes date apparently to a two year prison sentence spent on the island of Crete, where he awaited trial." 1

Shaw discovered the original manuscripts of Chronostophennes at the Thrasher University Library, mishelved under writings on orgone energy. Accounting for the preservation of the manuscripts is a difficult task. Miraculously, they escaped the little known American scourge of the nineteen fifties, in which the Disney Corporation ordered the burning of all the published works of Wilhelm Reich. Shaw theorizes the savior of the Chronostophennes writings to be the midwest owner of a drive-in optimology center, who later anonymously donated the writings to the West Virginia Thrasher University library.

A concentrated effort is needed to introduce the layman to the field of Locus Significology. Again, Locus Significology denies the necessity of time in any form to account for the functioning of the universe, philosophically or scientifically. This mode of thought is alien to modern civilization. In our society, and in cultures the world over, the individual is conditioned to respond to the arbitrary restrictions of time.

"We are told when to terminate our softball game so as not to miss dinner. We are told that it is too late for us to stay up and watch the "Untouchables" on television. We are taught that NOW is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their party. In short, all our actions reflect a deadline or some manifestation of time." 2

The Shaw article is divided into two basic parts. The first deals with a discussion of time, its scientific misconceptions in modern society. The second portion confronts the philosophical consequences of Locus Significology. In the Socratic tradition, Shaw immediately confronts the reader with life examination rhetoric.

"You were born not in the best of times, nor the worst of times. You were born rather, on a kitchen table, in a local hospital, or God forbid, Philadelphia." It is evident, that Shaw intends to refocus the significance of locations in our lives. "Sociological rites of passage occur not in time, but rather in place. You did not lose your virginity at age seventeen. You lost your virginity in the back seat of your older brother's Chevy, or better still, on the high school lacrosse field." 4

Especially persuasive to Shaw's arguments concerning the significance of location over time, is his handling of what he has dubbed the laymans absurd clause number one; "remember the good old days?" "Remember the good old days at Fort Carlson? Remember the mess hall fights? Remember too, that while you were stationed in North Carolina, your best high school buddy was parachuted somewhere into occupied Czechoslovakia? Throwing baked potatoes in the mess hall was dandy, but did you ever try to drop a hand grenade into the hatch of a Panzer Four? John Wayne made it look easy, but then again, he was stationed in Hollywood. Were they really the good old days, or were they rather, the good old places?" 5

Shaw's scientific training is apparent where he undertakes a investigation into the history of time itself. Shaw labels time as merely an arbitrary division primitive man assigned to the motions of the sun. Astronomy will tell you however, that sunrise and sunset are not determined by the passage of time. "The sun rises, because the earth rotates on its axis. More specifically, the sun rises because the whole goddamn planet changes location with respect to the big yellow thing. Seasons are not determined by the passage of time, but rather by the dictates of climate. The climate

factor of a given location is determined by latitude, the angle of solar radiation, and the apogee and perigee of the earth's elliptical orbit about the sun. If in doubt, ask Johannes Kepler." 6

In dealing with astronomy and time, Shaw introduces Nicolaus Copernicus, an early hero of Locus Significology. Copernicus, he contends, was unjustly pitted against the Judeo-Christian tradition. "The fault of the early church was to step outside the confines of theology, and assign locations. Heaven is above, they said, hell below, and the earth occupies the center of the universe. Nicolaus Copernicus dared to think otherwise. Having gathered about him all the writings concerning the terracentric universe, he ventured independent observations. Copernicus concluded quite simply, that there was no way in hell that the earth could be the center of the universe. The Church threw said astronomer in prison." 7 Shaw is convinced that the Church should have sponsored his efforts, rather than stifle them. "...and had he been given backing, who can speculate the outcome of his work? Having already assigned the earth a more exacting location in the universe, he could have probably located the position of heaven and hell within a few miles." 8

Shaw anticipates the greatest challenge to Locus Significology, the aging of man, and attacks the problem vigorously. Logically, the maturation and eventual death of the human being appears adequate to demonstrate the passage of time. Here again, Shaw draws upon his knowledge of the sciences. "A discussion of physical matter is now in order. Matter is anything which has mass and occupies space. The atomic components of all matter are in constant motion. Wherever there is motion, there is friction. There is no such thing as a frictionless vacuum. Recent investigations have discovered free floating hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon atoms and molecules in what was once dubbed the vacuum of deep space. With this basic understanding of matter, let us turn our attention to the human body. The basic unit of any living organism is called the cell. Cells similar in function congregate to compose tissues. People grow old and die, due to deterioration of tissue structures. In terms of location, lungs blacken, livers bleed, and hearts stop. Tissue deterioration is determined by cellular friction. Living cells undergo constant motion, as do their atomic counterparts. Blood cells must transport oxygen throughout your body. Muscle cells contract and relax. Friction is essential to all your bodily functions. Where there is friction, there is deterioration. Friction destroys all matter without preference. Examine your car's new steel belted radials." 9