derive from it. Second, language is not something man imposes on the land. It evolves in his conversation with the land—in testing the sea ice with the vee of a kamik, in the eating of a wild berry, in repairing a sled by the light of a seal-oil lamp. A long-lived inquiry produces a discriminating language. The very order of the language, the ecology of its sounds and thoughts, derives from the mind’s intercourse with the landscape. To learn the indigenous language, then, is to know what the speakers of the language have made of the land.

The American geographer Yi-Fu Tuan distinguishes in his writing between concepts of space and a sense of place. Human beings, he says, set out from places, where they feel a sense of attachment, of shelter, and comprehension, and journey into amorphous spaces, characterized by a feeling of freedom or adventure, and the unknown. “In open space,” writes Tuan, “one can become intensely aware of [a remembered] place; and in the solitude of a sheltered place, the vastness of space acquires a haunting presence.” We turn these exhilarating and sometimes terrifying new places into geography by extending the boundaries of our old places in an effort to include them. We pursue a desire for equilibrium and harmony between our familiar places and unknown spaces. We do this to make the foreign comprehensible, or simply more acceptable.

Tuan’s thoughts are valid whether one is thinking about entering an unused room in a large house or of a sojourn in the Arctic. What stands out in the latter instance, and seems always part of travel in a wild landscape, is the long struggle of the mind for concordance with that mysterious entity, the earth.

One more thought from Tuan: a culture’s most cherished places are not necessarily visible to the eye—spots on the land one can point to. They are made visible in drama—in narrative, song, and performance. It is precisely what is invisible in the land, however, that makes what is merely empty space to one person a place to another. The feeling that a particular place is suffused with memories, the specific focus of sacred and profane stories, and that

Above, map of the Cumberland Sound-Frobisher Bay region, drawn from memory by an Eskimo named Sunapignaq. Below, map of the same area generated with modern cartographic techniques.

Edmund Carpenter, with his particular interest in Eskimos' differing appreciation of the volume of space and their lack of a preferred orientation in it, has noticed that in maps of Southampton Island that the Aivilik prepared for him, the only distortions appeared in areas that were hunted very intensively. These regions were drawn larger than those visited less frequently. Contemporary Eskimo maps evince the same accuracy and richness, testifying to the continued maintenance of local geographic knowledge by those for whom this aspect of the culture is still alive, the astonishing degree to which the faculty of memory is cultivated among them, and their enduring penchant for long journeys over the land and sea ice. All this, despite their having moved into permanent settlements in most cases.

Traces of human presence in the land, like maps, organize undifferentiated space in certain ways, and the effect, especially in open country, is soothing. To come upon a series of Dorset campsites adds dimension and direction to the land; and one of course takes pleasure in the objects seen at these places. The same is true of a place where caribou for hundreds of years have crossed a river, or moved between mountains.

Distinctive landmarks that aid the traveler and control the vastness, as well as prominent marks on the land made inadvertently in the process of completing other tasks, are very much apparent in the Arctic. The most evocative are the imuksuit (stones piled up in the shape of human beings) that dot the eastern arctic landscape. They once funneled herds of caribou into depressions or rock corrals and marked lake shores at points where the fishing was good. One also finds stone fish dams and ptarmigan fences that date from Thule times. Rock cairns raised by early European explorers still stand out crisply in the landscape, on hills and headlands, and at