



The Last Launch: Messages in the Bottle

Yi-Fu Tuan, George F. Thompson

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Yi-Fu Tuan, one of the world's most honored scholars and the founder of humanist geography, has spent a lifetime exploring the relationship between the places and spaces that surround us and the inner self. In particular, his writings have focused on what it means to achieve human dignity within the varied communities we create.

Although we humans by nature may be flawed, as evidenced by war and injustice and environmental destruction, Professor Tuan affirms that all of us, by virtue of our remarkable senses and even more remarkable minds, are able to savor the wonders of our earthly home as no other species can. Moreover, we humans are by nature moral beings. For this reason, we find true fulfillment and ultimate happiness by doing good, an emptying of the self in service to others that, paradoxically, enriches and extends the self as few other acts can.

In *The Last Launch*, Professor Tuan's final book, we are given a senior scholar's views on a vast and complicated array of topics that would seem to require volumes to explore. But although his essays are expressed straightforwardly, they succeed in conveying big ideas—especially to the often impatient yet deeply curious young at heart, whatever their age. And it is to them that these short messages in the bottle, tossed hopefully into the sea, are addressed. Who knows what hearts and minds they may stir to life?

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