Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology. Vol. 25, No. 3

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Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology

1990–2014: Special 25th-anniversary issue!

This *EAP* celebrates 25 years of publication. In early spring, *EAP* editor **David Seamon** sent out invitations to contribute an essay for a special fall issue. In response, Seamon received the 19 entries that follow. To accommodate this issue's length as a paper copy, we have used a triple-column, ten-point format. The digital version remains in the usual two-column, 12-point format.

In his introduction to this anniversary issue, Seamon reproduces the list of potential questions that he suggested contributors might address (see p. 8). Though few of the entries answer these questions directly, one notes that they underlie many of the authors' concerns and serve as pointers toward important matters that may mark the future of environmental and architectural phenomenology.

One of these matters is the impact of digital information, hyperspace, and virtual reality on real-world places, life, and events. This concern affects *EAP* immediately, since **this will be the last paper issue**—production and especially postage costs have become too much to bear. As readers know, *EAP* is already available in an open-source digital version. With the elimination of paper copies, we will no longer send out a subscription request in fall issues. In lieu of subscriptions, we ask that readers make a donation for whatever amount they feel *EAP* is worth (see back page), since we still have production expenses.

We thank those readers who have supported *EAP* over the last 25 years. At its peak, in the late 1990s, our subscription list reached 150. Since open access, however, our paid readership has plummeted; in 2014, we received subscriptions from only 41 individuals and ten academic libraries. Though this loss in subscribership is discouraging, there is an encouraging side too. Since it became open source, *EAP* has been seen by many more readers than paper copies could generate.   For example, *(cont. on p. 2)*

Below: Booleroo Backyard–Panel 3, *60 x 213cm, 2014. This painting by artist* **Sue Michael** *pictures a backyard in* **Booleroo Centre**, *a small Australian town north of Adelaide. Note how outside and inside interconnect, a lifeworld feature Michael discusses in her essay, p. 15. For panels 1 & 2, see p. 17.*
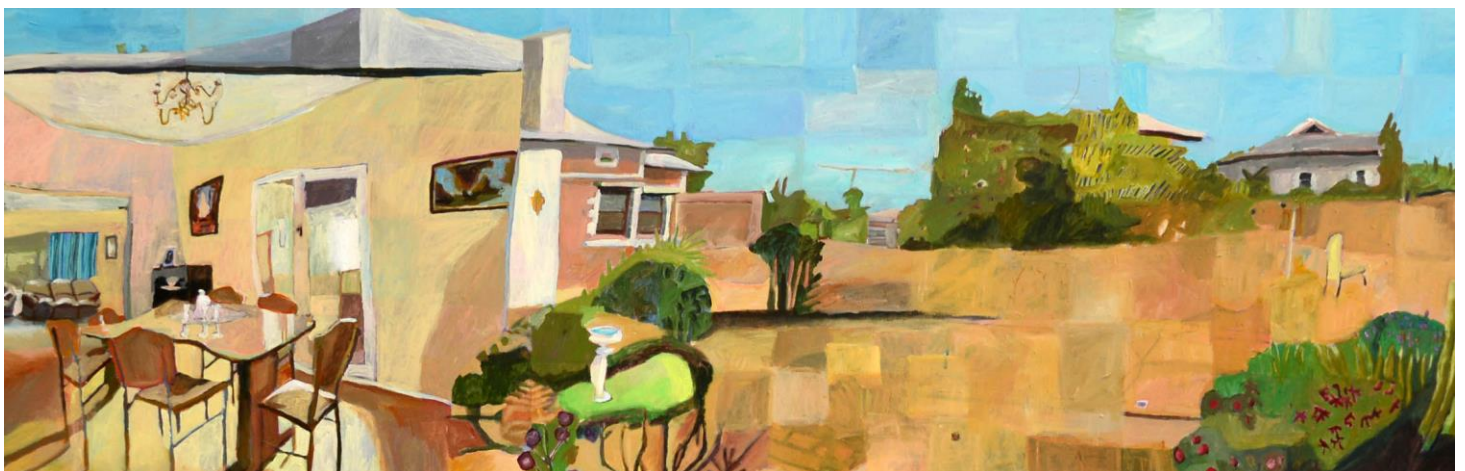
the fall 2014 issue has been viewed more than 1,100 times on the academia.edu website. We are told by the Kansas State University webmaster in charge of K-Rex (the digital library holding the *EAP* archive) that "hits" to the *EAP* collection are regularly in the top ten percent of most downloaded entries. Phenomenological insights may be gaining traction in a way unimaginable via paper distribution alone!

As some readers remember, *EAP* was originally envisioned by philosopher **Robert Mugerauer** (see his essay, p. 9), interior-design educator **Margaret Boschetti,** and environment-behavior researcher **David Seamon** at a breakfast meeting at the 1989 Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) conference. Boschetti and Seamon took on the task of co-editing *EAP* until 2002, when Boschetti retired and Seamon became editor. Boshetti was unable to contribute an essay to mark *EAP's* anniversary, but she did send a congratulatory note that makes a fitting end to the start of this special issue. She wrote:

David,

Congratulations on the 25th anniversary of EAP. *Hard to believe it has been 25 years since you launched this idea and asked me to be involved. It is truly a tribute to your commitment to encourage the expansion of interest and knowledge in environmental phenomenology that this milestone has been reached. Not only has the publication of* EAP *supported scholars, both established and new, to explore and expand their research in this field. It also has introduced voices from neighboring disciplines into the on-going dialog, thereby enriching the total milieu.*

I clearly recall how important it was to my career when I met you at a conference and discovered a group of like-minded researchers. Phenomenology not only provided a way to investigate questions of interest to me. It gave me a home in the academic community so I could continue to grow and move forward professionally. In that respect, I am like so many others whom you supported via EAP.

Best wishes going forward as you continue to support young scholars and mature minds with EAP.

Fond regards,

Margaret Boschetti, Hot Springs, Arkansas

More Donors, 2014

We gratefully thank the following readers who, since the spring 2014 issue, have contributed more than the base subscription for 2014: **Andrew Cohill, Janet Donohoe, Ben Jacks,** and **Harvey Sherman.**

Items of Interest

The 18th annual meeting of the **International Association for Environmental Philosophy** (IAEP) will be held October 25–27, 2014, in New Orleans. The conference follows the annual meetings of the **Society for Existential and Phenomenological Philosophy** (SPEP); and the **Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences** (SPHS). http://environmentalphilosophy.org/; www.spep.org/; http://sphs.info/.

The 45th annual meeting of the **Urban Affairs Association** (UAA) will be held in Miami, Florida, April 8–11, 2015. The theme of the conference is "The Dynamics of Place Making in the Global City." The UAA is dedicated to creating interdisciplinary spaces for engaging in intellectual and practical discussions about urban life. http://urbanaffairsassociation.org/.

The conference, **Philosophy of The City II**, will be held December 4–5, 2014 in Mexico City. Key questions include: What do philosophers have to say about urban life? Is there a need for a new philosophy of the city? This conference builds on an earlier conference held in Brooklyn, New York, in 2013. Contact: shane.epting@unt.edu.

The ***Journal of Aesthetics and Phenomenology*** supports research in aesthetics that draws inspiration from the phenomenological tradition. The journal provides a platform for innovative ideas that cross philosophical traditions and traditionally accepted fields of research in aesthetics. www.ingentaconnect.com/content/bloomsbury/jap.

ARID: A Journal of Desert Art, Design and Ecology is a peer-reviewed annual publication focusing on cross-disciplinary explorations of desert arts, design, culture and the environment for both scholarly and new audiences. *ARID* seeks submissions related to desert regions of the American Southwest and beyond. editors@aridjournal.org.

Habits and Habituality

Philosophers **Matt Bower** and **Emanuele Carminada** have edited a special 2014 issue of *Phenomenology and Mind,* which focuses on "Mind, Habits, and Social Reality." The 14 articles examine "habit, especially its personal and interpersonal aspects." Contributors include: **Dermot Moran** ("The Ego as Substrate of Habitualities: Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology of the Habitual Self"); **Maxine Sheets-Johnson** ("On the Origin, Nature, and Genesis of Habit"); and **Nick Crossley** ("The Concept of Habit and the Regularities of Social Structure"). The issue ends with a bibliography of work relating to habit.

As a tribute to phenomenology founder **Edmund Husserl**, we present, in the side bar, right, Moran's opening description of Husserl's understanding of habit and habituality. The journal is available at: http://www.phenomenologyandmind.eu/.

Max van Manen's New Book

Max van Manen, 2014. *Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing.* **Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press.**

Throughout his academic career, educator **Max van Manen** has been one of the most accessible commentators on phenomenological method. His *Researching Human Experience* (1990) is one of the most frequently recommended introductions for newcomers to phenomenological and hermeneutic research.

No doubt, ***Phenomenology of Practice*** will come to hold an equal place because it is a masterly account of the nature of phenomenology and the lived experience of doing phenomenological research. Van Manen begins by delineating the nature of phenomenological investigation broadly and then provides a five-chapter overview of key phenomenological founders and practitioners, including current, cutting-edge thinkers like Michel Serres, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Jean-Luc Marion.

In the second, longer portion of the volume, van Manen delineates three key aspects of the phenomenological process: first, the *phenomenological epoché*—setting aside assumed points of view and see-

"Life lived 'with blinders on'…"

Central to Husserl's analyses [of habit] is his understanding of habitual life in the familiar world. This is always a life where meanings are encountered or lived through as "always already there" or "pre-given." The everyday world of experience has a deep degree of stability, commonality, normality, familiarity, and even comfort. It is the common context and horizon for our collective concerns…. Precisely because everyday life has a pre-given, taken-for-granted character, it is invisible in the analyses of the positive sciences. The operations of this hidden intentionality need to be made visible, and Husserl gradually realized this required a major suspension of our naïve worldly-commitment, or belief-in-being.

For Husserl, everyday life is natural life, life in the natural attitude. This is a life lived in obscurity, the unexamined life, life lived according to everyday habituality, life lived "with blinders on" as Husserl often says.

Husserl's phenomenology of habitual life discovers habit as present at all levels of human behavior from the lower unconscious instincts and drives (that have their own peculiar individuality or idiosyncrasy) to bodily motility right up to the level of autonomous rational life in culture. Thus he speaks not just of bodily habits or traits of character but of peculiar and abiding "habits of thought." These habits of thought include scientific habits of thinking accepted without question and that it is the function of the transcendental epoché to disrupt and thereby expose.

The life of habit… is not just a matter of intellectual attitude or conviction. It can also be a matter of perceptual tendencies, desires, feelings, emotions, even peculiar moods. Husserl recognizes the complex character of our "feelings," as well as our intertwined emotional and affective "states," acts of empathy, sympathy love, fellow feeling, and so on, as well as acts of willing (important for our ethical lives). In this sense, personal love, for Husserl, is described as a "lasting habitus." All of these can have a habitual character, a particular style of being lived through, and as a result they can be sedimented into layers that encrust the psyche and form the "abiding style of the ego" (Dermot Moran, pp. 28–29).

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ing the phenomenon afresh; second, the *phenomenological reduction*—finding ways to locate the essential qualities of the phenomenon; and, third*, phenomenological writing*—the effort whereby phenomenologists transform their sightings and understandings of the phenomenon into accurate, robust descriptions, particularly "the noncognitive, ineffable, and pathic aspects of meaning that belong to the phenomenon" (p. 240). The sidebar, below and right, presents a short portion of van Manen's discussion of wonder, epoché, and reduction. In a future *EAP,* we hope to include reviews of van Manen's book because it is a major contribution to phenomenology.

Phenomenology and Wonder

Phenomenological method is driven by a pathos: being swept up in a spell of wonder about phenomena as they appear, show, present, or give themselves to us. In the encounter with the things and events of the world, phenomenology directs its gaze toward the regions where meanings and understandings originate, well up, and percolate through the porous membranes of past sedimentations—then infuse, permeate, infect, touch, stir us, and exercise a formative and affective effect on our being…. To say it more pointedly:

❖ Phenomenological research begins with wonder at what gives itself and how something gives itself. It can only be pursued while surrendering to a state of wonder.

❖ A phenomenological question explores what is given in moments of prereflective, prepredicative experience—experiences as we live through them.

❖ Phenomenology aims to grasp the exclusively singular aspects (identity/essence/otherness) of a phenomenon or event.

❖ The epoché (bracketing) and the reduction proper are the two most critical components of the various forms of the reductions—though the reduction itself is understood quite differently, at times incommensurably, and sometimes contested by various leading philosophers and phenomenologists.

❖ Phenomenological reduction and analysis occur primarily in the attitude of the epoché, the reduction, and the vocative… (pp. 26–27).

Epoché and Reduction

How can phenomenology gain access to the prereflective experiences as they occur in the taken-for-granted spheres of our everyday lifeworld? Normally we rarely reflect on the lived sensibilities of our experiences, since we already experience the meanings immanent in our everyday practices through our bodies, language, habits, things, social interactions, and physical environments.

Phenomenology is the method to break through this taken-for-grantedness and to get to the meaning structures of our experiences. This basic method is called the reduction. The reduction consists of two methodical opposing moves that complement each other. Negatively it suspends or removes what obstructs access to the phenomenon—this move is called the epoché or bracketing. And positively it returns, leads back to the mode of appearing of the phenomenon—this move is called the reduction…. (p. 215).

The epoché describes the ways that we need to open ourselves to the world as we experience it and free ourselves from presuppositions The reduction is generally the methodological term that describes the phenomenological gesture that permits us to rediscover what Merleau-Ponty (1962) calls "the spontaneous surge of the lifeworld" and the way that the phenomena give and show themselves in their uniqueness. The aim of the reduction is to re-achieve a direct and primitive contact with the world as we experience it or as it shows itself—rather than as we conceptualize it. But we need to realize as well that in some sense nothing is "simply given." The phenomenological attitude is sustained by wonder, attentiveness, and a desire for meaning…. [T]he reduction aims at removing any barriers, assumptions, suppositions, projections, and linguisticalities that prevent the phenomena and events of the lifeworld to appear or show themselves as they give themselves. So we need to engage in the reduction in order to let that which gives itself show itself (p. 220 and p. 221).

Human-Immersion-in-World
Twenty-Five Years of *EAP*

David Seamon, Editor, *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology*

The last longer-than-usual issue of *EAP* was produced for its 20ᵗʰ anniversary in 2009. In that issue, I published essays by four major figures in environmental and architectural phenomenology—psychologist Bernd Jager, geographer Edward Relph, and philosophers Karsten Harries and Jeff Malpas. In my introduction [1], I highlighted three "recurring concerns" that grounded the aims and contents of *EAP*:

❖ First, an emphasis on *existential* phenomenology—in other words, the absolute necessity of phenomenological work grounded in, arising from, and returning to concrete experience and the lived reality of lifeworlds;

❖ Second, an emphasis on researchers' openness to the phenomenon and offering it a supportive space in which it presents itself in a way whereby it is what it is most accurately and comprehensively;

❖ Third, an effort to hold theory and practice together, since a central phenomenological assumption is that how and what we understand is how and what we make; therefore, finding more accurate ways to see, think, and envision should, in turn, strengthen design, planning, policy, and advocacy.

These concerns remain central to the aims of *EAP,* and I don't wish to discuss them again here. Rather, in this introduction to the special 25ᵗʰ-anniversary issue, I, first, explain how its format came into being; and, second, discuss the one theme that has struck me most strongly in editing this special issue—i.e., the question of how we accurately understand, describe, envision, plan, and design for a central phenomenological claim: *that human beings are always already inescapably immersed and entwined in their worlds that, most of the time, "just happen" without the intervention of anything or anyone.*

As I considered scenarios for a special anniversary issue, I decided that the most revealing possibility might be to invite a good number of individuals associated with "environmental and architectural phenomenology" to contribute a short essay of 500–2,500 words. I sent out some 60 invitations and eventually received the 19 essays published here. In my letter of invitation, I explained that my aim was to "produce a special fall issue marking a quarter century of phenomenological work relating to environmental and architectural concerns." I included a list of possible questions that contributors might wish to address (the list follows this introduction on p. 8). I emphasized, however, that, "if there are some other relevant questions or themes more important to you currently, then please focus on those."

In studying the 19 essays, one notes that most contributors did not respond to my questions directly but, instead, focused on other themes and situations, all of which still relate to *EAP* and indicate important directions that future work in environmental and architectural phenomenology might take. **Robert Mugerauer's** opening essay is a helpful historical overview of "environmental and architectural phenomenology," particularly its disciplinary and professional dimensions.

In pondering the arrangement of the other 18 essays, I decided to organize them thematically. The first five essays—by psychologist **Eva-Maria Simms**, artist **Sue Michael**, and philosophers **Jeff Malpas**, **Bruce Janz**, and **Dennis Skocz**—deal in various ways with the theme of *place*—why it is important phenomenologically; how it might be understood via real-world situations; how human attachment to place might be intensified; and how physical, environmental, and human qualities contribute to a sense of place.

The next five essays—by anthropologist **Tim Ingold**, ecologist **Mark Riegner**, environmental educator **John Cameron**, and philosophers **Janet Donohoe** and **Bryan Bannon**—shift focus toward the *lived constitution of nature, the natural environment, and the natural world.* A central concern is how, conceptually and practically, we replace the standard modernist division between people and world with a penetrating recognition that human-being-in-the world always involves aspects of nature, though these authors disagree considerably as

to how this lived immersion is to be understood conceptually or to be encountered experientially.

The next three essays—by architectural theorist **Lena Hopsch**, philosopher **Matthew S. Bower**, and educator **Paul Krafel**—shift attention toward *real-world "applications" of phenomenological principles and methods*—Hopsch, in terms of transit design; Bower, in terms of lived implications of virtual realities; and Krafel, in terms of a more engaged, animated pedagogy, including environmental education.

The last five essays highlight *broader conceptual issues* such as the subjectivity-objectivity dilemma (geographer **Yi-Fu Tuan**); the appropriate relationship between phenomenology and analytic, empirical science (architect **Julio Bermudez**); phenomenology as practiced by non-phenomenologists (geographer **Edward Relph**); the relationship between phenomenological understanding and practical application (philosopher **Ingrid Stefanovic**); and parallels between real-world and phenomenological pathways and journeys (phenomenologist **Betsy Behnke**).

It is particularly appropriate that this special *EAP* issue ends with Behnke's essay, since her invaluable *Study Project in Phenomenology of the Body Newsletter,* published from 1988 to 1994, was one of the original inspirations for *EAP*. In that sense, endings often resonate with starting points.

In studying the 19 essays that follow, one can locate a considerable range of related themes, but I want to focus on one that lately has returned again and again to my thinking and writing: the difficult business of understanding the complex, multivalent ways in which we, as human beings, are intertwined, intermeshed, entrenched and submerged in the worlds in which we find ourselves.

Different phenomenologists have sought to clarify this "lived immersion" variously, with Husserl emphasizing intentionality, lifeworld, and natural attitude; Heidegger, being-in-world and dwelling; and Merleau-Ponty, lived embodiment, chiasm, and flesh. In his essay, Relph reminds us of yet another important effort to phrase this lived immersion: French historian Eric Dardel's perspicacious notion of *geographicality*—"the relationships and experiences that bind human beings to the earth, which [Dardel] considered to be fundamental aspects of human exist-

ence." Relph quotes Dardel's striking claim that geographicality "is not to be looked at but is, rather, an insertion of people into the world…."

Several contributors to this special issue consider how this people-world interlock might be phrased conceptually. Most directly concerned with this matter is Malpas, who speaks of "human being as placed being" and goes so far as to suggest that, because human beings are always already emplaced, phenomenology might consider rebranding itself as *topology*, since "every appearing or presencing is itself a 'taking place'."

In different ways, Donohoe and Ingold make a similar point in relation to the constitution of nature as it is lived. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty, Donohoe views nature "not as a thing but as a ground of experience itself"—a "world of which we are always already aware." Ingold argues that, in speaking of a phenomenology *of* the natural world, we conceptually presuppose an artificial division—a separating *betweenness*—whereby we fail "to notice how both we and [the beings and things of nature] *go along together* in the current of time." How, he asks, do we really understand and foster a "togethering" rather than yet another "othering"?

An answer to this question is suggested by other contributors, though in contrasting ways. For Simms, Michael, and Cameron, a lived enjoinment with place entails prolonged, care-grounded engagement, a way of being with the world that Riegner also points to in his overview of Goethean science as a sensitive phenomenology of nature. Though he would probably not use Ingold's phrasing, Malpas finds this "togethering" in the intimate, inseparable "gathering" of people-in-place. As he has written so eloquently elsewhere, place is "constituted through a gathering of elements that are themselves mutually defined only through the way in which they are gathered together within the place they also constitute" [2].

In considerable contrast, Bannon argues that most current phenomenologies of human-being-in-the-world remain caught up in a modernist "subject-object metaphysics." He suggests that we must move away from any claims of some essential, always-present lived structure of people-world. Instead, he emphasizes that we consider "decentering the human" and recognizing how ecological systems are always in continual flux. Bannon intimates that the conventional phenomenological emphasis on order, unity, synthesis, generalization,

and truth needs reconsideration via more recent post-structuralist, relationalist, and materialist perspectives that favor indeterminacy, diversity, local narratives, particularity, and contingent possibilities.

For me personally, the entry most intriguing is Matthew Bower's discussion of virtual reality, which he sees as progressively "part and parcel of the naïve everydayness of life" and entering "into relation with all other nodes of our perceptual field, modifying the nature of the whole."

As some *EAP* readers no doubt know, virtual reality (VR) has recently made a quantum leap via 22-year-old inventor Palmer Lucky's headset device called the *Oculus Rift,* bought by Facebook in March, 2014, for two billion dollars. This digital machine is the first to generate fully what VR programmers call *presence*—a deep, unquestioned sense one is somewhere else, for example, a simulation of a craggy, rocky mountainside that seems so real that you really think you could fall into the deep chasm below [3].

On one hand, Bower's claims for the future of VR are hopeful in that "we can find a virtuality that is not set over and against the real" but extends reality and enhances virtually what reality was before VR. On the other hand, there is the phenomenological work of philosopher **Albert Borgmann**, who is less sanguine because of the lived ways that virtual reality can facilitate experiences that might seem real but could never fully unfold in real reality or actual lifeworlds [4]. Borgmann identifies four lived qualities that trigger enhancements, distortions, or reductions of what "experience" often becomes in virtual reality:

❖ *Pliability:* the way that virtual objects and experiences can be "entirely subject[ed] to…desire and manipulation" [5];

❖ *Discontinuity:* the way that virtual objects and experiences need not have any practical connection or lived relationship with the real-world situation in the midst of which the virtual user is still immersed even as he partakes in virtual reality;

❖ *Brilliance:* The way that virtual reality can intensify an experience's attractive features and reduce or eliminate entirely its unpleasant, uninteresting, or irrelevant dimensions; the "truly brilliant reality," writes Borghman, "would exclude all unwanted information" [6];

❖ *Disposability:* The way that virtual users can end the virtual experience at any time and feel no responsibility or obligation to the "events" and "experiences" of the virtual reality they have just left; in this sense, virtual reality is readily dismissible and disposable.

Underlying these four qualities of virtual experience is the more fundamental phenomenological recognition that *"Reality encumbers and confines"* [7]. Though VR may superficially seem real, it can readily escape and replace the lived messiness of real lifeworlds with much more convenient, vivid, or fantastical situations that require no stakes or responsibilities.

On one hand, virtual reality holds remarkable promise in that it could be a huge contributor to repairing a good number of the world's problems. Who, for example, would need a car if he could simply put on his virtual headset and "go to" his workplace, grocery store, or favorite recreation place? Or who needs an elaborate house (or vacation, hobby, or fun night out) when all these "experiences" and "places" might be less costly generated vicariously and virtually?

On the other hand, virtual reality involves potential risks and dangers, including time wasting, titillation, addiction, and withdrawal from most things real. Why make the efforts that an encumbering, confining real world entails when virtual reality can provide ease, pleasure, and enhanced vividness without the downside of demands, exertions, obligations, or consequences?

I highlight virtual reality because, as Borgmann and Bower's work indicates, phenomenological perspectives can offer singular insights as to VR's possibilities and implications. *Lifeworld, natural attitude, intentionality, horizon, body-subject, embodied emplacement, lived place*, and other key phenomenological notions all identify integral constituents of any human experience, whether real or virtual. Human beings are always already soldered in and to their worlds, even if the soldering may be virtual. Understanding this soldering, in its myriad lived aspects, remains a central aim of *EAP* and environmental and architectural phenomenology.

Notes

1. D. Seamon, Twenty Years of *EAP*, *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology* 20, 3 (fall 2009): 3–5.
2. J. Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology,* Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006, p. 29.
3. L. Grossman, Head Trip, *Time Magazine,* Apr. 7, 2014, pp. 36–41; P. Rubin, Oculus Rift, *Wired*, June, 2014, pp. 78–95.
4. A. Borgmann, *Crossing the Postmodern Divide*, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992, pp. 87–102; also see A. Borgmann, *Holding on to Reality,* Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999.
5. Borgmann, *Crossing,* p. 88.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p. 96.

Possible Questions for the 25ᵗʰ- Anniversary Issue of *EAP*

Questions relating to phenomenology and related interpretive approaches and methods:

- What is phenomenology and what does it offer to whom?
- What is the state of phenomenological research today? What are your hopes and concerns regarding phenomenology?
- Does phenomenology continue to have relevance in examining human experience in relation to world?
- Are there various conceptual and methodological modes of phenomenology and, if so, how can they be categorized and described?
- Has phenomenological research been superseded by other conceptual approaches—e.g., post-structuralism, social-constructionism, relationalist and non-representational perspectives, the various conceptual "turns," and so forth?
- Can phenomenology contribute to making a better world? If so, what are the most crucial phenomena and topics to be explored phenomenologically?
- Can phenomenological research offer practical results in terms of design, planning, policy, and advocacy?
- How might phenomenological insights be broadcast in non-typical academic ways—e.g., through artistic expression, theatrical presentation, digital evocation, virtual realities, and so forth?
- What are the most important aims for future phenomenological research?
- Do the various post-structural and social-constructionist criticisms of phenomenology—that it is essentialist, masculinist, authoritative, voluntarist, ignorant of power structures, and so forth—point toward its demise?

Questions relating to the natural world and environmental and ecological concerns:

- Can there be a phenomenology of nature and the natural world?
- What can phenomenology offer the intensifying environmental and ecological crises we face today?
- Can phenomenology contribute to more sustainable actions and worlds?
- Can one speak of a sustainable lifeworld?
- What is a phenomenology of a *lived* environmental ethic and who are the key contributors?

- Do the "sacred" and the "holy" have a role in caring for the natural world? For places? For lifeworlds broadly?
- Can phenomenology contribute to environmental education? If so, in what ways?
- Can there be a phenomenology of the two laws of thermodynamics, especially the second law claiming that all activities, left to their own devices, tend toward greater disorder and fewer possibilities? Are there ways whereby phenomenological understanding of lifeworld might help to reduce the accelerating disordering of natural and human worlds?

Questions relating to place, place experience, and place meaning:

- Why has the topic of place become an important phenomenological topic?
- Can a phenomenological understanding of place contribute to better place making?
- Can phenomenology contribute to a generative understanding of place and place making?
- What roles do bodily regularity and habitual inertia play in the constitution of place and place experience?
- What are the lived relationships between place, sustainability, and a responsive environmental ethic?
- How are phenomenological accounts to respond to post-structural interpretations of space and place as rhizomic and a "meshwork of paths" (Ingold)?
- Can phenomenological accounts incorporate a "progressive sense of place" argued for by critical theorists like Doreen Massey?
- Can phenomenological explications of space and place account for human differences—gender, sexuality, less-abledness, social class, cultural background, and so forth?
- Can phenomenology contribute to the politics and ideology of place?
- Can a phenomenological understanding of lived embodiment and habitual inertia be drawn upon to facilitate robust places and to generate mutual support and understanding among places, especially places that are considerably different (e.g., different ethnic neighborhoods or regions)?
- Can phenomenology contribute to mobility, the nature of "flows," rhizomic spaces, the places of mobility, non-

spaces and their relationship to mobility and movement?

Questions relating to architecture and environmental design and policy:

- Can there be a phenomenology of architecture and architectural experience and meaning?
- Can phenomenology contribute to better architectural design?
- How do qualities of the designable world—spatiality, materiality, lived aesthetics, environmental embodiment etc.—contribute to lifeworlds?
- What are the most pertinent environmental and architectural features contributing to a lifeworld's being one way rather than another?
- What role will cyberspace and digital technologies have in 21ˢᵗ-century lifeworlds? How will they play a role in shaping designed environments, particularly architecture?
- What impact will digital advances and virtual realities have on physical embodiment, architectural design, and real-world places? Will virtual reality eventually be able to simulate "real reality" entirely? If so, how does such a development transform the nature of lifeworld, natural attitude, place, and architecture?
- Can virtual worlds become so "real" that they are lived as "real" worlds?

Other potential questions:

- What is the lived relationship between people and the worlds in which they find themselves?
- Can lifeworlds be made to happen self-consciously? If so, how? Through what individual efforts? Through what group efforts?
- Can a phenomenological education in lifeworld, place, and environmental embodiment assist citizens and professionals in better understand the workings and needs of real-world places and thereby contribute to their envisioning and making?
- Is it possible to speak of human-rights-in-place or place justice? If so, would such a possibility move attention and supportive efforts toward improving the places in which people and other living beings find themselves, rather than focusing only on the rights and needs of individuals and groups without consideration of their place context?

It's about People

Robert Mugerauer

__Mugerauer__ is Professor and Dean Emeritus in the College of Built Environments at the University of Washington in Seattle. He is a co-founder of EAP *and, through the years, has provided invaluable support and inspiration. His current work focuses on applying phenomenology and complexity theory to issues of environmental well-being. He has written* Heidegger and Homecoming *(University of Toronto Press, 2008).* drbobm@uw.edu*. © 2014 Robert Mugerauer.*

EAP is celebrating its 25th year of successfully accomplishing a central task: working as a site for phenomenologically exploring our lifeworld. In doing so, it has exemplified the core dimensions of both the phenomena and the approach: focusing on our lives together in our environmental and architectural realms and on the ways we come to understanding as part of a social, communal project. *EAP* has insightfully shown us what is given but too often overlooked because we are caught up in the midst of what we are doing. Lifeworld meanings, in other words, are normally experienced implicitly and not unfolded explicitly.

As a result of attending to *EAP's* gift—evoking meanings and values that enrich our lives—many of us, whether specifically working phenomenologically or with related qualitative strategies, have found ourselves called to participate in dialogue and to respond with research, design, and education.

What strikes me most in looking back over past *EAP* issues is the atmosphere of openness and freedom that prevails in the course of presenting fresh insights and substantive content. The project never was to form a closed circle of researchers, professionals, or inquisitive readers. Rather, a better image might be genuinely international networks with many different sorts of linkages among members or of orbiting activities intersecting here and there. That is to say, *EAP is all about people with a certain attitude or style* as much as it is about the environmental and architectural subject matter. David Seamon and Margaret Boschetti deserve full credit for helping so many of us along the journey.

Think of how the story of the last 25 years is a gathering and scattering of participants who do not form anything like a movement but, rather, facilitate a series of movable rendezvous. Indeed, part of the richness of what has happened is that many particular "tribes" actually have little contact with each other, or have in common a few individuals who are related with what are known as weak rather than strong ties.

In the beginning, there were "humanistic" geographers attending to place: Yi-Fu Tuan, Anne Buttimer, Ted Relph, and a young David Seamon. A few theorists and philosophers such as Christian Norberg-Schulz, Karsten Harries, and a young Bob Mugerauer were attending to architecture. These thinkers, however, were not connected at first. For example, I was happy but embarrassed to learn at a 1983 Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy conference in St. Louis that Harries, beyond his general work in aesthetics, had developed a sub-specialty of Rococo churches.

So off went the venture into uncharted territory. Not surprisingly—though pleasantly surprising to us in each instance—we did not "discover" other people, since they were already there doing good work. But we did discover what they were doing and ways to connect more and more of us. The basic move was to find venues for getting together, the master of which was Seamon, already performing the role he still does, formalized in *EAP*.

The main problem was finding parent organizations whose conferences were not so overly positivistic as to exclude other approaches.

Most of these venues were disciplinary, but an increasing number of multi-disciplinary, environmentally or architecturally focused organizations also appeared. There were sessions for several years at the American Association of Geographers (AAG), especially in the 1980s. There was also teasing open a time and place as part of the Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences (SPHS) meetings, beginning in the early 1980s and still continuing, as well as the hospitable International Human Science Research Conference (IHSRC).

Somewhat more problematic (because in the heart of the beast), there have been a long series of presentations at the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) from the mid-1980s. EDRA still provides a venue today, though some of us no longer attend because, in many ways, a hackneyed positivist critique still dominates (EDRA was where I first met Ingrid Stefanovic and where the intrepid Seamon still carries on). The International Association of Person-Environment Studies (IAPS), the European counterpart to EDRA (and more receptive to phenomenology with colleagues such as Gilles Barbey) was a good venue in the mid-1980s and following.

Architectural, urban, and design-oriented work was regularly presented at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) conferences from the mid-1980s onward and less often at the meetings of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP). Meanwhile, the blossoming field of architectural anthropology was hospitable as seen in presentations at the Built Form and Culture conferences in the 1980s and the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments (IASTE) from 1990 to the present.

Philosophers independently carried on, in large part because of the growing interest in environmental issues and regular presentations at the philosophical "mother ship" of SPEP in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In the early 2000s, another sub-set of continentally-oriented researchers founded the International Association for Environmental Philosophy (IAEP), which continues to hold its meetings in conjunction with SPEP and SPHS.

Many phenomenologists, purged from philosophy departments by analytic philosophy in the 1970s, had found other arenas in which to operate, including comparative literature. The International Association for Philosophy and Literature (IAPL) has been a two-decades-long site of exchange since the 1990s. Finally, there have been many "one of a kind" meetings focusing on topics such as place, spirituality, technology, sustainability, ecology, landscape, regional studies, and urbanism.

As I noted earlier, what is especially striking is that, while there are some people active in multiple arenas, almost no one participates in all. Indeed, even in the complex networks elaborated in the various conferences and meetings, not everyone crossed paths. There are many individuals and clusters with distinct trajectories, aware of each other but not focally working together. To note just a few, and here necessarily leave many others out (the remedy for which is the terrific now-digital *EAP* archive!) I still have not met face to face with Jeff Malpas, Michael Jackson, or James Weiner, have only intersected once with Dalibor Vesely, though with Juhani Pallasmaa and Alberto Pérez-Gómez more often, and with Tim Ingold only last year.

My point in all this attention to meetings is that environmental and architectural phenomenology is associated with a diverse, only loosely connected, group of interesting people. One result is a richness that comes from diversity and occasional cross-fertilization. That is the real story. Yes, content matters, but it proceeds from looking, thinking, and talking together about our shared world. While new people continuously have found one or another via ongoing activities and publications, what would have been much more random with many missed connections has been focused and facilitated by *EAP*.

It is not too much to say that the welcoming attitude prevailing among the people involved and promulgated by *EAP* has been a major force for good.

Human Being as Placed Being

Jeff Malpas

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Although I am certainly not opposed to a phenomenological characterization, I think of my own work as, for the most part, "topological" or "topographical" rather than "phenomenological." Yet I also take phenomenology, along with hermeneutics, to be essentially topological in character, a point I have argued for elsewhere (e.g., *Place and Experience,* 1999). It is precisely this topological character that seems to me to underpin the connections between architecture, environment, and phenomenology that *EAP* has been concerned to explore and articulate over the past 25 years.

One problem with some contemporary phenomenology, however, is that it seems to lose sight of this topological orientation (and so also to lose sight of its properly transcendental character). In fact, the continuing contemporary significance of phenomenology seems to me to reside neither in its cognitive scientific relevance nor in its possible connection with aspects of analytic thought, but rather in the way that issues of place and environment arise as central to phenomenological inquiry, even if they are sometimes obscured within it. This is also why phenomenology remains important to my own work, in spite of my ambivalence about whether that work is itself to be understood as primarily phenomenological in character.

If phenomenology is described as that mode of philosophical inquiry directed primarily at an understanding of "phenomena"—at an understanding of "what appears" or "is present"—then its topological orientation is already evident in the fact that every appearing or presencing is itself a "taking place." It is this "taking place," which is bounded as well as open and dynamic, that grounds the idea of topology as philosophical. Such "taking place" is the proper *topos* of the phenomena—the *topos* of appearing or presencing.

The significance of such a *topos* is not affected by shifts in the character of place and space that supposedly characterize contemporary globalized modernity. We can say that even globalized modernity appears only in and through specific *topoi*—globalization is something that occurs only in and through particular places, in respect of specific things, localities, and practices. *Understanding globalization thus requires an understanding of place*—and this is all the more so, given the way in which one of the characteristic features of globalization (and of technological modernity more generally) is to obscure its own placed character.

In this respect, too much of the contemporary discourse around globalization and modernity, even supposedly "critical" discourse, fails to engage with the real character of modernity, since the conceptual framework it employs (typically that of unbounded flow and connection) is precisely the framework of modernity's own self-representation—and so also the self-representation of contemporary corporate capitalism and bureaucratic-technocratic governance.

The *topos* of the phenomena is a *topos* in which we are always involved. As such, the inquiry into *topos*, the turn back to place, is also a turn back to ourselves. It is, I would say, a turn *back to the human* (although a turn that also puts the human in question—puts *ourselves* in question). The mode of being that is the human is most succinctly characterized as that mode of being that is always turned toward *topos*—even when it seems to be turned away.

Human being is thus placed being. This is especially important both for architectural and environmental thinking, since it is our own embeddedness in

place and the embeddedness of place in us that underpins and ought to guide environmental care and concern as well as architectural design and practice.

Greater environmental attentiveness is likely to be achieved only through greater attentiveness to our own human being—which here means our being in and through place—and the same holds for good architectural and design practice (which is also why so much contemporary architecture falls short *as architecture*). Moreover, in emphasizing the environmental here as tied to place, what is also emphasized is a conception of the environmental that itself encompasses the architectural (as the architectural itself overlaps with the environmental).

On such a topological or topographic conception, the environmental is not merely that which pertains to the "natural" or the "unbuilt" (to that which is *other* than the human), nor is the architectural about only the "cultural" or the "built," but instead both refer us to the entirety of the surrounding world as it is brought to focus *in place*, and that therefore includes the built and the unbuilt, the cultural and the natural, the urban and the wild.

In this way, the genuinely interconnected and interdependent character of the world is brought into focus as an interconnectedness and interdependence that is both encompassing and yet also concentrated; that is complex and multiple and yet comes to salience in the singularity of place.

Recognizing the topological character of phenomenology means recognizing its environmental and architectural relevance, and yet this may also be thought to bring with it a need to rethink the character of phenomenology. Although it does not do away with phenomenology as a mode of philosophical analysis and description, it suggests that phenomenology has an additional task that is directed toward the uncovering and articulation of our everyday involvement in the world, as that involvement occurs in and through the places in which our lives are embedded, and as it brings those places, and the wider environmental context, with all its complexities and interdependencies, to light.

Such a task requires a mode of phenomenology that speaks to the phenomena in their immediacy, their singularity—and in their everydayness. Such a phenomenology would be a phenomenology of the everyday, but also a phenomenology attuned to the place of the everyday and the everydayness of place. To some extent, it is a phenomenology already present, though less in the pages of Husserl and Heidegger than in the articulation of the placed character of experience that is to be found in much contemporary architecture, art, music, film and literature, as well as in many forms of personal reflection and practice.

Perhaps the turn toward a more explicitly topological sensibility, even in conjunction with phenomenology, also requires a turn toward a closer engagement with ordinary life as well as popular culture—to an understanding of *topos* in its most prosaic forms as that out of which any more developed engagement, including with environmental questions, must arise.

This understanding of phenomenology is also one that brings with it a fundamental concern with the ethical—where ethics is itself already oriented toward the question of our placed being in the world. Here place brings together the ethical with the ontological, so that the two are seen as properly and inextricably bound together.

Our being placed does not merely *determine* our being, it *is* our being, and as such it is also that which is the foundation for our being *as ethical*—it is in being placed that we are given over to the question of our proper relation to ourselves, to others, and to the world.

It is thus that environmental concern, as a concern with the world and our relation to it as that is articulated in and through place and places, itself arises as a concern that is both ethical and ontological. Such a concern has been clearly evident through the pages of *EAP*. Thanks, as well as congratulations to David Seamon and to *EAP* on 25 years of sustained engagement with the issues at stake here—25 years of sustained engagement with phenomenology, with environment, with architecture, and with place.

Going Deep in Place

Eva-Maria Simms

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From ten until I was twenty-eight years old, I spent none of my birthdays at home. August was always the time for travel: my tenth birthday, in a tent at a girl scout summer camp; my eleventh, in a convalescent home; my thirteenth, free and unsupervised in Salzburg; my fifteenth, accompanying an elderly great aunt to Wales; my seventeenth, as a maid in a dilapidated hotel on a North Sea island; my eighteenth, in London; my nineteenth, in Prague; my twentieth, high up in the Alps; my twenty-first, a Sunday a few days after arriving as a graduate student in Dallas, Texas; my twenty-second, at a wedding in Paolo Alto; and so on.

I left my home in Germany to have my American adventure—without knowing I would never return to live in Germany, apart from visiting my parents a few weeks most summers. When I was a young woman, it seemed to be a sign of my destiny that I awoke on that special day every year in another place, with other people, and without a birthday party. It made Salzburg, London, and Prague special. To touch the hearts of those places, I made sure I took my solitary "birthday walk" on beaches or through the mazes of city streets.

My husband Michael and I moved to a house on Mt. Washington after we came to Pittsburgh. "We have travelled far on this mountain," he wrote in a poem for me after our son was born. Over the past 25 years, that line has captured for me a different way of travelling. We have lived on the same mountain since

1987. We have walked the same streets, have seen children grow up, witnessed funeral processions, saw old houses fall and new ones built, and have looked out over the Monongahela Valley too many times to count.

I still travel to Europe every year, but the direction of my journey has gradually changed. *It all began with birds.* Our back porch had a canvas awning pulled up in winter, and every spring a pair of rosy house finches nested in the folds. A pair of mourning doves has been recycling a nest on the ledge above our back door for more than a decade, and they are probably by now the offspring of the offspring. I have to make sure every year that we do not use the porch too early in the season because, as soon as the door opens, the mama bird goes whoosh and flies away in panic. Every year the same visitors: They come and stay for a few weeks, their babies fledge, and they move on to other places when the season ends.

Birds, I noticed, don't just fly around all the time. They make their home in one place, and they live there

for the season, just like we do. They share this place above the Monongahela River with us. They are our neighbors, which means that they are our *nah-gibur* (Old High German), our "near-dwellers."

I began to notice other birds returning over the years: the chimney swifts who come in May; the magnolia warblers, who pass through around the

same time; the scarlet tanagers, who flash through the woods in June. Early May is the best time, because, through the still sparse leaves, you can see the ruby crowned kinglets in the thickets. My favorite neighbors, the coopers' hawks, refurbish their nest and engage in their courtship dance.

My daily walks through the neighborhood streets and woods are now overlaid with a soundscape of birdsong. I slowly learned to notice and differentiate the territorial melody of the wood thrushes or the warning chips of the chickadees. They don't seem to mind me—I guess I am nothing compared to a feral cat or a red-tailed hawk. Slowly, year after year, I have come to "travel far on this mountain," which has become more varied and full. My travels do not go far away anymore, but they go deep.

Going deep in a place means to understand its rhythms and its web of beings: the change of light over the rivers at dawn, the migration of birds, the first toad lilies of the spring, the ebb and flow of human and non-human beings who are my neighbors. I imagine that women in hunter-gatherer societies had deep relationships with their places, and they cultivated a particular knowledge of life in one place. That knowledge was inscribed into their bones: the legs that walked and the hands that touched. Their ears understood the cries of animals; their eyes knew how to see; their hearts welcomed the turning of the seasons, even if they were cold, wet, and uncomfortable.

As to the stones under us—the bones of the earth—how rarely do we actually see them here in Western Pennsylvania! They are hidden under layers
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of leaf mold and concrete, but sometimes you find a clearing in the woods where the beautiful red sandstone juts from a cliff. Or one notices shiny jet coal pieces sometimes flung across old trails. The story is that, during the great depression, people would gather these coal fragments and burn them in their stoves.

Going deep means to look at the stone and ask: What is under there? How did it come about? How strange to notice that all our hills have the same height! But you learn they are not hills at all: In this part of Pennsylvania, there are only valleys carved from a plateau by glacial-melt water during the last ice ages.

True ecological awareness means to go deep in a natural place. You begin to understand its fabric or relationships and how it changes in time. You remember the animal fellows from years back, and you look forward to their return and the birth of their babies.

You care for this place because you have walked it, and it lives in your muscles and bones. You care for this place because you have seen and scented and heard it. This place lives in your senses as a differentiated, perceptual landscape. It lives in your memory and it lives in your thinking because it asks you questions, and you search for answers.

This place lives in your dreams as the landscape of your soul, and you are here to be its witness. Your breath is of it and in you, and you give it back. After the last, your body will be of it, and your soul will pour itself over the river valleys. You are finally able to read the braille of the air currents as they carry other winged friends toward their other homes.

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Viewing Two Sides

Sue Michael

Artist and photographer **Sue Michael** *is a candidate for the degree of Master of Visual Art (research) at the University of South Australia's School of Art, Architecture and Design, in Adelaide. Her master's thesis is entitled, "Mytho-Poetic Domestic Settings of the Mid North of South Australia: Painting Humanistic Geography." Featured illustrations in this* EAP *issue are Michael's paintings of a home in* **Booleroo Centre**, *a small town (pop. 585) in the Southern Flinders Ranges region of South Australia, about 175 miles north of Adelaide— see p. 1 and pp. 16–17. More of her work can be viewed at* www.behance.net/soomichael. smichael@west-net.com.au. *Text and paintings © 2014 Sue Michael.*

Australian historian and writer Paul Carter (2010) has explored the spatial history of Australia and has provided pathways for me, as an artist, to follow: to meshes of local complexity, the clearly invisible, the breached commonplace, and story lines that can be traced back to unheard voices. Carter offers an approach that remains open to negotiation, where the human, non-human, cosmic, and local are all together.

Local South Australian knowledge, now gone, was collected by Robert Bruce in his 1902 *Reminiscences of an Old Squatter* [1]. He wrote:

I used to wonder why those rodents ["suahs," or stick-nest rats] would heap up a big cartload of sticks in the shape of a haycock, to roof their nests, when a half a barrowful might have fully met all requirements… those little chaps always had plenty of company, for whenever I happened to drop a lighted match on the windward side of their woodheaps I always noticed that in a short time afterwards a pretty equally mixed assemblage of suahs and snakes would leave…Those suahs have long since disappeared from the South Australian settled country (quoted in Barker et al. 1995).

The stick-nest rat's generous domestic practices, sharing with other species in an arid climate, have permeated my thoughts as a topos, a schema, particularly in relation to Mid North snakes' poisonous venom. The northern reaches of South Australia's Mid North have different geographical conditions from the more popular local tourist destinations of the Barossa, Clare Valley, and the Flinders Ranges. Long lines of ancient hills run north to south, sheltering flat plains that are usually tinder dry in summer. Peppermint box gums used to cover the undulating land, but these trees have given way to pastoral leases.

There is very little surface water, and the unpredictable climate brings flash floods, bushfires, snow, fierce wind, low winter temperatures, and unspeakable summer heat where snow may have rested a few months before. Drought is a major shaping force, and the landscape is dotted with old bores and homestead ruins that tell of the geographical realities (Williams 1974; Meinig 1963).

First-nation culture suggests the local landscape was generous, and the native Ngadjuri people lived successfully in the region before battles over water and land access began with European pastoralists (Warrior 2005). The Ngadjuri barely survived, after a late nineteenth-century decimation of their numbers and culture through massacres, disease, and displacement. Their strong ties to the land, incorporating cosmology, language, and knowledge of local medicinal plants, have mostly been lost.

My European pioneering ancestors had strong ties to local Ngadjuri, and I believe my family quickly learned to love the region as the Ngadjuri did. The sanctity of all life and the skills to make do with what resources were available to adapt to a harsh life are foundations for my family's culture, and I feel this directly links to Mid North geographical influences. A spiritual dimension runs through my visual-art research and becomes clearer after each visit to the area as I learn to interpret perceived yet unseen forces— voices from my family's past; and Aboriginality, with

its alternative intelligence, which has left traces wherever I go.

If life was difficult in this region, there still seems to be a bias for life and successful place making. It is a personal journey I take with a heuristic approach to research, trying to see settlement through the eyes of my great grandparents: how they made happy homes, full of creative projects, guests, simple comforts, and laughter.

My family's Mid North imagination was shaped by isolation, poverty, and a difficult climate, with death close by. Though few of us stayed on as farmers and shopkeepers, we learned a beautiful way to relate to the earth, to animals, and to each other. The land is still so calming and soothing to be in. I have heard First Nation people say it is a very powerful land.

From visiting the region now, I still see signs of a different way of thinking. European settlers had no clear rules in the early days and had to make their own sense of place. Even in today's "modernized" homes, I observe signposts of this different sort of intelligence: special plants are given indoor berths or places under the verandah; garden seating allows enjoyment of the natural environment via numerous orientations; patterns of outside shade continue into house interiors; cupboards and cases are filled with the gifts from gardens; lounge rooms with recliners and knee rugs afford sociability, mutual care, and gathering together via clustering.

These observations parallel what English opera and theater director Jonathan Miller says of home:

I actually think that the function of a great deal of art should be to redirect your attention to things you would otherwise overlook. It's the overlooked, the negligible, the disregarded, the abandoned and the derelict that is actually where the payload is (quoted in Cliff 2007).

Miller's domestic observation points toward a central premise of my art: *that nature's powerful presence is felt intensely to "enter" the home.* Over time, locals have come to accept the presence of the landscape, enjoying small mercies, adapting and using creative problem-solving, enhancing home spaces to have a better life, without focusing on fear.

I see this pattern in my family's homes and many other Mid North dwellings. When I peruse online real-estate photos from the region, I note how the aesthetics reflect the surrounding landscape: leaf-litter carpets and minimal yet atmospheric rooms painted the color of coral blush to match the soil. Sometimes, an entire house is painted aqua in a defiant "cooling" gesture.

Dwelling features like these are all positive signs of a nourishing living in an unforgiving region where you can die of thirst, if the silence or deadly brown snakes don't get to you first. There is so much to think about from alternative points of view.

Note

1. "Squatter" is a term used for earliest Australian pastoralists who used land before claims and boundaries were formalized.

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Above: Sue Michael, Booleroo Centre Road*, 120 x 150 cm, acrylic on canvas, 2012; see next page for more work by Michael.*

Sue Michael, Booleroo Backyard—Panel 1, *60 x 267 cm, 2014.*

Sue Michael, Booleroo Backyard—Panel 2, *60 x 212 cm, 2014. In an email, Michael describes the elderly woman who kept this backyard garden: "She often worked all morning and afternoon in her garden, all through the seasons. Even on unbearably hot days, she could be found pulling weeds from beneath the shrubs. She was from Booleroo Centre and was 93 years old."*

Left: Sue Michael, Booleroo Kitchen, *20 x 38 cm, 2013. Right: Sue Michael,* The New Car, *60 x 130 cm, 2014. Michael writes: "These simple domestic scenes point to neat, tidy, practical ways, with all that you need close at hand. The red dust and drought do impinge, but like a sweeping of the floor, life begins anew, in its own time."*

In describing her painting, Booleroo Centre Road *(reproduced on p. 16), Michael explains: "Slices of the countryside pass us by in the car. This canvas shows shifts, subtle differences, illuminations and undisclosed storylines. Like early explorers sketching from under a sailboat canvas, inching along the coastline, I have painted cross sections of the land that I have travelled since my childhood. This land is ever shifting and yet still feels the same."*

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Giving Space to Thoughts on Place

Dennis Skocz

Skocz *is a philosopher and independent scholar who uses phenomenology to pursue thematic interests in media, environment, and economics. His articles have appeared in* Analecta Husserliana *and other philosophical journals.* *skocz@verizon.net*. *© 2014 Dennis E. Skocz.*

How better to celebrate the 25th anniversary of *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology* than to reflect on the enduring importance of *EAP*'s aims? We humans are spatial to the core, not so much "lost in space" as "found in place." The public spaces in which we speak and act and the private spaces from which we emerge and to which we return each day form the two domains within which and between which the time of our lives plays out. Space and time are less Kant's a priori forms of intuition than they are that lived unity that everyday speaking calls "taking place." Place—public and private—is "built into" who we are as it is "built up" in our architecture.

My first ambition was to be an architect, and my dissertation in philosophy was on private property. In recent courses, I have called upon my classes to think open-endedly on philosopher Hannah Arendt's understanding of the ancient Greek distinction of the public and private as it bears on our lives today as selves and citizens. It seems that the fate of the public and private rises and falls in tandem and that, in a trend of long-making and uncertain outcome, each has become less distinct. The result is a lived topography more uniform and less human.

I put the following as a hypothesis to *EAP* readers: Sociology as it developed in the nineteenth century was the expression and product of world-transforming dis-placements brought on by modernity. I include within the scope of this hypothesis all the Great Grandfathers of sociology but think now especially of German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies and his distinction of *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*, often translated as *society* and *community* (Tönnies 1887/1957). Tönnies' rendering of community may be somewhat romantic, but society, *Gesellschaft*, stands first and foremost for the marketspace that developed with capitalism. Tönnies gives us much to think about in regard to social interaction mediated by markets and the "spacings" that ensue therefrom. In any case, I invite my colleagues to scan the founding literature of sociology noting how much dis-placing and re-spacing figures in the thinking of the early sociologies.

Let me shift now from the marketspace of global capitalism to the "home front." Here, I would propose to *EAP* readers a thought experiment. Imagine that you are a well compensated, white-collar worker or manager or executive or even Wall Street financier—or perhaps best for our purposes, a successful Willy-Lohman traveling salesman. Every night you check into a first-class hotel. Your every wish is satisfied by your ability to select your accommodation and the attentive care provided by the hotel staff and other workers in the hospitality industry. Architecture and interior design work their magic to create a guest experience with "no (unpleasant) surprises." Your laundry is always done for you, beds made, meals prepared and brought to your room if you like. No need to water the plants in the room or care for the grounds. Your family can stay with you. Baby-sitting and pet care are provided.

The one condition in this thought experiment is that you cannot stay long in any one location. Whatever you brought with you into a room or suite must leave with you. You cannot modify your rooms, though of course you can move to a hotel that better suits your changing aesthetic requirements. If someone were to ask you where you might be in three years, you would not be able to say. The material conditions of existence in this scenario are intended to rule out any negative judgment regarding one's circumstances based on conditions relating to discomfort, pain, fear, intrusion, disruption,

housekeeping responsibilities, or anger with poor service. Would such an arrangement leave something to be desired? Would there be a basis for calling any place in the succession of places one occupies over a lifetime one's own—in other than a very temporal sense? What would be missing for you to say, "This is my place," and mean it? And how important would it be to have whatever it took for you to call a place a room of your own?

The thought experiment framed here can be seen phenomenologically as an imaginative variation intended to achieve eidetic insight into the essence of "owness" or, more specifically, into the nature of a place one calls one's own. The bigger, follow-on question—one I have returned to recurrently since writing my dissertation—is whether having a place of one's own is a constitutive dimension of human being-in-the-world.

Would we be less human without a place to call our own? Is the reflection initiated above so culturally embedded that its relevance to other humans elsewhere is questionable? Or is the challenge to ownness from else*where*—in this case, a *place* some*where* else, someone else's *place*—already itself testimony to the importance of place to our being-in-the-world? Is a division of places into those we find familiar or strange testimony to a social landscape zoned by mine and thine, ours and yours? Is such a social-cultural-historical environment as much a part of human being-in-world as embodiment and speech?

In his list of potential discussion questions for essays in this special twenty-fifth-anniversary issue of *EAP,* David Seamon asks whether phenomenology can contribute to a politics and ideology of place. I think the answer is "yes." For Virginia Wolf, a "room of one's own" meant a place for women in the world of literature, politics, and ideas. The book of that title is a manifesto of the feminist movement. Contested spaces are drivers of conflict. Holy lands and *terra sancta* enter into secular and political struggle and warfare. The global phenomenon of migration and refugee movement is a narrative of dis-placement and finding one's place again in the world.

A few years ago, *EAP* offered me the opportunity to suggest how a micro-phenomenology of living in "climate-controlled" dwellings can shape or distort our relationship to the natural environment outside (Skocz 2010). Built space can isolate us from the vagaries of weather and climate or the demands on natural resources required to maintain a comfortable living space. Our buildings can effect an unconscious and potentially harmful suspension or *epoché* not so much from the natural attitude as from nature itself. Conversely, there is, to answer another of Seamon's questions, an architecture that makes for better placemaking, one that connects us to our natural surroundings not only aesthetically but also thoughtfully, grounding us in the material conditions of our existence.

EAP is a record of its readers' and contributors' ongoing efforts at "getting into place" and demonstrates the value of phenomenological reflection toward that aim. It is itself a place for coming to terms with place, a home for diverse, imaginative, and timely phenomenology. Let me add my words to congratulate and thank David Seamon for initiating and sustaining an essential and continuing dialogue over the 25 years of *EAP's* existence.

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Place, Philosophy, and Non-Philosophy

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My partner Lisa is fond of saying that we go into our academic areas based on what confuses and bewilders us. She means this somewhat facetiously when she thinks about her own area, creative writing, and adjacent areas such as rhetoric and literature. She suspects her area draws people who are baffled by basic human communication and coherent narrative.

She's probably right. I can say that I was drawn to studying place in part because it baffled me. I grew up on the Canadian prairies, and Saskatchewan is full of writers and artists who feel the need to explain the mystical draw of wide spaces to detractors in the rest of Canada. There is a strong attachment to place where I come from, but while I love where I'm from, I didn't quite understand why that attachment existed.

It's not that I couldn't see the beauty or understand the subtle colors and sounds. I still remember the smell of the wheat harvest in August and the crispness of hoarfrost in the brilliant winter sun. W. O. Mitchell's *Who Has Seen The Wind?* was read by every school child, and it both evoked a feature of the prairies we supposed that only we could understand, and also the invisibility of that feature. We felt like we had a secret, privileged knowledge of that place.

And yet, when it came time to go off to university in Ontario, I didn't look back. It didn't get into my bones the way I saw that it did for others. It was the new place that I wanted. Was I "differently-abled," lacking a place-sense that others possessed, and so much the poorer for it? Maybe. I went into philosophy, after all, notoriously the discipline least concerned about place, at least classically. Didn't philosophers rise as quickly as possible to the level of the universal, and leave all those messy particulars for other disciplines?

When philosophers did think about place, it was much like how Hegel thought about "individual"—as a universal concept that attached itself to all particular things. Place was like that—everything had one, and therefore the philosophical task was to consider this shared feature of all particularities. I suppose my attraction to philosophy should not have been a surprise—in high school science, I also gravitated toward physics and away from biology, on the grounds that physics seemed simpler to me—just equations and laws. Biological entities were messy—every one of them had a new set of facts to know. Every one of them was particular. Just like places.

We know a lot about the philosophy of place but little about the place of philosophy or, rather, the places of philosophy. We tend to think that philosophy has no place, that the development of its concepts is historical accident, which is not, of course, susceptible to logical analysis and therefore of little philosophical interest.

This perspective is evident even in policies from the American Philosophical Association concerning ethics. There are numerous statements on aspects of philosophy as a profession but few on the ethics of philosophy itself. If we compare the APA statements to other national academic organizations, such as the American Anthropological Association, we find that those groups reflect on the ethics of the methods and practices of anthropologists *qua* anthropologists, rather than anthropologists *qua* professionals or university members.

The distinction is important, as it points to an interesting gap within philosophy. Despite supposedly "owning" the sub-discipline of ethics, it is a study to be applied largely outside of philosophy itself, rather than inside. Why? Because ethics is about how we act toward

people and, in philosophy, there are no people. Of course, there are people engaged in philosophical activity, but there are no people who are the subject of philosophy. Concepts are thought to be free-floating, without owners, without creators or audiences, and without place. So, the APA does not have a policy on how those concepts are obtained, or whether there is some sort of intellectual property entitlement to concepts, or what happens if a concept is let loose on the world and helps or harms someone.

Given what I've said, you might think I've arrived home. Someone like me who isn't sure of his place attachment has found the one discipline with no place. And yet, this bothers me immensely. This cannot be right. There must be a blind spot in the history and practice of philosophy. Nothing is from nowhere. We aren't gods, and we shouldn't pretend that we are. Philosophy must be in place and be able to credibly conduct its activity knowing full well that it is in place, and yet not have the self-reflection on its own platiality change its activity into something else. The platiality of philosophy cannot turn it into literature, or politics, or sociology. But how is this possible?

In summer, 1990, I was in Nairobi, Kenya, supporting my soon-to-be spouse in her relief and development work. I visited the philosophy department, and several more times in the subsequent years, mostly to find out what interested the philosophers in Kenya. It became clear to me that, while they were aware of and engaged in the wider world of philosophy, they were also acutely aware of the image that philosophy in Africa had in the rest of the world.

Not only that. They were aware of the concepts that they had to address, which had currency in Kenyan society. These were not free-floating concepts, available to anyone. They were "live" in the sense that they were taken seriously. Some were very traditional concepts, such as those tied to witchcraft, ancestor veneration, and so forth. Even the most hard-nosed rationalists in the department recognized that these concepts had currency in society, even if they wished that they didn't. Some were concepts that had a special significance in Kenya, given their political and social climate—corruption, democracy, political representation, race. These, of course, are issues in any place, but they have a particular significance in a place that

has emerged recently from colonialism, and has neo-colonial structures in place. And, there was a discussion of method—Kenyan philosopher Odera Oruka proposed "sage philosophy," an approach to African philosophy that looked for philosophical concepts and arguments among traditional sages.

And so it became clear that African philosophy was one site of philosophy that necessarily needed to attend to its own place. Unfortunately, that has often been understood as carving out a space from a recalcitrant philosophical mainstream and asserting ownership over a body of material. That's fine but doesn't go far. It treats philosophical space as if it was a map, and there is finite intellectual property that must be claimed. It was not yet a focus on philosophical place, the sort that leveraged existing into new concepts adequate for Kenyan lived experience. To understand what that would look like, phenomenology is needed.

Phenomenology, it should be said, has had place embedded in its bones from the beginning. Husserl, following Brentano, started with intentionality, which enabled him to move from an empirical investigation of the world (largely placeless) to an examination that took seriously the standing and experience of the perceiver. Even if his goal was universal experience, his starting point was a version of human experience not generalized from the beginning. He had a notion of the horizon, well before Gadamer. The lived body and its experience in space was central to understanding human experience.

Perhaps most importantly, phenomenology accepted that philosophy had to pay attention to non-philosophy. I do not mean non-philosophy in French philosopher François Laruelle's sense, which is a broadening of philosophy (Laruelle 2010). I mean that phenomenology takes seriously the question of where philosophy comes from, what its lifeblood is, and what its limits are (or at least what the limits of its concepts are).

Taking experience seriously means that the conduit from the non-philosophical to the philosophical was in the reflection on the elements of that experience, not in some description of the metaphysical structure of the world, reflection on the mind of God, or deduction from existing categories and concepts. Phenomenology is philosophy, but it is also method. That method is per-

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haps the first to allow philosophy to become self-conscious about its place, and about the meaning of place for thought. It is no longer a philosophy *of* place, but philosophy *in* place, as well as philosophy which, for the first time, sees place as a condition of thought.

Many philosophical concepts and methods have become useful in a wide range of disciplines. Sometimes that use is explicitly recognized and sometimes, not. Phenomenology has turned out to be extraordinarily useful in resisting positivist tendencies of those disciplines to reduce place to data, as well as the modernist tendency to abstract place into location or coordinates (Janz 2005). Even as it provides the conversion of non-philosophy into philosophy, it also allows (for example) anthropologists to move from non-anthropology to anthropology without simply imposing a theoretical structure on the observable world (as happens with modernist forms of anthropology such as functionalism).

We might suppose that the non-philosophy that philosophy would be interested in would be things like myth, folk belief, or tradition. We might further include things like the passions, art, religion in general, and so forth. All of those have been the subject of philosophical thought, at least to the extent that the philosophical task has been seen as one of determining demarcation between what can be reasoned about and what cannot (e.g., Kant)

But there is more than that. The natural world is non-philosophy, while at the same time, if Deleuze and others are right (and I suspect they are), it is also a place that pushes and jogs us into new ways of conceptualizing it. We see the alien nature of the "olfactory poems" of dogs in the misty morning field (to quote Aldo Leopold) and realize a legibility to the world that has an effect on us while being at the far edges of our experience. Place is phenomenology's attention to the "blooming buzzing confusion" of particularity and its commitment to the notion that the world is always already meaningful, while at the same time also strange, opaque, and contradictory.

Phenomenology is not the only philosophical approach that takes seriously the border between non-philosophy and philosophy. We can find this question raised in a great many thinkers through the 20th century, in one way or another. It is remarkable, though,

when you start tracing it back, how much even thinkers fairly hostile to phenomenology are, in fact, indebted to it. Deleuze, for instance, often seen as diverging significantly from phenomenology, can be seen to be working out a phenomenological project, at least if Husserl's later generative phenomenology is the model (Hughes 2008).

Philosophy, I think, exists wherever you find it. It is disciplinarily within a set of conversations and questions that stretch back through time and space. But it is also the process of making sense out of what already is meaningful for us. We experience place as always already meaningful but also as resisting meaning at the same time, as having a kind of opacity as well as transparency. There is, after all, non-philosophy. We take meaningful existence and interrogate it in various ways, laying bare what is hidden. At the same time, however, we provide a conduit from non-philosophy to philosophy. Phenomenological investigation exists in both of those moments, both in the constitution of the world as meaningful place (including the recognition of the limits of meaning and the presence of non-philosophy) and then in our reflective ability to interrogate that world.

Perhaps philosophy isn't as placeless as it first appeared.

So I am still out of place. I think I probably always will be. I live in Orlando Florida, and I keep thinking of Edward Relph's idea of "placelessness." Placelessness, alas, seems all too often to fit this place—undifferentiated strip malls or the "next big thing" to provide economic revitalization. Urban decay and homes where the yard is mowed but where no one has lived for years, under the theory that, if something resembles a place, it will continue to be a place.

And yet, my very act of living here, along with many others, means that this place is intelligible, at least to me, at the same time as it is mystifying. It is without question non-philosophy. My colleagues in Kenya have their version of non-philosophy to grapple with, and I have mine.

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Can there be a Phenomenology of Nature?

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Phenomenology has traditionally been understood to focus on universal structures of consciousness that make experience possible. Many thinkers suggest that this perspective makes nature merely a correlate of consciousness, thus indicating that nature could not possibly be universal or structural. Other thinkers argue that this understanding of phenomenology embraces an anthropocentric viewpoint that undermines any intrinsic value of nature.

While these positions may be true on a particular reading of phenomenology, I would like to suggest here that a genetic phenomenological account of nature allows us to understand that there is nothing natural about nature and that, in spite of nature's cultural embeddedness, there can be universal elements of our experiences of it. These universal elements can only be discovered through a genetic phenomenological account of experience of nature. The genetic account is characterized by phenomenological philosopher Edmund Husserl in his later work as an asking back into the sedimented layers of the natural attitude.

Seen in this way, genetic phenomenology allows us to peel away layers of cultural sedimentation that characterize our constitution in the natural attitude, revealing the way in which the facts of the natural attitude are already laden with meaning but also recognizing that there is a fundamental, universal level of experience of nature that supports those cultural meanings. As Merleau-Ponty explains in his 1960s lectures, "nature is what has a meaning without this meaning having been posed by thought" [1]. This position does not reduce nature to a cultural construct because, ultimately, it views nature not as a thing but as a ground and horizon of experience itself.

The difficulty is that many theorists want to establish nature as something independent of and "beyond" the experience of nature. This perspective inclines toward a conception of nature as a thing in itself landing us back in a kind of Kantian position of a "natural" realm that we cannot attain. Phenomenology, on the other hand, has always conceived of the natural world as not a thing in itself but as a thing of experience. This thing of experience is not thereby reduced to subjective experience, pure and simple, because all experience is viewed as intersubjectively, historically, and culturally embedded.

Phenomenologically, we also recognize that there are both the pregiven and the given that characterize any experience and that allow us to speak of the constitution of nature in that experience. Finally, we understand that the constitution of nature is not the same as the creation or production of nature. As philosopher Ted Toadvine suggested nearly 20 years ago,

The truth of the claim that nature simply is nature as experienced is demonstrated precisely by the world, the world we know and see all around us. This is the world of our experience—none other. Any world with which we intend to deal must come to us through this very one [2].

Another misunderstanding about phenomenology is in viewing phenomenological distinctions as separations. In any experience, there is a constitutive act and that which is given—these are two sides of the same experience and they are distinct but not separate. One cannot be without the other. Nature cannot be without subject, subject cannot be without nature. It is true that if we focus upon consciousness as the sole key to understanding experience then nature becomes secondary. Husserlian genetic phenomenology, however, begins with the natural concept of the world.

Husserl describes this as the lifeworld way into phenomenology as opposed to his earlier Cartesian way. By beginning with the natural concept of the world, we draw into question the apodicticity of consciousness in favor of the pregivenness of the world. In other words, it is an acknowledgement that we are always already aware of the world before we consciously turn toward it in analysis or reflection.

What we must investigate, then, is that world of which we are always already aware. What is its structure? How is it pregiven, presupposed? What are the conditions of constitution that make experience of nature possible? This leads to an understanding of the constituting subject that is lived-body, in-the-world, and a thoroughly intersubjective meaning never separated off from the natural world.

That world with which we begin and from which subjectivity or consciousness can never be separated is what Husserl called the *lifeworld*. The lifeworld is the environing world, the surrounding world of our everyday sense that grounds any conception of an objective scientific world. Does this mean that lifeworld is subjective? Not for Husserl. It is a false division to establish an objective world over against subjectivity. Instead, Husserl speaks of lifeworld as having an essential structure that he calls the *lifeworld a priori*.

This deeper conception of the lifeworld includes the objective sciences as well as the constituted cultural worlds of homeworld and alienworld [3]. The lifeworld is not just empirical sensuous experience. It includes ideas and scientific theories and their results within it because it is the pregiven, unthematized, natural world of experience.

The general structures that Husserl wants to focus upon are those elements of the lifeworld that are bound to its relative being as homeworld or alienworld; in other words, those that cannot be separated off from any particular cultural world, but that are themselves not relative. These are the lifeworld a priori. This universal lifeworld a priori is distinct from an objective a priori that has been established by the idealizing sciences. The sciences are dismissive of their own foundations within a lifeworld full of presuppositions in favor of their universal, idealized, geometrized world.

Instead, Husserl is interested in the common structure that all cultural worlds share regardless of their layers of sedimented cultural history. This lifeworld a priori is still a perceptual world whereas an objective lifeworld is not.

One of the ways to avoid the mistaken separation of subject from world is to avoid thinking of the lifeworld as an object. Lifeworld is not something we can experience in its wholeness. It is not something we can grasp as an object, not even if we acknowledge that it is an intersubjective object.

This understanding still relies upon an idea of the subject as absolute and everything as relative to it—the subject as master and commander of world. Instead, if we think of lifeworld in terms of its transcendental conditions for the possibility of experience of any homeworld or alienworld, we come closer to what Husserl, in his later work, means by the term [4]. Husserl explains:

There exists a fundamental difference between the way we are conscious of the world and the way we are conscious of things or objects (taken in the broadest sense, but still purely in the sense of the life-world), though together the two make up an inseparable unity. Things, objects (always understood purely in the sense of the life-world), are 'given' as being valid for us in each case (in some mode or other of ontic certainty) but in principle only in such a way that we are conscious of them as things or objects *within the world-horizon* [5].

The important term here is *horizon,* which is not something that can ever be made an object of experience but is nevertheless entailed in any experience, for all experience is horizonal. This means that the horizon that is lifeworld is pregiven rather than given, that it is the very condition of any objects of world as being given. Because lifeworld is pregiven, it cannot be described in the same way we might describe a cultural homeworld or alienworld, as having particular characteristics or a peculiar sense. Rather, it is the very condition of the possibility of sense, but which itself cannot be made an object of sense. It is horizon and ground of both culturally relative homeworlds and alienworlds.

To think of lifeworld not as object but as horizon is to recognize it as a way in which something is experienced or revealed. That which is presupposed in the constitution of anything at all is the pregiven lifeworld

as horizon of such constitution. It is about a style of constitution of which we are unaware and which remains unthematized because it is the very condition of constitution of a cultural world and, as horizon of constitution, cannot be brought to presence itself. That lifeworld horizon is at the same time a ground of every experience of homeworld or alienworld, since it entails the world history of earth that belongs to every people of earth.

So what accounts for our sense that nature exists independently of us and is not our human construction? I would suggest here that nature, insofar as it is given, makes possible the sense that it is not simply a matter of our constitution. Givenness of anything of experience is what challenges us or calls us forth into the experience. A thing draws our attention, asks for our focus upon it, or makes itself felt in the background of a constitutional activity. We do not come up with experience out of whole cloth.

The importance of a phenomenology of nature comes precisely from this particular vantage point that phenomenology makes possible. It is the vantage point that allows for the theorist to see herself as always involved in the world and responding to the world rather than separating herself from the world and making that world an object.

A phenomenology of nature also allows us to recognize that, in spite of differences of homeworld or alienworld, there are fundamental structures of lifeworld pregiven in any worldly givenness. Nature is never object to my subject. Rather, we are intertwined in such a fundamental way that I can respond to the call to attentiveness to nature that allows me to recognize my embeddedness within a pregiven nature, while at the same time acknowledging my unique role in the renewal and critique of the values that are passed along through any response to nature.

Once we begin thinking of policy-making or implementation, we tend to leave phenomenology behind and to take on the instrumental, reductive approach as masters of nature that we recognize theoretically to be problematic. How can phenomenology hold us to account? What renewal and critique requires of us is an understanding of traditional ways of thinking and responding to nature that establish our role as masters of nature, as the ones who can put things right. Critique requires of us that we draw that approach into question by attempting as far as possible to expose the pregiven elements of our constitution and attempt to move forward with a new kind of thinking.

What a genetic phenomenology of nature can offer, then, is a partner to the more empirical, concrete sciences that are focused on environmental issues, which are issues of world and nature. In allowing us to peel away sedimented layers of sense, genetic phenomenology helps to reveal the presuppositions of our everyday approach to the natural world and, in so doing, leaves us prepared for a process of renewal and critique.

Notes

1. M. Merleau-Ponty, *La Nature: Notes, cours du Collège de France* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1995) p. 19, p. 20; as cited by Renaud Barbaras, "Merleau-Ponty and Nature," *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. 31 (2001) p. 29.
2. T. Toadvine, "Naturalizing Phenomenology" *Philosophy Today*, vol. 44 (1999), p. 126.
3. J. Donohoe, *Remembering Places* (NY: Lexington, 2014), pp. 12–20.
4. For more on the earlier notion of lifeworld as object in Husserl, see A. Steinbock, *Home and Beyond: Generative Phenomenology after Husserl* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1995), pp. 98–102.
5. E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1970), p. 143.

A Phenomenology *with* the Natural World

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Phenomenology has not, for me, been a point of departure. I have never thought of it as an approach, method, or way of working that I might apply. Like most things philosophical, it has grown on me more or less serendipitously and has wormed its way into my thinking without my really noticing it.

No doubt, this home-grown phenomenology takes all kinds of liberties with the canonical texts, many of which I am happy to leave unread. Textual exegesis is a task for trained philosophers and not for amateurs like me. I have always been slightly bemused by scholars who bury their heads in the most arcane and impenetrable of texts in the effort, they explain, to get to the bottom of our experience as beings in a world. You would think that the best way to fathom the depths of human experience would be to attend to the world itself and to learn directly from what it has to tell us.

This, of course, is what inhabitants do all the time, in their daily lives, and they have much to teach us. That's why I remain, both by training and at heart, an anthropologist and not a philosopher. If we are to begin to resolve the crisis in our relations with what we call the "natural world," then we should be listening to the wisdom of its inhabitants, both human and non-human, rather than taking shelter in the closeted self-referentiality of philosophical discourse.

Nevertheless, in much the same way as phenomenology, anthropology struggles with what looks like a mismatch between ethical principle and scholarly practice. For while claiming to study with and to learn from our interlocutors, we anthropologists have a nasty habit of turning lessons learned into material for analysis. This is what happens when we say that what we are actually doing is ethnography. It is like turning the telescope to look through the wrong end. Instead of calling on the experience we have shared with those among whom we have worked to enlarge our vision of the world, we take our sights from the Olympian heights of theory to scrutinize the thinking of our erstwhile teachers.

The source of the problem, I believe, lies with that little word *of*. I have long held doubts about the fundamental postulate of phenomenology, namely that consciousness must always be consciousness *of*, precisely because it puts the telescope the wrong way round. Likewise, when we invoke the phenomenology or the anthropology *of* this or that, it seems that we run rings around the thing in question, turning the places or the paths from which we observe into circumscribed topics of inquiry.

The operative word, I think, should not be *of* but *with*. I would start from the postulate, then, that consciousness is always consciousness *with*, before it is ever consciousness *of*. Whereas '*of*-ness' is intentional, '*with*-ness', I would argue, is attentional. And what it sets up are relations not of intersubjectivity but correspondence.

The problem in our relations with the natural world, then, is that we have forgotten how to correspond with the beings and things of which it is comprised. We have been so concerned with the interaction *between* ourselves and others that we have failed to notice how both we and they *go along together* in the current of time. This, surely, is what sustainability means: not the perpetuation of a completed form or stable state but the capacity to keep going, to carry on, or

to perdure. If interaction is about othering, then correspondence is about togethering. It is about the ways along which lives, in their perpetual unfolding or becoming, answer to one another.

This shift from interaction to correspondence entails a fundamental reorientation, from the betweenness of beings and things to their in-between-ness. Think of a river and its banks. We might speak of the relation of one bank to the other, and crossing a bridge, we might find ourselves halfway between the two. But the banks are continually being formed and reformed by the waters of the river as they sweep by. These waters flow in between the banks, along a line orthogonal to the span of the bridge.

To say of beings and things that they are in-between is to align our awareness with the waters; to correspond with them is to join this awareness with the flow. Just such a shift of orientation is needed, I believe, if we are to understand the world of nature as one that we do not only experience but can also live with or inhabit both now and for the foreseeable future.

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The Phenomenology of Betweenness
Encountering Nature's Wholeness

Mark Riegner

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When something has acquired a form, it metamorphoses immediately to a new one. If we wish to arrive at some living perception of nature, we ourselves must remain as quick and flexible as nature and follow the example she gives.

—J. W. von Goethe (quoted in Miller 1988, p. 64)

Whether we observe a natural phenomenon on a relative micro-scale (e.g., a sprouting spring flower) or on a macro-scale (e.g., an oak forest through the seasons), it is evident that transformation underlies all things. While many transformations are gradual and imperceptible—consider the growth of a pine tree—many others are abrupt and even startling, such as a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis. Underlying these disparate examples is the recognition that change takes place in a temporal dimension—i.e., change occurs over various time spans.

We can, however, extend our observations to an apparently stationary object, say a wildflower on the edge of a trail, and ask whether there is evidence of change across a spatial dimension. In other words, does the organism, in the moment, offer us a picture of transformation among its various parts and structures?

Furthermore, if we gaze, for example, into a tide pool, and we note the differently shaped shells of the various snail species, we can ask: What is it that changes from one form to another? What form elements shift (e.g., height of spire, number of whorls, number and distinctiveness of ribs) and to what degree do they change?

As I hope to show, these are not idle questions but necessary first steps of a phenomenological method that can lead us to a cognitive experience of wholeness expressed within and among living organisms.

The pioneer of the particular phenomenological path I outline here is the influential poet, playwright, and naturalist J. W. von Goethe (1749–1832), who developed a way of science centered on keen, penetrating observation (Amrine et al. 1987; Seamon and Zajonc 1998; Bortoft 1996, 2012; Holdrege 2013; Riegner 2013).

Here, I do not explicate the epistemological underpinnings of the breadth and depth of Goethe's contribution. Rather, I focus on a central aspect of Goethean phenomenology: the notion of metamorphosis. As expressed in the opening epigraph, Goethe saw all phenomena as transitory—momentary manifestations moving from a past toward a future.

Be they clouds, rivers, plants, animals, or the observer, all phenomena are embedded in an ongoing process of metamorphosis. Furthermore, by carefully attending to the metamorphosis of the phenomenon at hand, the observer can be led into a cognitive experience of the wholeness of the phenomenon.

In this essay, I attempt to lead the reader toward this cognitive experience or, at the very least, to offer an explanation of what this experience may entail.

Before we look at natural phenomena, it may be instructive to begin with a geometric example (***fig. 1***, next page). As we glance at the shapes from left to right (or from right to left), note that shape and size change in an orderly manner. Furthermore, the
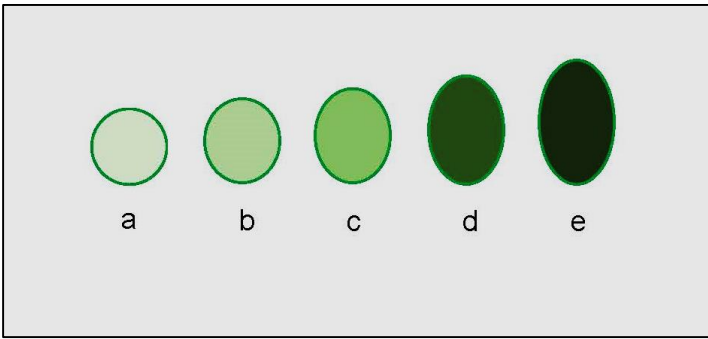
shading changes in a stepwise fashion. Several features appear to be correlated and accordingly change in concert.

If the shapes were cut out and reordered randomly, a student would have little problem arranging them in the original orderly progression. One would also be able easily to draw an intermediate oval shape that could logically "fit" between any two shapes in the series, say between *d* and *e*. This is possible because we readily grasp the context that gives meaning to the order of the shapes—and is itself accessed *through* the shapes. That context then informs our ability to draw a "missing" shape. Moreover, rather than seeing the shapes as isolated phenomena juxtaposed in space, we instinctively see them as steps in a developmental process, frozen moments in a continuum.

How many missing shapes are there? Clearly, as a property of a continuum, there exists an infinite number of missing or, better, *potential* shapes in the sequence. In fact, between any two shapes, there exists an infinite number of potential shapes. There are, however, limits to the infinite number of potential shapes because not any random shape will do. Like hearing a wrong note played in a melody, we would immediately notice an incorrect shape misplaced in the sequence.

One final point regarding this pictorial sequence: A distinguishing feature expressed through the relationship of the shapes to each other is that they exhibit both difference and sameness simultaneously. In other words, each shape in the sequence can be considered the same shape expressed in various degrees of modification. I will return to this point later, but for now we can ask: How does this example apply to the notion of metamorphosis in nature?

In *The Metamorphosis of Plants*, Goethe (1790) took great pains to describe clearly and objectively the various organs of the plant, noting morphological details of shape, size, juxtaposition, and so forth. One of his many key insights was the observation that the plant is all "leaf," meaning there is one transformative movement, one gesture (not an actual leaf) that comes to expression through the various spatially arranged organs, such as among the leaves up the stem, in the calyx, corolla, and stamens:

The organ that expanded on the stem as leaf, assuming a variety of forms, is the same organ that now contracts in the calyx, expands again in the petal, contracts in the reproductive apparatus, only to expand finally as fruit (ibid., p. 100).

In other words, there is *one* ideal organ that comes to expression in modified form along the length of the plant. This is the essence of metamorphosis: Both unity and its manifestation in diversity are entwined in the phenomenon. Evidence of this notion includes plant structures that are morphological combinations of two organs, as if the differentiation process were unable to actualize fully; or organs that appear in the "wrong" place. This can occur as a "mistake" in development, such as the proliferous rose that caught Goethe's attention in that it possessed a stem with leaves protruding from the center of the flower; or the proliferous carnation that exhibited multiple additional stalked flowers growing out of the main corolla (ibid., pp. 93–96).

Many plant species, however, demonstrate configurations of incomplete differentiation under *normal* circumstances, e.g., the familiar poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*; Euphorbiaceae), in which the pollinator-attraction role, usually characteristic of the corolla, is shifted to the brilliant red upper leaves; or the neotropical heliconias (Heliconiaceae) where intermediate forms between leaf and bract are typical (**fig. 2**, left).

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To grasp fully the notion of metamorphosis, one needs to hold difference and sameness simultaneously in one's consciousness (as in the example of figure 1). Bortoft (2012) described this cognitive experience as an act of distinguishing:

Distinguishing is a dual movement of thinking which goes in opposite directions at once: in one direction it differences [read as a verb], whereas in the other direction it relates. So the *act* of distinction 'differences/relates'—not differences *and* relates, because this would be two movements, whereas there is *one* movement which is dual (ibid., p. 22).

We can practice this mode of cognition by studying the leaf metamorphosis of a given plant. As in many annual plants, the ragleaf bahia (*Bahia dissecta*; Asteraceae) (*fig. 3*, below), a common plant of the central Arizona highlands, exhibits a marked transformation of the leaf shape up the stem, technically known as *heterophylly*. In preparing this figure, I removed the leaves from the stem and then dried, pressed, and arranged them in a spiral, the lowest stem leaves at the bottom left; the uppermost leaves and terminal flowers, near the center of the arrangement.

One can readily see the progression of one leaf shape to the next in the sequence. Clearly, no two leaves are identical. Note that it's through their ordered differences that the movement or gesture becomes intelligible. As in figure 1, there are several morphological trajectories that intersect. For instance, note how leaf size expands then contracts, or how leaf shape becomes less differentiated and then more complex, or how the relative length of the petiole (leaf stalk) at one point begins to shorten. Regarding the contraction of leaf size toward the apex of the stem, one observes that the final leaves seem to disappear from space; they become insubstantial so that a new metamorphic impulse can come into being, that of the flower.

Based on the preceding, one needs to regard the space *between* the leaves—what I will call "betweenness"—as a crucial aspect of the wholeness of the phenomenon. Just as in the structure of a musical melody the intervals are equally as important as the notes, experiencing betweenness among the parts of an organism—a plant, in this case—is the key to finding wholeness, or meaning, in the phenomenon. Brady (1998) referred to this quality of betweenness as the "context of movement," which relates and integrates all the spatially disparate parts into a unified whole.

Of course, nothing tangible is in motion in figure 3; it's only in the mind's eye that a movement or gesture comes to expression. But once the attentive observer grasps the context of movement—the dynamic quality of betweenness in the metamorphosis—it becomes objectively evident what may constitute the potential, as yet unmanifested, forms. Just as one can draw endless triangles or rectangles if one grasps the "rules" that inform them, so can one draw endless leaves that could conceivably fit into the sequence.

The next step is to regard how a particular flower is associated with a given leaf metamorphosis. Compared to imagining a potential leaf in the sequence, this effort is much more challenging because it entails a yet deeper cognitive experience of the plant, an experience that approaches what Goethe described as the *Urpflanze* or "Archetypal Plant." Goethe pointed to this experience and its associated application:

With this model and the key to it, it will be possible to go on forever inventing plants and know that their existence is logical; that is to say, if they do not actually exist, they could, for they are not the shadow phantoms of vain imagination, but possess

an inner necessity and truth (from Goethe's *Italian Journey*, in Brady 1987, p. 268).

If we direct our attention toward seeing the botanical structures clearly in all their detail, and seeing betweenness not as an intellectual abstraction or as an empty void but as a dynamic reality, then we approach what can be considered the organizing principle and the dynamic wholeness of the plant. Bortoft (1996, pp. 240–241) describes this experience; note how the distinction between subject and object, observer and observed, simultaneously unites/dissolves:

The organizing principle of the phenomenon itself, which is its intrinsic necessity, comes into expression in the activity of thinking when this consists in trying to think the phenomenon concretely. What is experienced is not a representation of the organizing principle, a copy of it 'in the mind,' but the organizing principle itself acting in thinking.

In the last part of this essay, I outline some possible examples of this phenomenological approach through which we can attempt to grasp betweenness as a dynamic reality such that all parts become revelations of the whole. Besides observing and comparing the structures of a plant, one can apply the same way of seeing to an animal. Holdrege (1999), for example, examines the biological details of the sloth, noting how all its parts, including behavior, integrate into an expressive whole. No part of the animal is superfluous and each has significance in the context of the living organism.

Another approach is to contrast two seemingly very different organisms so that each can be used to illuminate the other. Here, too, Holdrege (1998) provides an example in his comparison of the horse and the lion; whereas the horse accentuates, for instance, the skeletal system and hooves by providing a rigid support structure (the horse can sleep standing up), the lion is dominated by the muscular system, which exhibits remarkable suppleness and dramatic swings between tension and relaxation (when relaxed, the lion collapses to the ground).

One can apply this comparative method also on a landscape level. For example, in the central Arizona highlands, the aspen (*Populus tremuloides*; Salicaceae) is a familiar and striking tree. It has a thin, tall, straight appearance, its branches

extending from the upper trunk (*fig. 4a*, below). Its bark is white and even rubs off like talcum powder. The individual leaves flutter with the slightest breeze (hence the Latin species name) and, in the autumn, turn a stunning gold before dropping. One can regard the aspen as having an open "sensitivity" to its surroundings: the trembling leaves, the thin bark, the dramatic seasonal change of appearance, and the delicate, fuzzy catkins. More than many temperate tree species, the architecture of the aspen resembles a neuron complete with axon and dendrites (*fig. 4b*).

In striking contrast, the alligator juniper (*Juniperus deppeana*; Cupressaceae), found mostly at lower elevations than the aspen but overlapping in some areas, exhibits a rounded, enclosing crown, in which dense clumps of needles sway together when a strong breeze moves through the tree (*fig. 4c*). The bark, from which the tree gets its common name, is remarkably thick and deeply furrowed (**fig. 4d**). As a conifer, the juniper is evergreen and shows little change in appear-

a

b

c

d

ance through the seasons, thus a relative lack of sensitivity to its surroundings. Like the tree itself, its fruits are spherical, fleshy berries relished by wildlife.

In comparing the aspen and alligator juniper, one notes they are *morphological polarities*; once these endpoints are identified, one has a context to examine other local trees with "intermediate" forms. For example, the ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*; Pinaceae), another conifer, with its less dense, more airy structure and flaky, even sweet-smelling, bark, exhibits a more open architecture than the "self-enclosed" alligator juniper, while the emory oak (*Quercus emoryi*; Fagaceae), with its partly stunted, twisted architecture, thick, grooved bark, and stiff, contracted leaves, also stands between the juniper and aspen but leans somewhat closer to the former. Just as the leaf sequence of an annual plant creates a context for envisioning potential leaves, so a careful comparison of forest trees offers a descriptive means to situate particular species in a web of morphological relationships (Schad 1967).

The search for betweenness via the Goethean tradition can be extended further to examine an entire group of closely related (or not necessarily related) organisms. One ground-breaking work is biologist Wolfgang Schad's study of the entire class of mammals (Schad 1977, 2012; Riegner 1998). Echoing Goethe's archetypal plant, Schad's exhaustive observations uncover the interweaving of morphological trajectories that reiterate in various configurations in different species of mammals. Inspired by Schad's contribution, researchers have used his approach to investigate morphological patterns in dinosaurs (Lockley 2008), birds (Riegner 2008), and general patterns of evolution (Rosslenbroich 2014).

These journeys into whole-organism biology are just a beginning. In time, as more studies demonstrate the value of a phenomenological approach, a metamorphosis of the sciences themselves may lead to new explorations of the dynamics of wholeness in nature.

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Figures: 1. Sequence of oval shapes; 2. Heliconia plant showing transition ("metamorphosis") between leaf and bract; 3. Leaves and flowers of ragleaf bahia; note the metamorphosis; 4a. Aspen tree in autumn colors; 4b. aspen architecture's resemblance to a neuron, with axon and dendrites; 4c. alligator juniper; 4d. detail of alligator juniper bark.

Evolving Conceptions of Environmental Phenomenology

Bryan E. Bannon

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Given the centrality of the concept of nature within phenomenological inquiry, it should be no surprise that many philosophers have turned to that philosophical tradition to address environmental issues. In addition to the conceptual insights phenomenology has offered, the method's emphasis on experience has contributed to creating space for a diversity of voices that might not otherwise be heard within the philosophical community.

To my mind, however, the most important contribution phenomenology has made to environmentalism is the reminder that the philosophical questions relating to nature are not merely conceptual puzzles but emerge from both our personal and collective connection to and affection for the world in which we live.

Even as phenomenologists have written about, among other themes, the human relationship to the environment and animal life, the narratives that shape that relationship, and the constitution and value of places, valid and important criticisms have emerged regarding various elements of phenomenological method. These have included a perceived anthropocentrism, a less than adequate conception of materiality, and a persistent, unacknowledged subjectivism.

While in some cases the charges are somewhat overblown, what these criticisms reveal is the need for phenomenology to evolve and adapt as a method so as to meet current challenges, particularly those posed by the environment. Specifically, challenges deriving from new materialisms (e.g., Karen Barad, Isabelle Stengers, and Bruno Latour) need to be addressed for phenomenology to retain its relevance.

The particular force behind these views stems from the conception of the world they advocate and how that conception both jibes with phenomenological goals and requires the reformation of certain phenomenological principles. Take, for example, the case of Latour. While he explicitly rejects the category of nature, distancing himself from the traditional phenomenologists such as Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, throughout his work one finds the same motivation that inspires all phenomenologists: a return to experience as the foundation of philosophical inquiry.

What is interesting is how the two approaches diverge depending on whether one begins, as in most varieties of phenomenology, with *lived* experience or, as with Latour and many of the new materialisms, with an asubjective conception of experience. The former, as Heidegger had already noted nearly a century ago, is yet another manifestation of modernity's dualistic subject-object metaphysics. If the Heideggerian and Latourian rejection of lived experience is an apt one, phenomenologists might learn from these new materialisms a new starting point that complicates our inquiries and enriches our findings.

In terms of these complications, there are several methodological issues with which phenomenologically-minded environmental philosophers must reckon:

❖ Acknowledging that human experience is one kind of experience among many and thereby recognizing that human experience cannot be a foundation for generalizable claims about the environment;

❖ Understanding subjectivity as a complex network of relations formed both through complex biological networks as well as through complex interpersonal and institutional networks;

❖ Coming to terms with the less adversarial understanding of technology and the sciences that accompanies the attribution of agency and experience to things in the world.

This list is intended neither to be exhaustive nor to imply that there are not contemporary phenomenologists already attentive to these issues. Rather, it is meant to give a sense of how phenomenology might adapt and expand to include insights not only from contemporary philosophers but now more established lines of critique as found in the work of, for example, Foucault and Deleuze.

The ways in which these adaptations might enrich the phenomenological project are also myriad. For one, consider the various phenomenologies possible once nonhumans are acknowledged to have a form of subjectivity proper to them! Rather than endless debates about whether animals "have" consciousness or reason, the discussion shifts to how diverse forms of life display a rationality proper to them by constructing a world of relations for themselves through whatever means are available to them cognitively and environmentally. Though the potential for making phenomenological errors increases, by engaging with other forms of animal life in this way we may be able to envision better ways to construct a human world more inclusive of our fellow non-human beings.

Including specific technological and institutional analyses as a part of our thinking about the human relationship to nature can shed light on the psychological and social obstacles to adopting a more environmentally friendly lifestyle:

❖ How does a certain technique affect our view of other beings?
❖ How could reorganizing a specific social arrangement lead to a more sustainable way of interacting with each other and with the earth?
❖ How might we reconsider the notion of community to include both animate and inanimate aspects of the environment?

Again, these questions have not necessarily been ignored, but the decentering of the human in phenomenological research may yield new findings.

As one example, consider some of the ways in which many phenomenologists consider the concept of nature: following Husserl, as an idealized and mathematized object, derived from the personalistic attitude, correlative to an intentional consciousness or, following philosophers like Hans Jonas and David Abram, as itself an organism and a subject.

While the latter serves to counteract the kinds of excesses environmentalists have identified with the modernistic conception of nature (and Husserl himself was critical of those tendencies as well in *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*), the understanding of nature as a subject or an organism still utilizes the same fundamental metaphysical categories to understand the world as the modernistic conception of nature, that of subjects and objects.

If the new materialisms mentioned above have any consistent view between them shared with phenomenologists, it is that the subject-object metaphysics must be abandoned. Perhaps what we learn from their criticisms is that phenomenology has not been as thorough as it could be in expunging these ghosts of modernity. Rather than considering nature as a being that possesses inherent properties in need of preservation, we might move toward a more relational conception of nature. Essentially, this shift amounts to a choice between two contrasting conceptions of networks:

❖ On one hand, a perspective associated with the organismic conception of nature in which there is an inherent order to an ecological system that must be maintained;
❖ On the other hand, a perspective associated with the relational conception in which the order present in ecological systems is largely contingent. In this latter view, organisms do not *possess* ecological niches but they *create* them, and environments are largely a result of the creative activity of organisms and the geological forces of the earth.

While I have been emphasizing the need for phenomenology to change, there are also myriad ways in which the insights of the phenomenological tradition can be helpful to philosophers endorsing new materialisms. For example, Martin Drenthen and John van Buren have both pointed out ways in which hermeneutic methods might be employed to address environmental problem-solving, both in terms of eliminating disagreement and opening up possibilities for interpreting exactly what the problems are that we face.

Another possible contribution derives from the history of phenomenological engagement with science and

technology. Given the similarities between phenomenologists' and new materialists' criticisms of the modern scientific worldview, new materialisms would be remiss to dismiss phenomenological critique as mere doom and gloom or overly romantic and pessimistic. In many cases, phenomenological concerns can serve as a useful guardrail against slipping back into the technological excesses of modernity.

Last, phenomenologists' emphasis on the ineliminable affective dimension to experience can continue to have an important role in decision-making regarding the design of places, especially if the material world is more affectively sensitive than previously given credit for.

So, if this alliance of phenomenology and new forms of materialism is possible, the question remains of what kinds of changes in practice and inquiry become possible on that basis. To explore this question, consider the interplay between concerns about embodiment and the question of novel ecosystems. While there may contemporarily be good prudential and political reasons to maintain reservations about the creation of such systems, on a relational conception of nature there is no way to reject their establishment out-of-hand and without discussion. After all, if there is no one way that nature is meant to be, no one order that must be preserved, what obstacles are there to establishing new biotic communities? In this way, humans may take a more active hand in shaping ecological communities in a manner similar to what Steven Vogel has called the "social construction of the environment."

We do not, however, need to restrict ourselves to what is best for human beings in making these choices. Rather, we might aim for, as Karen Barad puts it, "making a better world, a livable world, a world based on values of co-flourishing and mutuality, not fighting and diminishing one another, not closing one another down, but helping to open up our ideas and ourselves to each other and to new possibilities, which with any luck will have the potential to help us see our way through to a world that is more livable, not for some, but for the entangled wellbeing of all" [1].

Setting some of these ideals as our goals, it is necessary to think through the effects on others' embodiment, including the nonhuman and perhaps even the nonliving, in order to realize them. In this way, our enriched phenomenological insights might give new meaning to Aldo Leopold's injunction to "think like a mountain."

Theoretical constructs, like species, need to evolve to survive. At this point in history, phenomenology faces both philosophical and institutional pressures to do so. To meet these pressures, I will humbly make one final recommendation pertaining to our style of writing. Currently, so-called "continental" approaches to the environment tend to base themselves in dense exposition of texts. While these can be useful to fellow scholars and have value in terms of clarifying the views of historical philosophers, the approach allows others who are unfamiliar with (or perhaps averse to) the ideas of the philosophers under consideration to ignore our work. If we were more open to addressing the currently prevalent ideas in environmental philosophy more generally in language that is not specific to particular philosophers, this would make our work more difficult to ghettoize and to ignore. Philosophers like Ingrid Stefanovic and Irene Klaver might serve as models in this regard.

Given the positive contributions the phenomenological method has made and could make to environmental philosophy, I hope we rise to these challenges. What the phenomenological philosophy that emerges from these trials has in common with a philosophy like Stengers' "ecology of practices" remains to be determined. But we should be encouraged both by the continuity of concerns between them as well as the potential such affiliations have for removing us from some of the major theoretical impasses of the twentieth century.

Note

1. Karen Barad, "Erasers and Erasures: Pinch's Unfortunate 'Uncertainty Principle'," *Social Studies of Science* 41: 450.

Place Making, Phenomenology, and Lived Sustainability

John Cameron

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After years of full-time environmental advocacy followed by an academic career teaching place phenomenology and supervising students in phenomenological and other qualitative research methods, I immersed myself in retirement in place making on Bruny Island, Tasmania.

Through publishing nine of my essays in *EAP,* David Seamon has generously provided me with the opportunity to explore questions relating to place, phenomenology, and environmental concerns. In the spirit of giving voice to place that has infused my 'Letters from Far South," I leaven my commentary with brief accounts of some of the encounters my partner Vicki and I have had with the more-than-human world of "Blackstone," our 55 acres of land on the island.

The experience of place making became more intertwined with phenomenological perspectives and practices as our time on Bruny progressed. As various phenomena—for example, the form of a sandstone rock shelf or the charred trunk of a grasstree—seized my attention, I drew on Goethean science, a proto-phenomenological practice, to explore them more deeply:

I was drawn to sit much closer, into the enclosure of the fallen leaves, and the universe did indeed become suddenly compact. There was an odd juxtaposition between the intimacy of the space created by the "hair" hanging down to the ground, the breath of the breeze, and the harshness of the snake-like "skin" seared black. From within the fibrous cave beneath the grasstree, I could imagine the movement of the plant drawing nutrients from the earth upward, meeting fire and producing such delicate elongated leaves that they seemed to be merging into the air. This motion brought me closer to a sense of what the *gesture* of the grasstree might be [1].

Undertaking Goethean science offered a stance of openness toward the natural world, an attitude of receptivity through intuitive sensing. It also raised many questions of practice. It took many hours over a long period of sitting, drawing, intuiting, and writing to gain even a simplified understanding of particular plants and rocks from a Goethean perspective. In addition, there are limitations to the broader applicability of this approach. It requires a commitment that many people, even sympathetic observers, would lack the time and inclination to make. In the latter stages of the process I used, the understandings were fleeting and numinous—not easily transferable to everyday perception despite their emotional power at the time. Their main effect has been to open me to a depth of communication and communion with elements of the natural world that I had previously not experienced.

By virtue of our choice to produce our own electricity, rely on rainwater, have composting toilets, and grow some of our own produce, I could write more directly about what it was like to live more sustainably. Here the power of phenomenology in constantly focusing on the experience itself, rather than theories or ideas about sustainability, showed itself. On some occasions, producing our own power was energizing and affirming:

One spring afternoon I was striding down toward the house with a bracing wind blowing straight off the Channel into my face and

the sun glinting off the water into my eyes. I exulted in the strength of the elements and lengthened my stride. "It's a high energy day today," I declared to Vicki, and we enjoyed the new layer of meaning that term now had for us [2].

On other occasions, it proved to be more psychologically challenging than I had imagined:

Behind my wry self-description of being "technically challenged" lay a psychologically slippery slope. I quickly had to overcome my fear of approaching any unfamiliar machine without an expert by my side, as all the "experts" were in Hobart and reluctant to make the ferry journey to Bruny. Technical instructions from Simply Solar by phone about our declining batteries often left me puzzled and, at worst, in confused desperation. I re-experienced boyhood anxieties about my lack of practical aptitude and common sense [3].

Another aspect of our environmental ethos was our desire to re-vegetate our degraded sheep paddocks and provide sanctuary for endangered and other wildlife. Our experience was a far cry from the gradual deepening of relationship implied by advocates of ecological restoration with phrases such as "restoring the land, healing the mind" [4]. The neighboring grazier predicted angrily that our land would be a bloody mess if we removed his sheep.

We planted 4,000 native trees, shrubs, and plugs of native grasses. We sprayed thistles. In some seasons, the place *did look* a "bloody mess," and I felt like one, too, veering erratically between despondency and elation as the trees grew, but weeds and pests proliferated.

There is value in a phenomenological account of such processes, if only to provide a salutary tale for those who undertake land regeneration, as we did, with more idealism than expertise, and to those who glibly advocate tree planting as a panacea. In the end, though, I was able to write:

I do have the strong sense that as the birds in the fields check out our planted trees, the ladybirds and skinks take refuge in the tree guards, and some self-sown eucalypts begin to appear now the sheep have left, we are working in partnership with the regenerative forces of the land [5].

Spending each morning up in the paddocks gave me the opportunity for encountering more of the wildlife. Our lived environmental ethic has evolved during our time on Bruny. An attitude of care and respect for wildlife grew into recognition of the agency and creative presence of other species. At university, I had taught students about moral considerability and the rights of other species, but confronting the power and fierce gaze of a flesh-and-blood-and-feathers equal

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was a different matter altogether. One of the turning points was direct engagement with the eagles:

The eagle has hovered above my head on several occasions since, and each time I have met her fierce gaze as directly as I can. My pulse still races and the skin on the back of my neck still tingles as I hold all possibilities for the encounter open. It's another shift in attention, I realize. I'm so accustomed to being the one who is checking things out that it's odd to let myself be the object of a large wild creature's curiosity when she is clearly unafraid of me. The eagle is calling the shots, not me; she decides how long she will remain poised over my head [6].

It was a similar story with an embodied sense of place. One of my favored topics when teaching place phenomenology was Merleau-Ponty's notion of body-subject [7]. It predisposed me toward explorations in body sensing through Goethean science and more generally in everyday life.

The notion of the inseparability of person and world rolls easily off the tongue and pen, but when I felt it physically, I was disconcerted. For example, one day while floating on my back in Blackstone Bay, I distinctly sensed an unspoken "conversation" between my body and the enclosing water [8]. In retrospect, I realize I was unsettled because I felt that the water was not only alive but was in some sort of mysterious communication directly through my skin beyond my conscious understanding or control. Body and brine were somehow interpenetrating, so that one of the primary boundaries of what I consider myself to be was dissolving. In less dramatic ways, I've often felt discomfited on Blackstone when the very experience of deeper connection with other species or elements of place that I've been reading about and wanting to happen actually occurs.

I came to realize that lived experience isn't just the sum of what happens to a person. Under the influence of the phenomenological gaze, as it were, human experiencing itself becomes a more active process. The question of *attention* engaged my mind. The quality of attention as well as the objects of attention—thistles, marker points, back and shoulder muscles, and thought processes—became important while spraying, for example.

In what is almost a paradox, I've become more actively receptive and receptively active in my approach. Susan Murphy's dictum "accept all offers" as applied to invitations to pay attention by the more-than-human-world has become a guiding principle:

"What deeper experience am I being offered by the natural world in this moment? How do I respond?" [9]. Perhaps this is an inevitable aspect of the phenomenological endeavor—a prolonged inquiry into any phenomenon changes both the experience and one's capacity to experience.

The process of chronicling what has occurred at Blackstone became an integral part of life, but it quickly became insufficient simply to narrate events. As researchers such as van Manen have emphasized, an essential part of producing a phenomenological account is rewriting, seeking always to cleave to the experience itself [10]. "Is that actually what happened?" and "What was it really like, as opposed to what I think it should be like" became constant questions and frequently exposed how I embellished my accounts. I'd argue that my best writing involved a lived reciprocity between experiencing and describing: the more I honed my writing, the closer attention I paid to my experience, the richer my life became, thus providing more useful material for reflection and further writing.

I have often struggled to communicate what I have learned on Blackstone in a way that is helpful for environmental action, even when there was a shared ethos:

I drove away from the meeting on local climate change with mixed feelings. It had been a stimulating event, but I was troubled by absence of any mention of non-human life. It was of course implicit in the motivation for action on climate change. I knew that many of our colleagues shared our concern over the already visible effect of warming on the Bruny environments and its non-human inhabitants. Part of what I had been learning on Blackstone, though, was that human actions are best undertaken in partnership with natural forces, and a place will make it clear what needs to be done if one is quietly attentive to it. It is inextricably part of daily life, extending well beyond questions of general motivation. "It's not just all about people," I muttered to myself [11].

There is no shortage of advocates for bringing a place-oriented perspective to bear on local responses to environmental challenges such as climate change. Geographer Edward Relph calls for a "pragmatic sense of place," bringing the voices of local knowledge and experience into dialogue while avoiding the pathologies of place, considering alternatives and consequences, and reaching "imperfect but workable agreements" for courses of action [12].

The difficulty is partly one of language. For example, discussions about climate change, energy, and land use are usually couched in terms of political feasibility and economic costs and benefits. In contrast, the language of place affiliation is poetic and evocative, more rooted in the soundscape of the place itself. When I've attempted to bring in the perspectives and value of other species, I've failed to stimulate anything approaching dialogue.

More fundamentally, environmental philosopher Val Plumwood contends that we won't deal effectively with environmental crises until we have a place-sensitive society in which the dominant institutions of labor and property take place relations seriously rather than reducing land to a real estate commodity. Further, she argues that we must develop the capacity to enter into dialogical relationships with "earth others" [13].

I am sympathetic to this view and offer tools for such an undertaking provided by phenomenology and Goethean science [14]. If, however, human-human communication over climate change is so difficult, the prospect of including other species in dialogue, however that is conceived, seems remote indeed.

Notwithstanding these many difficulties, I believe that movement toward a more place-responsive culture is a worthy undertaking for a variety of reasons. Place-based education is richer and more locally relevant for students. A greater emphasis on local place relationships reinvigorates local communities and leads to a wide range of social, political, and environmental actions in defense of place. Place-based education counteracts alienation and disconnection from the rest of life with which humans share the planet. It provides the basis for a more meaningful, productive, expressive, and grounded life.

Do the "sacred" and the "holy" have a role in caring for the natural world? My ideas about spirituality, place, and the sacred are changing as a result of our time on Blackstone. Our attempt to provide sanctuary for wildlife means more than providing physical refuge as the original meaning of the word as a holy place infers [15]. All beings, animate and inanimate, are worthy of reverence. Simone Weil's contention that heartfelt attention is a form of prayer resonates strongly with me [16]. The choice to adopt an attentive attitude toward all forms of the sentient world in which we are immersed is ultimately a spiritual one:

One evening last month, as the setting sun turned the rock pools into burnished mirrors and filled the sandstone caves with honeyed light, I was stopped in my tracks by the stillness. Feeling weak-kneed, I put down the oysters I had collected and sank onto a nearby mushroom-shaped rock. Spontaneously, I broke into a Buddhist chant. As my voice reverberated in the sandstone hollows and traversed the still waters, I felt I was singing out a heartfelt thank you to the rocks, waters, and mountains of the Channel, in gratitude for their simply being there [17].

Notes

1. J. Cameron, Letter from Far South 5, *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology,* 21, 3 (2010): 17.
2. J. Cameron, Letter from Far South 4. *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology,* 21, 1 (2010): 16.
3. Ibid.
4. This phrase is the subtitle of T. Roszak, M. Gomes, & A. Kanner, eds., *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1995).
5. Letter from Far South 6. *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology,* 22, 2 (2011): 17.
6. Ibid., p. 16.
7. M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge, 1962).
8. Letter from Far South 9. *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology,* 25, 2 (2014): 22–23.
9. S. Murphy, *Upside-Down Zen* (Melbourne: Lothian Books, 2004).
10. M. van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1990); M. van Manen, *Phenomenology of Practice* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2014).
11. Excerpted from Letter from Far South 11, *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology,* forthcoming, 2015.
12. E. Relph, T., 2008, A Pragmatic Sense of Place, in *Making Sense of Place*, F. Vanclay, M. Higgins, & A. Blackshaw, eds. (Canberra: National Museum of Australia Press, 2008); reprinted in *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology,* 20, 3 (2009): 24–31.
13. V. Plumwood, *Environmental Culture* (Lndon: Routledge, 2012). Far from any naïve "talk with the animals" suggestion, Plumwood's notion of interspecies dialogue is highly sophisticated, based in the combination of decades of ecophilosophical inquiry and a lifetime's experience of living on her own in a biodiverse environment.
14. In addition to the phased process of Goethean science I have employed, there are possibilities such as Shotter's suggestion of "withness action" (J. Shotter, Goethe and the Refiguring of Intellectual Inquiry, *Janus Head* 8, 1 [2005]: 132–58).
15. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the root word is the Latin "sanctus," meaning holy.
16. S. Weil, Attention and Will, in *Gravity and Grace* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952).
17. Letter from Far South 8, *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology,* 23, 2 (2012): 21.

Photograph, p. 37: Mist over Blackstone Bay. © 2014 Vicki King and used with permission.

Social Space and Daily Commuting
Phenomenological Implications

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Encouraging use of public transit is one important way to reduce energy consumption and counter climate change. In my research on the design of Swedish travel centers, I have studied the transit stations for the planned "West Link," an underground railway tunnel through Gothenburg that will increase the capacity for commuter traffic.

My method is phenomenological; one result is an interactive questionnaire that works as a dialog tool for identifying "soft" spatial qualities that might have value for collaborative planning processes. I ask how one might design public-transport spaces that incorporate safety, comfort, unambiguous orientation, and aesthetic values. A thorough answer to this question might help designers and planners to create more sustainable, user-friendly urban spaces.

The French philosopher Merleau-Ponty (2002) argued that human beings did not receive sensory impressions passively. Perception, he claimed, is *active*. Via a direct, pre-reflective awareness, we stretch ourselves into the world. Drawing on his work, I have developed a research method that I call "spatial-sensory analysis" [1].

The human sensory-motor system plays a decisive role in perceiving and understanding space (Hopsch 2008; Johnson 2007; Merleau-Ponty 2002). One can speak of spatial affordances or a *spatiality of situation*—i.e., the ways a certain space gives possibilities for human action and interaction.

How we perceive is a theme for psychology and cognitive science. Phenomenology offers a theoretical base for generating architectural design that adequately accounts for human movement and sensory experiences as well as ethical concerns (Hopsch et al. 2014). Phenomenology offers an innovative way to address issues of security, orientation, climate, and beauty, especially in relation to contemporary "placeless" environments with considerable potential for alienation.

A phenomenological approach is also valuable because spatial planning today involves large-scale digital representation. To understand *lived* space, however, human beings must encounter it via bodily presence. To gain a more thorough knowledge of this lived attunement to space, our research group used group discussion and explorative workshops to investigate specific aspects of spatiality and movement in urban traffic space. Participants in these workshops included researchers, practitioners, and potential users.

In the first stage of our research, we developed tools to identify and describe environmental qualities that might integrate urban public transit with urban space. These tools were used in the early planning process. Researchers and practitioners were involved in a series of dialog seminars to understand how to identify and notate taken-for-granted lived qualities and actions often regarded as "tacit knowledge" (Hartelo & Mochizuki 2009; Hopsch et al. 2013).

The West Link Project is an eight-kilometer, double-track rail system under the center of Gothenburg. This network will connect commuter rail

services to city mass-transit routes. In spring, 2012, a collaboration between The Swedish Transport Administration and Chalmers University prepared a pilot study of the designs for several new West Link stations to be built as part of the larger project [2].

This collaboration drew on the model of a design research studio. The aim was a "hermeneutical spiral" of progressive interpretive discovery whereby perspectives are widened and knowledge is deepened [3]. One result was new design methods and tools that can be used to identify innovative spatial qualities to strengthen environmental encounter. A deeper knowledge of urban spatial form in an embodied context created a starting point for working with new aspects in the design of space for public transportation.

This focus on sensory dimensions of the urban-transit experience provided a point of common reference that allowed participants to consider the *experiential* nature of transit design. Participants came to recognize the importance of a multisensory focus, including the significance of haptic experience. Participants gained a deeper sense of empathy—in other words, how to "feel into things" and thereby incorporate affective dimensions of transit experience.

Considering peoples' bodily and sensory experiences of urban space contributes to designing public transport in a more user-friendly way. One central goal is contributing ideas for designing public places with a multivalent sense of meaning. A phenomenological approach is a useful tool because it offers new ways to map out questions and to think in new ways. This knowledge might contribute to urban design and planning that support urbanites' choice of mass transit as a convenient, pleasurable mode of travel.

More broadly, this collaborative study indicated that the way human beings sensuously experience place and space can become the nucleus for interdisciplinary studies (Diaconu et al. 2011). Contemporary urban planning is a field of interconnectedness and relations; there is necessary a trans-disciplinary approach that bridges gaps between architecture, urban planning landscape architecture, and traffic planning.

Questions developed within a complex context require cooperation and mutual understanding to achieve resilient results. This process can contribute to innovative structures that facilitate people's choices in transit situations and so contribute to more sustainable urban development.

Notes

1. Because it is trans-disciplinary, this method has practical application within collaborative efforts such as urban design and public-transport and traffic planning. The present study is supported by the Swedish Research Counci FORMAS, in collaboration with the Swedish Transport Administration. The broader focus of which the current work is part is "Architecture in Effect: Re-Thinking the Social in Architecture." For a description, go to: http://architectureineffect.se/projections/project-practicies [accessed July 24, 2014].

2. For more information on the West Link Project, go to: www.trafikverket.se/Om-Trafikverket/Andra-sprak/English-Engelska/Railway-and-Road/Railway-Construction-Projects/West-Link-Project/ [accessed July 24, 2014].

3. Other programs involved in this collaborative study were Istanbul Technical University's Department of Architecture; Mississippi State University's School of Art and Design; and the *Ecole Nationale d'Architecture de Paris's GERPHAU (Groupe d'études et de recherche philosophie, architecture et urbain).*

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Topologies of Illumination

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Google recently offered early adopters of its Glass device a primer on how not to seem "creepy or rude" while using the new technology in public. Sourced from firsthand experiences of the company's "Glass Explorer" members, the guide issues a warning against awkward social lapses caused by staring into the device's prism for extended periods of time. Digital interfaces often induce such imperturbable trances as those in which smartphone users already find themselves. The socialite, shopper, artist, and business executive now wear the distrait stare of a lone video gamer, each navigating this unsteady merger of apparatus and environment.

There is a vanishing separation of these "augmented" spaces—enhanced by applications, high-resolution mobile photography, social networking, and the instantaneity of information—from the built and designable forms through which everyday life has been traditionally lived. As Google acknowledges, however, it is still an uncanny separation, continually reasserted upon exploring and feeling out its limits, finding us all the more prone to sudden jolts and spells of disorientation. But the rude affectations of the smartphone user (which may only worsen as "wearables" and devices tailored to gestural response gain currency) are more telling of discrepancies between the habits and norms of a changing technological culture than of any failed architectonic integration of the virtual.

That one could now feasibly organize her life as though the world were nothing more than a vast internet of data is a fact far from contingent upon any specific advance in visual imaging. It speaks to our imaginative submission to the virtual, even where computer graphics fall short. The dream of a "Second Life" is after all one of escapism. There have always been sufficient, if anemic, surrogates for the real, and the vampiric body of the gamer, nourished in darkness on the glimmer of televisual feeds, hardly needs convincing of this.

We are inclined to imagine virtual reality as a particular kind of interface. In the most commonplace of occurrences, however, we can find a virtuality that is not set over and against the real. Wearing eyeglasses, for example, suggests technical mediation of perception resulting in a refocused real that, if anything, becomes *more* real to us than our unadorned vision. The glasses become in their virtuality second nature, once the weight is no longer felt on the bridge of our nose and the frame's blur eventually lost, transfigured into an extension of our face (so much so that we feel naked without them). Limits to the apparatus nonetheless appear, as Heidegger suggests, when things break down. With a sudden jerking of the head or in the midst of an intimate embrace, the awkward presence of our eyewear is reasserted.

But this does not prevent us from experiencing clarity of sight as a property belonging to the real. We imagine such lenses as "corrective" of our own natural flaws in relation to a measurable standard of human physiology. In relation to other organisms, other spectrums of light, there is no singular, correct way of seeing the real. Is an apparatus that filters the world through a searchable function therefore less "real" than the focusing effect of corrective eyewear?

Technology enjoins with our perceptual field in the gestural articulation of seeing. Whether or not 3D movies or simulation technologies such as Oculus Rift—and whatever subsequent developments may follow—offer compelling simulacra seems beside the point. A low-resolution illusion is not necessarily less illusory than a

high-resolution one. Since its inception, video gaming has offered an engrossing experience, one that only grows in its scale of filmic excitation. But, as in most Hollywood productions, the simulacrum is less than transformative; it is manipulative. Such feats of illusion do not therefore set out to sway us of their everyday factual existence. We already know there is something uncanny about Google Glass. Such augmentation and illusion simply exploit what we are willing to grant them.

However immersive the means of virtual reality, a horizon of embodied awareness endures. As with the sleight-of-hand magician, whose illusions are most efficacious when we are complicit in their unveiling, reality vanishes only in designated blind spots. The magic of cinema, similarly, depends upon a suspension of disbelief, a partial willingness to accept the possibilities within frame. We can ask what it would mean then to feel at home in technological virtuality. But such a feeling would not correspond to those moments in which we *want* to be duped into believing something that we have already differentiated from our everyday lives.

A more apposite answer to the question of whether a virtual world could become so "real" as to be lived as though it were a "real" world should perhaps instead be sought in the constructed, social domain, where integrations of new technologies brush against custom and habit. To speak of a "Twitter-verse" that is both ubiquitous and seemingly nowhere is to describe something that has face value to our natural attitude; it constitutes a "real" connective tissue that is *felt* as an immediate feature of the interfaced environment. Our vision plunges into the depths of a glowing screen as it does the phantasms of clouds across the sky or sunbeams piercing the forest canopy. It is here that virtualities are rendered in aesthetic transactions of our subjective engagement, where they append and fulfill the anticipation of experiencing an actual sense of place. That is, they are not merely tricks, games, or illusions. They are, like corrective lenses, enhancements and elaborations of our visual field.

The phenomenological and logistical inseparability of technological virtuality and everyday experience seems to parallel that of architecture and the environment more broadly. Building does not eliminate nature, but rather enjoins in conversation with it, speaking to its sensuous and elemental particularity while at the same time fundamentally modifying it. Similarly, virtuality cannot, on perceptual grounds at least, be thought of simply in opposition to a "real" counterpart. Each reflects the other in an intricate and ever-shifting composite of feeling and sensation that, as a totality, no longer obeys the logic of a finite sense of place.

At the heart of inquiring into a topology for which Facebook or satellite imaging figure prominently, we must turn to the contraction of global distances. Merleau-Ponty offers an instructive observation: "Everything I see is in principle within my reach, at least within reach of my sight, and is marked on the map of the 'I can'" [1]. The question then concerns what happens when this "I can" is multiplied and mediated by technics, when the map of reality undergoes radical spatial distortion.

French urbanist and philosopher of acceleration Paul Virilio recounts a discussion with his wife in which she remarks that "what she had found most unbearable in the Nazi occupation of France was the feeling of being cut off from the United States. At a stroke there would be no more American magazines, no more newspapers, and above all, no more movies" [2]. Today, this sentiment is given a far more banal expression, as "FOMO," or a perpetual "fear of missing out" that binds the tangible here and now to an ever-elusive elsewhere borne by visual media.

Merleau-Ponty's penumbral "I can" is in such cases tempered by an absence made present, a "that which I cannot" in the face of infinitely manifestable possibilities. This background knowledge of negated possibility aligns with what we might inversely call a real virtuality. The idea of the virtual hangs decisively on its temporal dimension in this regard, its sense of anticipation and retention (a point elaborated by Bergson and later adopted by Deleuze). "*When* can I see it?" one asks; the *where* is implied or irrelevant.

The reality of the virtual is the extension of this "I can," which for the time being privileges the effects of lighting and sight. But one can imagine other sensorial virtualities that weigh upon our feeling of inhabiting a

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particular place. Not least of these would be the potential to administer simulated olfactory sensations. A smelt virtually might even convey further contortions of spatiality—the onset of some *mémoire involontaire* of a long forgotten place: digital tea and biscuits from childhood.

What I am calling real virtuality is therefore a Janus-faced description of technology subsuming perceived orientations toward place: society becomes not only a spectacle but an encompassing "missed connection." No sooner is absence made present than the gestural and communicative elaboration of our bearing on the world is met with new intensities that enter into our subjective field of graspable and mutable potential. Real virtuality is apprehended only in the void left behind by its disappearances, after the sights and sounds to which we have grown accustomed are noticeably impoverished. Conversely, the field of perception is interfaced with endless streams of visual hyper-stimuli, the only remedy being to "space out." This situation corresponds with what Virilio suggests as an "overexposure" of spatial perspective [3]. Filmic technique becomes the organizing architectural principle of this overly illuminated landscape.

The architecture of the world is already and increasingly lived as a virtuality. Architecture has been challenged by cinema over its mastery of lighting, of imposing special effects upon the action that unfolds in the street. Each of us, no longer just inhabitants of architectural space, is the self-appointed auteur behind our unique cycloptic perspective and haphazard mise-en-scene. We direct the spectacle of our lives across various platforms of recording and transmitting.

Recall that it was within the confounding spectacle of cinematic violence that a movie theater gunman killed one dozen people and injured more than two-dozen others several years ago. But it is not the case that an inability to distinguish between fiction and reality is symptomatic of this incursion of virtuality; such a spectacle differs categorically from *really* believing that the magician's lovely assistant could vanish inside of a box. And if there was a confusion of Hollywood action and reality, it certainly does not testify to the *realism* of the film. Rather, it suggests a

more totalizing phenomenological symmetry between the architect and the technologist. Reality seems more cinematic.

The built environment, which is furnished in a manner Heidegger might have described as "present-at-hand," becomes increasingly "ready-to-hand" in its bearing upon us. We discover a participatory sense of its objectivity through which our desires and anxieties are reflected back with disturbing immediacy. To this effect, a restaurant chain has recently capitalized on touch-screen menus in an attempt to mitigate the embarrassment of customers wanting to order gratuitous amounts of food.

Through this hybridized, architectonic technics, we can look across a boundless landscape. The world expands through the emissions of screens and electronic interfaces, and our embodied relation to them acquires a luminous quality. We can at any moment "reach" across vast distances, moving through optical connections, nearing the speed of light.

How to coordinate a body in an environment defined by its perceptual utility more than spatiality? The result seems to be division, disunified and strained attention spans that can no longer tolerate emptiness or equilibrium. A new campaign for split-screen "smart" televisions advertises the convenience of being able to roam around a bombed-out warscape in a first-person shooter while simultaneously keeping apprised of the football score.

Perception must in this way increasingly answer to demarcations of time far more than of space. Rapid successions of appearances—that is, montage—characterize our trading off of perspective. We orient ourselves as both spectator and auteur, mastering the art of sequencing and setting our environment into motion. Channel surfing, web browsing, news aggregation, instant messaging, and so on—these are not the activities of a flâneur but of a gambler, an individual, suggests Walter Benjamin, who is motivated by ecstasies of time more than space. Whosoever is lost to the rapid ordering of appearances and lighting effects can be set suddenly adrift, inhabiting the perceived role of the Joker, now an audience member, now the Dark Knight himself.

With the introduction of video monitors, interfaces, and handheld or wearable devices, the architect and technologist creep ever closer

together. Everything is wallpapered with digital visualization. What does this mean for the designability of an environment?

Place can now be thought out as a moment in a sequence, as something we "check into"—a timestamped pin-drop on a virtual map. The sequencing of space into units of time—i.e., events or posts on a timeline feed—may force the architect to become set designer and cinematographer in one. Meanwhile, the city starts to resemble an airport terminal in its infrastructural layout, punctuated by wireless "hot spots" in the subway and public device charging docks. These amenities seek to accommodate instantaneous movement across great distances.

Here, we might return to the ungainly, unwieldy aspect of technology. It comes as the blinding flash of daylight upon stepping out of the theater, the impaired conversability of the obsessive texter. But we cannot mistake these lapses of habituation for a return to our everyday senses. What makes virtuality *real* is that it has fundamentally changed the architecture of social reality; it does not set upon us as a Matrix-like dissimulation from the *really* real. We cannot, finally, leave the cave of shadows for a Platonic light. Virtuality, as a basic function of technology that has grown increasingly complex, is part and parcel of the naive everydayness of life. In its immediate quality, it enters into relation with all other nodes of our perceptual field, modifying the nature of the whole.

Neil Harbisson, a colorblind artist and the first person to gain government recognition as a cyborg, perhaps illustrates in an extreme way the indissolubility of real virtuality. Via an antenna embedded into his skull, Harbisson can "hear" the sky and "listen" to his mother's eyes, as frequencies of light are digitally transmitted as sound waves. "I don't perceive my antenna as a device, I perceive it as a part of my body, I perceive it as an organ," he says [4]. Much as the cyborg offers Donna Haraway an image to dissolve gender essentialism, it undercuts the assumption of any essential unity of the real. Modes of perception are diverse, synesthetic, constellational, and always changing. To the extent that the virtual can "substitute" the real, it is indistinguishable from cyborgism in mediating somatic movement and perception.

The architecture of the world today is of a similarly hybridized quality. Perhaps what is needed, then, is a cyborg phenomenology, capable of investigating rapidly shifting perceptual fields and adapting to the body modifications of the embodied subject. Only by thinking through the perceptual limits and horizons of the virtual can we come to a rigorous understanding of how to fabricate better physical and digital architecture. Simply drawing users away from the tempest of virtuality does not remedy the disappearance of distances any more than an occupied France could forget that feeling of being cut off from America.

The task for design might instead become one of fulfilling, within that digital trance of the virtual, the function architecture has always performed: to create a sense of place and restfulness, to offer shelter from the storm.

Notes

1. M. Merleau-Ponty. *The Primacy of Perception* J. M. Edie, ed. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1964), p. 2.
2. P. Virilio. *War and Cinema* (NY: Verso, 1989), p. 11.
3. P. Virilio. *Lost Dimension* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2012), p. 30.
4. Niel Harbisson. "TEDWeekends: How a Colorblind Cyborg 'Hears' Color." *The Huffington Post*. http://huffingtonpost.com/neil-harbisson/hearing-color-cyborg-tedtalk_b_3654445.html, July 26, 2013 [accessed July 6, 2014].

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Navigating by the Light

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In this *EAP* commentary, I weave some strands of my teaching experience with some design principles advocated by architect Christopher Alexander. The fact that these related strands from different professions fit together will, I hope, contribute to a synergy of constructive possibilities.

In *The Nature of Order* and his other writings, Alexander champions "incremental development" [1]. Rather than imposing a design upon a locale, he prefers to walk the site, develop a plan, and then proceed with construction in a way that allows the site to give feedback for identifying and modifying subsequent steps in the construction process.

He sees this approach to design and building as nurturing the holistic nature of life, allowing a creation to emerge through progressive differentiation in a way similar to babies emerging from within fertilized eggs. The architect does not put together beforehand all the parts of a building, which is then assembled. Instead, he or she helps the totality of the creation to emerge. Alexander insists there is a power and sanctity in this organic process that increases the wholeness and life of the completed work.

I follow a similar kind of "incremental development" in my teaching at Chrysalis Charter School, a small, kindergarten-through-eighth-grade, science-and-nature school in northern California that my wife and I co-founded in 1996. In the school's ninth year, I was teaching literature to the school's eighth graders. We were reading excerpts of Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Self-Reliance*. As students read aloud from the work, I asked them to *give voice* to the words, not just read them. The students did so, with increasing energy, going round in a group circle, returning to me. I thought that I, too, should give voice to the words and thereby model an even more "out-thereness." I approached a student and, looking into his eyes, sincerely spoke "Trust thyself." To the next student I said, "Every heart vibrates to that iron string. Trust thyself. Never imitate." Around I went, looking each student in his or her eyes.

This experience led, in the next few weeks, to my sharing what I called "eye shine." Talking about it as a class, we were more readily able to look into each other's eyes and see a spirit shining within. This effort nourished a respect and trust that led over the months to exultant reading of poetry and the emergence of a class shout, "My beacon fire is lit!" My sharing this development with my fellow teachers led one to write: "Encouraging the light within each student to shine brighter." A month later, we as a faculty realized that this was our mission statement, which we weren't even thinking about until this sentence emerged, unasked for and spontaneously.

This mission statement has made a tremendous difference to our school: it defines and focuses organizational aims in a directed, powerful way. This result surprised me because, at my previous employment, I had experienced hours of staff time wasted at meetings where disparate "stakeholders" gathered to produce a mission statement. The result was an elegant-sounding "public-relations" document that had no real meaning and drew away organizational energy because it referred to nothing real.

These two contrasting experiences with mission statements mirror Alexander's two dramatically different approaches to design and construction. Our mission statement of "encouraging the light" emerged organically over many months from what we were exploring and in response to the children who are the reason for the school.

Some educators are dubious that Chrysalis can be organized around "the light." They ask, "How do you measure the 'light'?" These skeptics want an absolute number similar to numerical scores on standardized tests. If "the light" can't be specified in this way, then it must be subjective. At Chrysalis, however, we accept that this "light" is an objective reality. A teacher doesn't need absolute numbers to navigate by it. Rather, one focuses on relative changes. What things make the "light" brighter? What things tend to make the "light" dim? The aim is always to navigate toward more "light."

Frequently, I've had to defend our mission statement from critics. Here is a typical conversation:

"Yes, encouraging the light sounds nice but what about the real work of teaching the kids?"

"The real work is encouraging the light."

"Yes, but what are you teaching them?"

"That depends on the teacher and the students."

"But you need to teach the grade-level standards."

"No, we are a chartered public school governed by our charter. We are exploring a different way of organizing public education."

"But how can you assure parents that their child is receiving all the grade-level standards?"

"Parents don't ask. They want to see the light shining within their child."

"Well, how can you assure the State of California that your students are being taught the grade-level standards?"

"By the state's standardized tests. Our students on average perform significantly higher than schools of similar demographics."

"But are you teaching to the standards?"

"No, we are encouraging the light within each student to shine brighter. And one of the ways you encourage the light is offering each student the experience of understanding the concepts we are working with. So it is not enough to cover the material and pass a test. That does not necessarily encourage the light. The key concern is whether the child experiences understanding. We 'light up' when we understand something. That's what we focus on at Chrysalis. In addition, a student's light can shines brighter when he or she knows they are safely within a kind, gentle environment, So we spend a lot of time working to transform the 'unkind' culture that kids bring from television and other schools into a kind one. We greet students as they arrive on campus. Our 'light shines' when we are out in nature so we take the students out into nature every week. Our 'light shines' when we are known and honored as individuals, so we have structured the school to have small classes that emphasize helpful feedback rather than judgmental grades."

Navigating by the light brings me to another parallel with Alexander's work, which unfolds in a similar "subjective" way. He explains:

…. Let's say, if I'm trying to make a modest building, what do I do? I do consciously try to make the building move from its not very good current state toward a state in which you're more likely to experience "God" in that building. And that tells me very often what to do. It's not just some sort of great wish, it actually tells me, "Look, make this column bigger"…. [2].

The relative presence of "God" referred to here obviously can't be measured quantitatively. Rather, like us teachers at Chrysalis, Alexander is navigating by relative differences. For him, the question of relative life and wholeness in a design keeps reappearing throughout the making process so that the end product might become a slow accumulation of many smaller decisions all moving in the same intentional direction toward the worthy ends of appropriateness, beauty, and belonging.

The last question I want to address here is why moments of intuitive perception, important for both Alexander and Chrysalis teaching, sustain "lighting up"? What are we intuitively perceiving in these special moments, and why do they inspire spontaneous joy? Helpful here is the work of philosopher and science educator Henri Bortoft, who explains that this moment of insight is:

not to be thought of as a generalization from observations, produced by abstracting from different instances something that is common to them. If this result were the case, one would arrive at an abstracted unity with the dead quality of a lowest common factor… In a moment of intuitive perception, the particular instance is seen as a living manifestation of the universal [3].

About the time I read this passage, I had witnessed just such a moment for one of my students. I had been field-testing a science unit that used a local plant to get elementary students interested in field biology. Part of the unit was on how flowers develop into seed-containing fruits. One of the activities (called "forms of the process") asked students to collect ten specimens of the readily found *Erodium botrys* (commonly known as long beaked stork's bill) at different stages of flowering development and then arrange the specimens in temporal sequence.

One student's set of specimens was such that there was a gap in the middle, and he could not see any broader pattern. He had some examples of the flower's dropping its petals and its ovules starting to swell; he also had some examples of the plant style growing progressively longer. But in between was a gap preventing him from seeing all his specimens as part of one, dramatic transformation. The student was dutifully doing the activity but was frustrated because he knew he somehow wasn't "getting it."

I went out to find a specimen that would fit exactly in the middle of the gap. When the student added the specimen to his flowering sequence, a spontaneous "WOW!" burst forth, and his face lit up. As Bortoft explains, "In a moment of intuitive perception, the particular instance is seen as a living manifestation of the universal" [4].

So what is it about phenomenology that I think I've understood, even though I would never claim to be a phenomenologist? What I think I understand is that there is a way of seeing that can hap-
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pen through direct experience. These moments of understanding are wonderful and they "light us up." They are the core of Alexander's approach to understanding and making. They are the core of our pedagogical efforts at Chrysalis.

These similarities between Chrysalis and Alexander's work help me as a teaching professional to feel less alone. These similarities strengthen my desire to keep navigating "by the light." I hope the experiences I have described here with my Chrysalis pupils might, in a parallel way, strengthen the desire of architects to work in the manner explored by Alexander.

Notes

1. C. Alexander, *The Nature of Order,* four vols. (Berkeley, CA: Center for Environmental Structure, 2002–05).
2. From an interview available at: www.patternlanguage.com/archives/wendykohn/wendykohninterviewedited.htm [last accessed June 24, 2014].
3. H. Bortoft, Counterfeit and Authentic Wholes: Finding a Means for Dwelling in Nature, in D. Seamon and R. Mugerauer, eds., *Dwelling, Place and Environment* (Dordrecht: Martinus-Nijoff, 1985), p. 296.
4. Ibid.

Points of View and Objectivity
The Phenomenologist's Challenge

Yi-Fu Tuan

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I understand the phenomenologist's challenge to be that of embracing both "point of view" and "objectivity," which, as I see it, is also that of intellectual endeavor at its most ambitious. Let me illustrate what I mean by these two terms, first, at the microscale; then, at the macroscale.

Microscale

What I see is always a point of view—*my* point of view. What I hear, by contrast, is more circumambient and so less subjective. What I smell is even less subjective, more "in the round," and more a quality that emanates from something "out there." Heidegger, I believe, once praised the sense of smell for that reason. The visual, being a point of view, is—as I just said—subjective, and yet that subjectivity diminishes as the viewer approaches the object so viewed.

I see the Washington Monument from afar. It is in *my* field of vision. I dominate it. As I approach it, however, this is less and less true, until under its shadow I feel *it* to be the looming presence (subject) and *me* a mere speck (an object) in its shadow. Phenomenologists, eschewing objectivity, tend to emphasize the "point of view" or the subjective. This is a mistake, for the human experience includes both.

Point of view is from somewhere. By contrast, the view from nowhere is from God's position way up in the sky, hence objective. (The terminology of "somewhere" and "nowhere" is Thomas Nagel's.) We are capable of both. What we are not capable of or, rather, what we are not good at is to see from someone else's position. Chaos would ensue if this were all there is to

perception, but of course it isn't. By virtue of our innate ability to see also from "nowhere," we share a common world.

A simple experiment will show this to be true. Put a three-dimensional model of hills, valleys, streams, and farms on a table. Have two persons *A* and *B* stand on opposite sides. Ask *A* to describe what *B* sees from his side of the table and vice versa. The task will be difficult for both, and yet both can describe with relative ease what they can see from a point high above, even though neither has been there!

Macroscale

The art of the novel peaked in the nineteenth century. It was also in the nineteenth century that social science and phenomenology were being established. At that time, these three endeavors to understand human reality had much in common. The novelist strove to capture the society of the time. *Madame Bovary* had the subtitle "*moeurs de province*." Balzac's *La Comédie Humaine* was a monumental effort to depict life in all its variety. The great novelists sought to be objective by drawing attention, as would a sociologist, to the social and economic forces at work. They also provided technical information of the sort one might find in a manual. Thomas Hardy described how a tractor worked and wasn't bothered by the departure from plot line. Herman Melville famously—or perhaps infamously—made a part of *Moby Dick* read like a tract for whaling.

Also on the objective side of the ledger in the work of a great novelist is a large, overarching theme such as the nature of war in Tolstoy's *War and Peace,* or the nature of time in Proust's *À la recherche du*

temps perdu. Of course, this large, overarching theme is the novelist's and is, in that sense, a point of view and subjective. But my point is that a theme so large and inclusive is, humanly speaking, a view from nowhere, a God-like view, within which is a host of individuals, each of whom has a past, a socioeconomic position, and a distinctive perspective.

Now, to the extent that phenomenologists engage in "psychological description," they are poets, short-story writers, or novelists. Heidegger, frustrated by the inadequacy of prose to capture human reality, resorted to the poetry of Hölderlin, but he would have done better, be a great phenomenologist and novelist if, in a masterwork peopled by hundreds of characters, he included a poet named Hölderlin! In the twenty-first century, a phenomenologist-novelist might not feature a poet in his work, but he would surely have to include, besides bakers and car dealers, academic types such as feminists and Marxists. In other words, the issue is not phenomenology being critiqued by feminists and Marxists, but rather that they appear as colorful characters in a masterwork of phenomenology.

What is the use of such a masterwork in phenomenology? The use is twofold: one that it is a mirror to society but, then, if it is indeed such a mirror, it is also a plan for society's improvement. The usual plans designed by government and commercial bureaus are too thin and abstract to serve that function adequately. On the other hand, the poet's or short-story writer's work, phenomenological in its psychological acumen but without the broader frame that is also phenomenology's calling, is too dense and limited to be of use other than for a narrow purpose, such as building a homeless shelter or an airport. A masterwork in phenomenology rises above these limitations.

A Theoretical Human Endeavor

Finally, just as a great realistic novel has many characters, none of whom actually existed, so a great phenomenological treatise can be deemed a work of socio-economic and psychological realism even though it contains individuals none of whom actually existed but who are postulated to represent a human type or hint at a human condition. In this sense, phenomenology is "theoretical." Is this a fault? Not really, for this bent toward theory and abstraction is a weakness in all mental endeavors. Only God who knows the number of hairs on our head is thoroughly and completely empirical.

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Considering the Relationship between Phenomenology and Science

Julio Bermudez

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In this essay, I discuss what I see as central to the advancement of *EAP* in the next quarter century: developing a sophisticated, robust phenomenological dialogue with analytic science. This dialogue is necessary because it is increasingly difficult, if not impossible (theoretically and practically), to advance insights, observations, or allegations without offering empirical evidence.

Quite simply, rhetorical craftsmanship, logical argument, poetic writing, and impeccable credentials are no longer enough to cement the legitimacy of research claims. In their place, science, the source of most of our practical knowledge and technology, has de facto become today's only widely agreed method to validate arguments and hypotheses. Science is therefore a fundamental power broker in all important decisions affecting us, be they related to environmental, psychological, social, political, or economic matters.

Signs of this condition abound. The rapid rise of evidence-based design is but one example of an accentuating trend. We can be upset and enumerate the many problems and biases behind this state of affairs, but the fact remains uncontestable. Instead of resisting, a more productive path would be to think of science as another perspective, language, and method that can be used when considering phenomenological questions, insights, and recommendations. We teachers, professionals, and designers know this very well. If we are to engage students, clients, and users productively, we must speak to their concerns, in their language, using their logic.

Is this matter-of-fact recognition indicative of a capitulation to an instrumentalist, reductionist, and materialistic worldview? Are we betraying the spirit of phenomenology? Here, we must carefully avoid rushing to an answer grounded in the claim that phenomenologists profoundly distrust, if not reject, the natural sciences as a means for probing phenomenological issues. This perspective began with the compelling foundational work of such thinkers as Gaston Bachelard and Steen Rasmussen. The perspective progressively became mainstream with architectural theorist Alberto Pérez-Gómez's insightful *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science* [1].

These and other phenomenologically-inspired thinkers asked how anyone can accept positivist reductionism to describe, much less pinpoint or explain, the complex thickness of lived experience. These thinkers claimed that, since subjective experience is inaccessible from without, it cannot be probed directly by scientific method and therefore must always remain beyond empirical measurability.

I would argue that this formulaic view of phenomenology as anti-scientific has never been true. Phenomenology began with founder Edmund Husserl's famous exhortation of "back to the things themselves" in response to obscure philosophical analyses and abstractions lacking little relation to lived experience. This "going back to things" involved a contemplative science of sorts: the direct, unbiased observation of first-person experience of reality and consciousness. Husserl developed a specific method, the "phenomenological reduction," as a way to put aside all content of consciousness to "objectively" access what is really

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present in experience. I don't necessarily defend or criticize Husserl's "reduction." Rather, I bring it forward to highlight his affinity with scientific method in the sense of taking nothing for granted and instead seeking to apply objective observation to subjective psychological events [2].

If phenomenology's beginning is marked by Husserl's aim to bring a kind of scientific sensibility into matters of philosophy, other phenomenologists following Husserl used science as a springboard to clarify their understandings of phenomenological principles and conclusions.

For example, philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty criticized standard philosophy and science by arguing that human cognition is unavoidably embodied and therefore neither purely intellectual and detached nor merely physiological and reactive. He painted a deliciously nuanced account of our lived world replete with sensuality, emotions, contextuality, and concreteness [3]. Merleau-Ponty's critique of science did not, however, mean ignoring or eliminating it. In fact, some commentators have argued that he saw the future of phenomenology as embracing some type of "naturalization"—in other words, a disciplined, skillful coupling of phenomenology and the natural sciences [4].

Another productive conversation between science and phenomenology is seen in the thinking of philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, who worked to demonstrate that interpretations are the only way to penetrate, however superficially, any claim on reality [5]. Turning Husserl's "reduction" on its head, Gadamer argued that it is the prejudices we bring to any particular situation that make interpretation at all possible, hence the fundamental flaw and naiveté of ordinary science when it demands or expects "objectivity."

One can also look to the latest phenomenological criticism of modernity and the scientific project. According to philosopher Jean-Luc Marion, our encounter with reality transcends us at every turn by what he calls its "saturation" [6]. He argues that the nature of an event always exceeds our capability to make sense of it, much less to control it. At best, we can deploy a "reduction" (in Husserl's sense) so that we can access the "given" (the phenom-

enon) as gift. In this act, we may realize a transcendence of being and some mode of spiritual presence. Philosopher Karsten Harries makes a similar point: that reality is real precisely because it does not conform to our desires but rather resists and, sooner or later, wins over our best attempt at subjugating it. The phenomenological conclusion is that reality transcends human beings. However powerful, instrumentalist science and applied technologies cannot ultimately solve the dilemmas of human existence [7].

Perhaps what is most remarkable about these phenomenological insights is they did not lead phenomenology to radical subjectivism, relativism, or nihilism—an end for some philosophical positions such as existentialism and post-structuralism. Nor did these phenomenological insights lead to a rejection of science but only to the refutation of scientism, its most simplistic representation.

Here, we ask the reason for such equanimous response. I suggest that, in their heart of hearts, phenomenologists are pragmatists. They truly want to deal with the experience of the world as lived and to understand human being-in-the-world. They are not keen on generating far-fetched philosophical models or adopting radical ideological positions. Given this no-nonsense attitude, phenomenologists are ready to accept experience-based knowledge and utilize it for advancing lived reality either actively (e.g., via the design of the built environment) or receptively (e.g., via human interaction with that built environment).

This pragmatic attitude has been a significant part of *EAP* since its beginning. The scholarship of Yi-Fu Tuan, Christian Norberg-Schulz, Edward Relph, and David Seamon always included references to scientific evidence supporting their claims (e.g., in environmental psychology, gestalt psychology, anthropology, geography and sociology) [8]. Empirical evidence was also central to Christopher Alexander and Thomas Thiis-Evesen's insightful observation and "cataloguing" of phenomenology-based typologies of architectural forms (pattern language and archetypes, respectively) [9]. This pragmatic attitude continues today. For example, architectural theorists Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Juhani Pallasmaa emphasize the claims of neuroscience that support long-held phenomenological positions regarding human cognition, perception,

embodiment, and environmental experience in general [10].

If there is nothing new in using empirical evidence to strengthen phenomenological claims, there is some novelty in the increasing mention of scientific understandings in the phenomenological literature. This development may be an indication that the natural and social sciences are finally beginning to consider the phenomenological critique of science that began with Husserl's work in the early twentieth century.

To contribute to research and practice in the twenty-first century, phenomenologists must find ways to better authenticate their discoveries and claims [11]. How, in other words, might phenomenological research expand its typical emphasis on smaller-scale self-observation and hermeneutics to include empirical measurement providing more objective validation to otherwise unreliable or unverifiable first-person accounts or relativistic qualitative interpretations?

Quantifying the qualitative dimensions of any phenomenon may ultimately be impossible, and I am not advocating an absolute threshold of trustworthiness (which is never really possible in a positivist mode of research either). In this regard, the social sciences have developed a wide range of qualitative methods to identify less tangible aspects of cultural, educational, psychological, and related phenomena [12].

One also notes that recent developments in neuroscience have allowed researchers to non-invasively observe the neural correlates of mental states. Adopting the scientific method phenomenologically means for phenomenologists to develop hypotheses, deploy practical procedures, gather data, conduct analyses, and produce findings that convincingly characterize phenomena. From one point of view, the aim can be phrased as the construction of probabilistic empirical mappings of phenomena.

Though some phenomenologists might disagree with this aim, I don't think it is farfetched or phenomenologically inappropriate. One can argue that concrete steps in this direction began in the early 1980s via the insights and leadership of Chilean scientist Francisco Varela, among others. This effort led to the development of *neurophenomenology*, an area of sci-

entific investigation that has steadily grown in significance in the last two decades [13]. My call to use scientific method to test phenomenological claims also parallels efforts in "experimental philosophy" ("X-Phi"), an innovative reflective practice working to examine empirically philosophical topics that have resisted scrutiny via more conventional analytical reasoning [14].

There is no reason why we cannot judiciously bring science into phenomenological inquiry, devise appropriate methodological adaptations and, thereby, lead scientists into new considerations and questions that evade them due to their quantitative training and worldview. In fact, some successful examples of this line of inquiry already exist. Running the risk of self-promotion, I would like to highlight two research projects I have been successfully conducting that manage to investigate highly qualitative claims within a scientific, empirical framework.

The first of these projects is a large survey on "Extraordinary Architectural Experiences" that seeks to map the phenomenological nature of these transformative events. In this research, I use a very large number of self-reported experiential accounts to validate (via statistical analysis) otherwise unreliable first-person accounts [15]. The second research project uses neuroscience to probe the phenomenology of contemplative spaces. Here, I employ non-invasive brain imaging (e.g., functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging, or fMRI) to gauge physiologically the cerebral activity of individuals "experiencing" contemplative environments [16].

The adoption of novel, non-reductionist methods of scientific observation and analysis should not unsettle phenomenologists because I emphasize emphatically that my critique does not require that more conventional phenomenological modes and methods be forsaken. My critique does imply, however, that phenomenologists consider a more encompassing, scientifically-engaged mode of phenomenology. Just as we cannot speak of one unique paradigm to describe all phenomena in physics (e.g., Newtonian, quantum, and relativistic models all have their accuracies but at different space-time scales), one mode of phenomenology cannot address the inexhaustible realm of human being and experience.

Forcing a choice between phenomenology and

science or the subordination of one to the other are false options. A more comprehensive approach requires a respectful, judicious, and mutually beneficial dialogue between phenomenology and science. Let us do it!

Notes

1. S. Rasmussen, *Experiencing Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1962); G. Bachelard. *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964); A. Pérez-Gómez, *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983).

2. Here, some readers may object to my analogy between Husserl's phenomenological reduction and scientific observation; see my discussion in J. Bermudez, Non-Ordinary Architectural Phenomenologies: Non-Dualist Experiences and Husserl's Reduction, *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology* 21, 2 (2010): 11–15.

3. M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (NY: Routledge, 1962).

4. J. Petitot, F. Varela, B. Pachoud, and J.-M. Roy, eds., *Naturalizing Phenomenology: Issues in Contemporary Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1999).

5. H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 2nd edn. (NY: Crossroad, 2004).

6. J.-L. Marion. *Reduction and Givenness* (Evanston, IL.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1998).

7. K. Harries, Transcending Aesthetics, in J.Bermudez, ed., *Transcending Architecture* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, forthcoming).

8. E.g., Y.-F. Tuan, *Topophilia* (NY: Prentice-Hall, 1974); C. Norberg Schulz, *Existence, Space and Architecture* (NY: Praeger, 1971); E. Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976); D. Seamon, *A Geography of the Lifeworld* (NY: St. Martin's, 1979).

9. C. Alexander, *A Pattern Language* (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977); C. Alexander, *The Timeless Way of Building* (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979); T. Thiis-Evensen, *Archetypes in Architecture* (Oslo: Norwegian Univ. Press, 1987).

10. E.g., Alberto Pérez-Gómez drew on recent neuroscience findings in a lecture he presented at the sixth annual symposium of the Forum for Architecture, Culture, and Spirituality, held in Toronto in June, 2014). In February, 2014, at the New School of Architecture and Design in San Diego, Juhani Pallasmaa participated in a dialogue with neuroscientist Michael Arbib. Pallasmaa was also a keynote speaker at the 2014 conference sponsored by the Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture (ANFA) and held at the Salk Institute.

11. On trustworthiness as understood phenomenologically, see, for example, D. Seamon, A Way of Seeing People and Place: Phenomenology in Environment-Behavior Research. In S. Wapner, J. Demick, T. Yamamoto, and H Minami, eds., *Theoretical Perspectives in Environment-Behavior Research* (NY: Plenum, 2000), pp. 157–78.

12. E.g., C. Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994); T. Black, *Doing Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999); D. Amedeo, R. G. Golledge, and R. J. Stimson, *Person-Environment-Behavior Research*. NY: Guilford Press, 2009); C. Grbich, *Qualitative Data Analysis* (London: Sage, 2012).

13. F. Varela, Neurophenomenology: A Methodological Remedy for the Hard Problem, *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 3 (1996): 330-349; also see A. Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind: Constructing the Conscious Brain* (NY: Vintage, 2012).

14. Joshua Knobe and Shaun Nichols, eds., *Experimental Philosophy* (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008).

15. J. Bermudez and B. Ro, Memory, Social Interaction and Communicability in Extraordinary Experiences of Architecture, in C. Jarrett, K.-H. Kim and N. Senske, eds., *Proceedings of the 2013 ARCC Conference* (Charlotte, NC: Univ. of North Carolina), pp. 677–684; J. Bermudez. Empirical Aesthetics: The Body and Emotion in Extraordinary Architectural Experiences, in P. Plowright and B. Gamper, eds., *Proceedings of the 2011 ARCC Conference* (Lawrence Technology University: Detroit, MI) pp. 369–380.

16. See my lecture, Architecturally Induced Contemplative States, delivered at the 2012 Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture (ANFA) conference; this lecture is available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=PalHtOrY9E4#t=21_#1 [last accessed June 20, 2014].

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Varieties of Phenomenological Description

Edward Relph

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David Seamon's invitation to write something for this anniversary edition of *EAP* (which I have subscribed to since it began a quarter-century ago) led me to reflect on books that have had a long-term influence on my thinking about place and landscape.

I soon realized there are a handful of writings I have often turned to because they are inspiring models of phenomenological description. I have referred to these works infrequently in my writing, and some may not be familiar to *EAP* readers, so this invitation provides me with an opportunity to share them, if only as brief synopses scarcely doing them justice. The fact that none of these works are recent probably reflects my distaste for the current tendency to look at the world through theoretical lenses.

What I mean by phenomenological description is broader than the philosophical method developed by Husserl and used by Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and others. While the work of these philosophers has certainly influenced my thinking, the approaches I mention here have different, unrelated provenances. Most make no reference to phenomenology, but I regard them as implicitly phenomenological because they all demonstrate ways to return to experiences of things in themselves. They attempt, as Edward Said claimed of humanism, to dissolve what William Blake called "mind forg'd manacles" for the purposes of reflective understanding. Several focus on ways of seeing, a theme that corresponds with my interests in landscapes and the visual properties of places. I begin with those [1].

In 1786, as Goethe set out on a journey to Italy to escape his problems in Weimar, he wrote in his diary that he was determined to see "with clear fresh eyes." He looked carefully at everything he encountered—architecture, trash, trees, clouds, mountains, landscapes, people, and the fashions they wore. At one point, he exclaimed, "I have spent the day just looking and looking. It is the same in art as in life. The deeper one penetrates, the broader grows the view." This idea of "clear fresh eyes' has served me as a sort of touchstone as an unprejudiced way to study places, and the results it has given are a basis for trusting my own judgments and reducing dependence on the opinions and theories of others [2].

I regard renowned critic of art and society John Ruskin as among the very best interpreters of landscape. I recently visited an exhibition displaying some of his thousands of detailed drawings and paintings, many never published, all based on careful, precise observation. Apparently, he made them to help in understanding the characteristics of different types of rocks, plants, colors, clouds, mountains, buildings, and townscapes. This understanding then informed the critical commentaries he wrote and published.

To prepare for *The Stones of Venice*, a book that influenced William Morris, Marcel Proust, Gandhi, and many others, Ruskin had scaffolding erected in the cathedral of San Marco so that he could draw the capital of every column as well as many other decorations [see sketch, next page]. This exercise gave him an intense, direct knowledge of gothic architecture that enabled him, in effect, to think himself into the experiences of the people who had made what he was looking at—experiences based in deep convictions and beliefs that Ruskin claimed were instinctively expressed in the carved decorations.

By comparison, he regarded the gothic revival architecture and manufactured products that surrounded

his life in the Victorian age as trivial and thoughtless, no matter how precisely made. Insofar as they revealed anything, it was a division of labor that had broken human beings into "small crumbs and fragments of life" [3].

I am especially intrigued by Ruskin's attempt, as an art critic, to identify different forms and functions of imagination because imagination is a phenomenon really accessible only to phenomenological approaches. Ruskin defined it as "the power of seeing with a vividness that would not have occurred to vague memory." He used both his own experience as a draftsman and his extensive knowledge of landscape painting to disclose three interconnected aspects of imagination, which he labelled descriptively as *associative*, *contemplative*, and *penetrative*. For Ruskin, seeing, thinking and imagination were faculties to be held in balance as a way to get to the heart of the matter [4].

Writing a little over a century later, Gaston Bachelard had the advantage of being familiar with phenomenological methods when he explored the types of spaces "seized upon" by the imagination. "Only phenomenology," he wrote, "can help us to restore the subjectivity of images, and to measure their fullness, their strength and their transubjectivity." His interpretive source was poetry rather than painting, and the poetic images he considered were specifically those of "felicitous space." These images led him to identify the imaginative functions of houses, attics, drawers, nests, shells, corners, and what he called "the

intimate immensity" implicit in each. Every place, no matter how small, is simultaneously discrete and an imagined microcosm of the world [5].

For her wonderful book, *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood,* Edith Cobb used autobiographical accounts of childhood to investigate the role of spontaneity and creative imagination in children's experiences of nature. What she found was that "Experience in childhood is never formal or abstract. Nature for the child is sheer sensory experience." But children grow up and evolve out of nature into culture. Similarly, experience of environment turns into thought about environment. For adults, environmental experience tends to be a diffuse continuum of "nature-body-mind-society" [6].

Environmental or, more specifically, geographical, experience is the theme of Eric Dardel's *L'Homme et la Terre*, published in 1952. I discovered this short book by chance in a university library some 40 years ago, and, to my knowledge, the work has rarely been referenced by anyone else. Dardel explores what he called *geographicality* (*géographicité*)—the relationships and experiences that bind human beings to the earth, which he considered to be fundamental aspects of human existence. To elaborate his ideas, he used the expressive writings of early 20th-century regional geographers that he filtered through his own experiences of different types of environments, including the sky, oceans, shorelines, mountains, barren plains, cities, and city streets. Dardel suggested that geographicality is mani-

fest in landscape—an assemblage that "is not, in its essence, made to be looked at, but is rather an insertion of people into the world, a place of life's struggle, the manifestation of our being and that of others" [7].

Phenomenological description can be based on a reflective analysis of one's own experiences, but this method can lead to narrow subjectivity and is, frankly, very difficult to write about. For me, it makes better sense to try to hone skills of seeing and observation and then to find ways to access the intersubjective experiences of others. In addition to their own careful observations, Ruskin worked from paintings, Bachelard from poetry, Cobb from autobiographies, and Dardel from geographical essays.

In my view, however, the quintessential example of phenomenological description based on the experiences of others is William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* a book that probably had a substantial impact on the thinking of both Heidegger and Wittgenstein. James wrote in the introduction that his book is an elaboration of "the feelings, acts and experience of individual [human beings] in their solitude, so far as they stand in relation to whatever they consider divine" [8].

James did not refer to his method as phenomenological. Instead, he called it either *empirical* or *pragmatic*, though the essence of his approach, like phenomenology, is to study direct experiences and to avoid theoretical speculation. His writings incorporate a survey of subjective phenomena recorded in literature by "articulate and self-conscious" people who had no special erudition but "lie along the beaten highway."

His descriptions of religious experience follow what he referred to as an existential point of view that embraces both unremarkable, everyday experiences of faith in different religions, and also mysticism, intense moments of conversion, and what he referred to as pathologies, exaggerations, and perversions. To grasp the variety of religious experiences, he focussed on particular cases and claimed, in an echo of Goethe and Ruskin, that "One must know concrete instances first. One can see no farther into a generalization than just

so far as one's previous acquaintance with particulars enables one to take it in."

For me, these different approaches to phenomenological description share a strong family resemblance because they address the question of how *this* phenomenon—be it place, landscape, buildings, space, nature, silence, imagination, being, religion, or the earth—is experienced.

These thinkers demonstrate that while there are different ways to answer this question, they all require the hard work of clear seeing and careful thinking. Early in his account of his life at Walden Pond (which I am inclined to regard as a phenomenological account of the practice of dwelling), Thoreau wrote:

Let us settle ourselves and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusions and appearance... till we come to hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call reality and say 'This is' [9].

Notes

1. E. Said, *Orientalism* (NY: Vintage Books, 1979), p. xxii.
2. J. W. von Goethe, *Italian Journey* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 1, p. 109 [originally 1786–88]. "Clear fresh eyes" is an apt summary of Goethe's general approach to science and nature, discussed in D. Seamon and A. Zajonc's *Goethe's Way of Science: A Phenomenology of Nature* (Albany, NY: State Univ. of New York Press, 1998).
3. J. Ruskin, "The Nature of Gothic," in *The Stones of Venice*, Volume II, Chapter VI, sections xv and xvi [1853].
4. J. Ruskin, "On Imagination," in *Modern Painters,* Volume II, Section 2 [1846]. In a later edition, Ruskin expressed misgivings about this particular interpretation but let it stand as an example of his thinking.
5. G. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. xv, p. xxxiii [originally 1958].
6. E. Cobb, *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood* (NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 28–29, p. 58, p. 65.
7. E. Dardel, *L'Homme et La Terre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954), pp. 1–2, p. 12, p. 41 [my translation].
8. W. James, 1902 *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1902). Quotations are from Lecture I and Lecture XX.
9. H. D. Thoreau, *Walden and Civil Disobedience*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), p. 67 [originally 1854].

Image, p. 56: John Ruskin, The South Side of the Basilica of St. Mark's, Venice, from the Loggia of the Doge's Palace, c. 1851, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, UK, pencil and watercolor.

Phenomenology, Philosophy, and Praxis

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> *What is Phenomenology? It may seem strange that this question has still to be asked half a century after the first works of Husserl. The fact remains that it has by no means been answered.*
>
> —Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception, 1945, p. vii*

A century has passed since philosopher and phenomenology founder Edmund Husserl published *Ideas*. Almost 70 years have passed since French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty wrote the words above, and his question continues to be answered in many different ways.

Some thinkers have interpreted phenomenology in light of new findings in the field of neuroscience and philosophy of mind, building new bridges between disciplines [1]. Others have taken phenomenology into the field of nursing and related health-care fields, "helping us to grasp the ordinary, the unexpected, and the ineffable elements of human experience in health and illness" [2]. Many researchers work in the field of environmental and architectural phenomenology, reflecting on the meaning of place, embodiment, building, dwelling, and home.

When I think of who has made a significant contribution to this field, David Seamon has a prominent place on the podium, given his prolific list of publications and extraordinary contribution to the community, provided via *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology*. He received a service award from the Environmental Research Design Association (EDRA) in 2006, celebrating his accomplishments in advancing phenomenological possibilities within the field of environmental design.

I am sure that I am not the only supporter of his work who feels that we could be providing him with a number of additional awards as well for his long career in support of thoughtful, phenomenological research. His determination to provide a forum for phenomenological reflection is not only impressive but always inspirational.

Other contemporary writers who regularly come to mind as key contributors to the field of environmental and architectural phenomenology include Bob Mugerauer; Ed Casey; Jeff Malpas; Edward Relph and, my most recent favorite, Henri Bortoft [3]. When I think of these researchers, I realize they have all taken the *philosophical* dimensions of phenomenology and *enlarged* those concepts through interdisciplinary dialogue.

Such a task is no small achievement. Classic philosophical texts, not to mention dense phenomenological works such as Heidegger's *Being and Time* or Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, open up vistas that are challenging to even the most sophisticated student of philosophy. Yet these thinkers I've highlighted manage to take those key classic texts and build upon them without compromising the integrity of the original philosophical message. To my mind, in doing so, they not only validate the mission of philosophy as "applied," but they take phenomenology into the lived world and truly change it for the better.

My sense is that phenomenology is *applied* philosophy, in the true sense of the term. As a method, it serves to remind us of the significance of the full range of meaning of human experience, including taken-for-

granted assumptions, values, and perceptions often forgotten in analytic frameworks. In attending to pre-thematic ways of being-in-the-world, phenomenology helps to comprehend human behavior in its fullness.

The larger task is to find ways in which phenomenology can take that understanding and provide guidance in the actual, deliberate design of better places. Challenges remain in terms of both revealing implicit paradigms, values, and experiences of place, as well as applying that knowledge to our city-building practices. There has been much accomplished since Husserl; at the same time, there is much more to be done. That promise ensures that phenomenological work will continue, particularly in the interdisciplinary "application" to specific urban-design challenges.

Let me end by extending my congratulations to *EAP* and to David Seamon for keeping the phenomenological project on the right track for decades. May he continue to do so for many years to come!

Notes

1. See the work of Evan Thompson, including *Waking, Dreaming, Being: New Light on the Self and Consciousness from Neuroscience, Meditation and Philosophy* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2014, forthcoming); and *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).
2. *Nursing and the Experience of Illness,* I. Madyar and J. Walton, eds. (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 1; see also P. Munhall, *Revisioning Phenomenology: Nursing and Health Science Research* (London: Jones and Barlett, 1994).
3. See R. Mugerauer, *Interpretations on Behalf of Place* (Albany, NY: State Univ. of New York Press, 1994); E. Casey, *Getting Back into Place* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2009); J. Malpas, *Place and Experience* (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999); E. Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976/2008); Henri Bortoft, *The Wholeness of Nature* (Hudson, NY: Lindesfarne Press, 1996); and *Taking Appearance Seriously* (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 2013).

In Celebration of a Conversation of Pathways

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Should I begin with an example drawn from field notes in the life of a practicing phenomenologist? The time and place: June, 2014, in Hildesheim, Germany [1]. Three paths:

- The path through the countryside from which one plunges into the trees at a certain spot, unexpectedly emerging at a small structure filled, for my German colleague Rolf, with the memory of the sounds made by a Japanese musician (sounds that accompanied the silence perfectly);
- The path that led us around the little lake, conversing all the while, after our dinner with Professor Ogawa;
- The path we took more than once (and at different times of day) between Rolf's home and the campus.

Already, several possible experiential structures emerge:

- Experiencing a path as a direction to a goal, even if the goal is not known in advance to someone taking this path for the first time;
- Experiencing a path that brings us back to where we started, even though we continually moved forward in a single direction;
- Experiencing a path linking two places—now one is the starting point and the other is the destination, then later in the day they exchange roles as we travel the path in the opposite direction.

In the last case, both Rolf's home and the places where the seminar met (including the grassy, tree-sheltered space behind the building as well as "our" room inside) work as "destinations," each at their own time. But neither destination is arbitrary or indifferent. They reflect our destinies, whether the seminar group as a whole is engaged in a collective experiment in phenomenological practice at the university, or Rolf and I are back home discussing phenomenology with the help of good wine and a full moon or a summer thunderstorm. In other words, when Rolf and I walk the pathway between his home and the campus, this makes sense for us because we are also fellow sojourners following a pathway of inquiry and exploration we call "phenomenology."

This lived connectedness stands out even more clearly for me when I recall the memorable night that five of us from five different countries gathered for dinner, an occasion not merely for some good German beer but for outstanding camaraderie and much laughter. On one level, we were at the restaurant in that particular small hotel because it was where two of us were staying as well as being "on the way" home for the rest of us.

More profoundly, however, we were together at that specific place and time because our life-paths had converged, coming together not only through a shared commitment to the phenomenological tradition, but through our complementary work with the lived body, movement, and dance. With such colleagues, one can embrace at a doorway—a threshold—to say goodbye at a time of literal, physical parting, yet remain companions (whether for a while or for a lifetime) on the "path with a heart."

Here it is clear that, even though I initially set out to describe a path as a feature of the natural and built worlds, I find myself describing a multi-dimensional experience in which the possibility of following a path of phenomenological practice plays as great a role as the bricks, gravel, and earth of the visible paths beneath our feet. In what follows, I accordingly explore some resonances between certain experiential possibilities of paths as elements of lived landscapes and similar structures emerging in the lived experience of phenomenology itself—or more specifically, phenomenological method (*methodos,* from *hodos,* way, journey)—as a path [2].

As a first example, consider someone walking along and coming to a fork in the path. This path branches off in two directions, offering two ways to proceed, and to go on at all, one must make a decision (Bloomer and Moore 1977, 86). One example of this structure in phenomenological practice involves a fundamental choice of method: Husserl's path of description, or Heidegger's path of interpretation? [3].

Here, it is striking that the notion of "pathway" is often used to characterize Heidegger's life and work (e.g., Pöggeler 1989). Thus, it is entirely fitting that the motto for his *Gesamtausgabe*—the project devoted to publishing all of his writings—speaks of "pathways, not works" [4], especially since Heidegger himself often refers to paths in a number of connections. Some examples:

❖ He uses a particular country path of his youth as an occasion for interpretation (1981);
❖ He sets a conversation in motion along a different country path (1966);
❖ He draws on the word "pathmarks" as the title for one collection of essays (1998);
❖ In the original German title of another collection (2002), he recovers, beneath the conventional use of the word *Holzwege* to indicate being led astray (being on the wrong track), its original meaning—paths leading into a forest or wood.

In the last example, he uses the original understanding of *Holzwege* to suggest paths that simply lead where they lead, even if the region they wander through contains no traditionally canonized "destination." He even links the notion of language as a "path" or "way" *(Weg)* with the Tao (1971a, 92f.) and contrasts the act of traversing a path already there with the work of clearing a way (as across a snow-covered field) and keeping it open, bringing it forth as a path for the first time (1971a, 129ff.).

When we set forth in the pregiven world, it is the path itself that walks us, so to speak, requiring us to adjust our gait with its steppingstones and stairs, inviting us to move swiftly ahead or to ramble and linger. But whether the path was originally shaped by the erosion of stones, by animals seeking water, or by landscape architects, it has a history, encompassing an inaugural establishment or pathmaking; the gradual consecration of the path through repeated use; and

perhaps a further phase in which a path no longer taken becomes overgrown, its destination forgotten or irrelevant, the world it gathers no longer shining forth [5], for in a Heideggerian interpretation, a path, once made, only keeps its world alive if we hear the call of this pathway (1981).

For Husserl, however, what first stands out is the need for the initial pathmaking wherever there are no pregiven paths to guide us. On more than one occasion, he turns to the image of the explorer of the "trackless wilderness" of an entirely new continent (5/154; cf. 3–1/224) [6] to describe his discovery of the "immense fields" of investigation (20–1/303) opened up by the new paths and directions of phenomenological research (20–1/272, 315).

In the process, he delineates several important features of phenomenology as a pathway of inquiry:

❖ When we set forth on the path of phenomenological work, we do not know in advance what the investigation will deliver (HM8/347f.): The path proves its practicality and fruitfulness as a way to proceed only when we actually take it (34/291).
❖ We necessarily proceed step by step (24/445; 20–1/273, 286; 8/169), while at the same time remaining cognizant of the larger horizon (e.g., the concrete whole we ultimately want to explicate), since it is what orients our progress every step of the way (34/296) [7].
❖ As a result, the unity of the path consists of its being a path toward a goal—but as Husserl tells us in the same breath, the goal may not lie at the end of the path, but in the journey itself (15/419).

Furthermore, Husserl's turn to the figure of the explorer makes it clear that once a path has been made, it becomes intersubjectively accessible. It is true that there are many difficulties to overcome when first penetrating into the "new world" opened up by phenomenological practice (3–1/5)—Husserl refers in this context to "the path of thorny investigations" (17/251; cf. 8/169) requiring "patient and constant *work*" (HM6/6). Once a way has been made, however, a second explorer can follow in the footsteps of the first (20–1/325).

It is here that Husserl emphatically identifies the task shared by both explorers and phenomenologists: namely, the task of *description* (20–1/326). If one actually travels to the new land, one can remain unmoved by criticism from geographers who never bothered to

make the journey (5/154f.) because the explorer's reports (like those of the phenomenologist who turns to the phenomena themselves) are based on the firsthand evidence of actual experience.

It is true that the observations made by both the phenomenologist and the geographical explorer can be incomplete so that distinctions are missed, as when the explorer interprets what will turn out to be two different rivers as parts of one (20–1/322). But subsequent explorers traveling along the first explorer's path may improve the descriptions (20–1/325, 3–1/224). And not only that: What is opened up by the first path is a realm of inquiry where *"other paths* are possible" (17/11).

For the phenomenologist, then, the "goal" is the exploration of the entire terrain of this new field, with the field of phenomenological work conceived as a place where new explorers taking new pathways will necessarily discover new features of the landscape or reveal new aspects of features already found (20–1/325). Eventually, once the main geographical structures of this new land have been revealed, future generations are able to walk the paths together (cf. 1/48) and to carry out a thorough cultivation that goes beyond the initial explorer's efforts (5/161). In each case, what is required is not merely knowledge "about" the goals and the methods (the pathways to reach these goals): "we must walk the paths themselves" (24/445).

This becomes clear when we consider various ways in which a path can fail. For instance, we may find our path blocked by an unsurpassable obstacle. Then there is the case of a path that fails by leading you away from where you wanted to go, or to alter the example, one might be well on one's way, only to find out that the path is leading you toward somewhere you really do not want to go.

What these three scenarios share, however, is that someone was already underway on some path, and from the standpoint of a rigorous descriptive phenomenology, a pathway can also fail to be experienced as a pathway by *not being taken.* It is true that we may recognize a formation as a "path" when we see it on a map, but in such a context all points of the path are given simultaneously and no direction of travel is privileged.

In contrast, for situated experiencers who are not simultaneously "here" and "there" but continually bear their lived "here" within themselves, the experience of actually taking a path involves being at a certain location at each moment (whether at a beginning or already underway) and proceeding in a certain direction (even if there is no fixed and pregiven goal or no discernible end as long as one lives). Moreover, it is true that the literal pathways we encounter in everyday life exist in an already-constituted space and take measurable time to traverse.

Yet if we are actually to "walk the paths themselves" (24/445), rather than merely talking or thinking about doing so, our ongoing experience will necessarily display the most fundamental structure governing primal temporalization, primal spatialization, and primal motility: "this/more," as "this" now spills over into the immediately "next" now, and as each fresh actualization of my kinaesthetic possibilities, of my capability for "more" movement, opens "more" space—the immediately adjacent stretch of the path my movement is taking (Behnke 2009, §5.1). In this way, a path is *a promise redeemed step by step,* and the only way a path can keep its promise is if we correlatively accept its invitation and walk the path itself, following wherever it leads.

Along the way, however, we find side paths, intersections, byways, paths that lead to other paths, signposts to distant destinations, and so on. There are also places where pathways meet—places celebrated as special nodes of activity, interchange, and mutual enrichment and influence (cf. Alexander et al. 1977, pattern 30).

Yet this is also true of phenomenological pathways. For me, *Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology* is not only a nexus where many pathways, coming from many different directions, can meet, but an inspiration for those exploring the experiential dimension to set forth on pathways of their own, secure in the knowledge that there is more than one way to go about the task.

By providing a forum for all such explorers' reports of their journey, *EAP* has become a place that is hospitable to a genuine conversation among pathways. For decades, *EAP* Editor David Seamon has served as the curator of this place of many meetings, the host of these

lively, diverse discussions. On behalf of the community that this place has gathered, I therefore offer you, David, our most grateful thanks.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Rolf Elberfeld for inviting me to the University of Hildesheim to share my work as part of his series of seminars on experimental and transformative phenomenology.

2. Here, it is not possible to provide a complete phenomenology of paths; for some starting places, see Norberg-Schulz 1971, ch. 2; Alexander et al. 1977, patterns 30, 36, 52, 120, 121; Bloomer and Moore 1977, ch. 8; Seamon 1979, 28, themes 4 and 14. It is likewise impossible to present a full account of the extensive use of the figure of the "path" or "way" in Husserl and Heidegger.

3. See Delius 1952–53. Of course, the situation can be more complex, e.g., a thinker can use both methods, or other approaches, such as Goethean phenomenology, may come into play.

4. Cf., e.g., Seamon 1979, 29: "Phenomenology is as much a process as a product ...."

5. See Heidegger 1981 on a path gathering a world; on the world gathered by a bridge—which for Norberg-Schulz is "a particularly expressive path" (1971, 26; cf. 53f.)—see Heidegger 1971b, 152ff.

6. All references in this form refer to Husserl 1950ff., cited by volume/page number; citations from Husserl 2001ff. follow the same convention using the abbreviation HM.

7. Cf. Casey 1993, 278ff., on a kind of "double-tracking" where at each stage of my journey I experience my current "here" in relation to the "there" I'm headed for; see also Alexander et al. 1977, pattern 120, on experiencing paths in terms of intermediate goals.

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Environmental & Architectural
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Published three times a year, *EAP* is a forum and clearing house for research and design that incorporate a qualitative approach to environmental and architectural experience.

One key concern of *EAP* is design, education, and policy supporting and enhancing natural and built environments that are beautiful, alive, and humane. Realizing that a clear conceptual stance is integral to informed research and design, the editors emphasize phenomenological approaches but also cover related styles of qualitative research. *EAP* welcomes essays, letters, reviews, conference information, and so forth.

Exemplary Themes

- The nature of environmental and architectural experience;
- Sense of place, including place identity and place attachment;
- Architectural and landscape meaning;
- The environmental, architectural, spatial, and material dimensions of lifeworlds;
- Changing conceptions of space, place, and nature;
- Home, dwelling, journey, and mobility;
- Environmental encounter and its relation to environmental responsibility and action;
- Environmental design as place making;
- The role of everyday things—furnishings, tools, clothing, interior design, landscape features, and so forth—in supporting people's sense of environmental wellbeing;
- Sacred space, landscape, and architecture;
- The practice of a *lived* environmental ethic.

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