

Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology

Volume 21
Number 2

Article 1

3-20-2010

Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology. Vol. 21, No. 2

Kansas State University. Architecture Department

Follow this and additional works at: <https://newprairiepress.org/eap>

Vol. 21, No. 2, Spring 2010 (includes "items of interest," "citations received," a book review by Eva-Maria Simms, essays from Julio Bermudez & Dennis Skocz, and poems by Vicki King).

Recommended Citation

Kansas State University. Architecture Department (2010) "Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology. Vol. 21, No. 2," *Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology*. Vol. 21: No. 2.

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology* by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact cads@k-state.edu.



Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology

Vol. 21 ▪ No. 2

ISSN 1083-9194

www.arch.ksu.edu/seamon/EAP.html Spring ▪ 2010

This *EAP* includes conference information as well as one book review, two essays, and two poems. *EAP*-sponsored conference sessions will be taking place at the annual meetings of the **Environmental Design Research Association** (June 5); the **International Human Research Conference** (August 4–8); and the **International Association of Environmental Philosophy** (November 8)—see pages 2–4.

In this issue, psychologist **Eva-Maria Simms** reviews the new MIT edition of Goethe's 1790 *Metamorphosis of Plants*. Next, architect **Julio Bermudez** overviews a phenomenology of extraordinary architectural experience, a project he introduced in *EAP*'s spring 2008 issue. Third, philosopher **Dennis Skocz** investigates how the lived fact that phenomenology founder Edmund Husserl's study was heated by a coal stove might offer insight into current ways of thinking about weather, climate change, and the thermal environment. We conclude with two poems by artist and writer **Vicki King**.

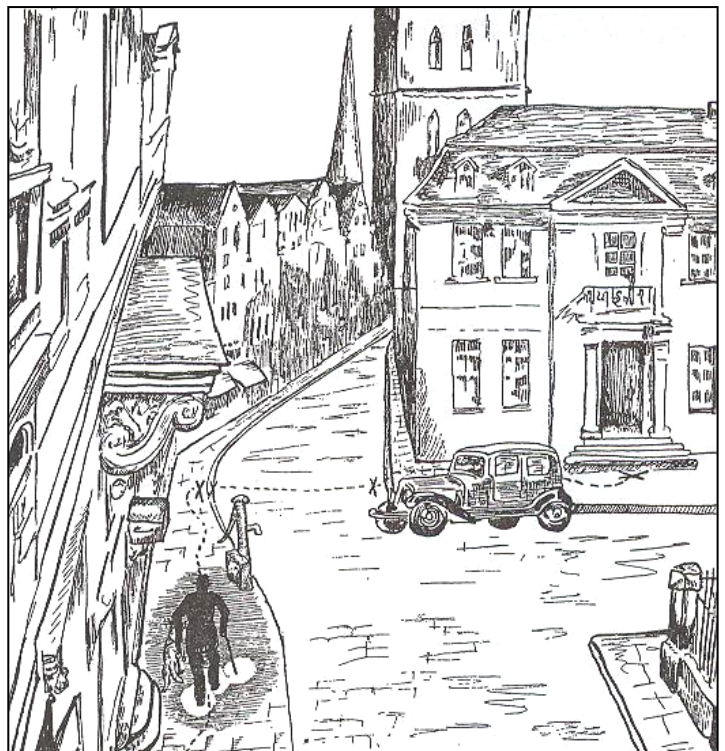
New Edition of Casey Book

Indiana University Press recently published a 2nd edition of philosopher **Edward Casey's** *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, first published in 1993. This new edition includes a new introduction as well as two additional chapters: "How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time" (originally published in S. Feld and K.H. Basso's 1996 *Senses of Place*); and "Smooth Spaces and Rough-Edged Places" (originally published in a 1998 issue of *Review of Metaphysics*).

Drawing, right: Though not directly phenomenological, biologist Jakob von Uexküll's *Stroll Through the Worlds of Animals and Men* (1934) is one of the first discussions of lived differences among lifeworlds, both of human beings and of other creatures. Brett Buchanan's recently-published *Onto-*

Ethologies (see p. 6) examines how three philosophers—Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze—have drawn on Uexküll's thinking to consider the ontology of living beings.

Entitled "Blind man and his dog," the drawing below is one of the many intriguing images in *Stroll*. Uexküll writes: "The best way to find out that no two human *Umwelten* [lifeworlds] are the same is to have yourself led through unknown territory by someone familiar with it.... [For example], the blind man's world is a very limited one: it extends only as far as he can feel his way with his feet and cane.... His dog, however, must guide him home over a certain path. The difficulty in training the dog lies in introducing into the dog's *Umwelt* specific perceptual cues which serve the blind man's interests, not the dog's. Thus the route along which the dog leads the blind man must be plotted along a curve of obstacles against which the man might stumble. It is especially hard to teach a dog the meaning of a mailbox or an open window—to give it perceptual cues for things which it would normally pass by unheeded. The edge of the curve over which the blind man might stumble is equally hard to introduce into the dog's world, since under ordinary circumstances a freely running dog scarcely notices it."



Donors, 2010

We are grateful to the following readers contributing more than the base subscription for 2010.

David Adams	John Baker
Arnold Berleant	Julio Bermudez
Rosmarie Bogner	Margaret Boschetti
Vincent Canizaro	Linda Carson
Louise Chawla	Clare Cooper Marcus
Andrew Cohill	Marion Dumont
Marie Gee	Kirk Gastinger
Robert Habiger	Steen Halling
Alvin Holm	Arlene Hopkins
Susan Ingham	Sara Ishikawa
David Kermani	Karen Kho
Evelyn Koblenz	Patricia Locke
Ted Lowitz	David Murphy
The Nature Institute	Anne Niemiec
Juhani Pallasmaa	Doug Paterson
Lubomir Popov	Carolyn Prorok
Leanne Rivlin	Madeleine Rothe
Hanalei Rozen	David Saile
Gwendolyn Scott	Sema Serin
Harvey Sherman	Eva Simms
Heather Thoma	Max Underwood
Ian Wight	

Items of Interest

Environmental Philosophy is a peer-reviewed professional philosophy journal publishing articles in all areas of environmental theory, including ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics, theology, ecofeminism, and eco-phenomenology. The journal editors welcome submissions, including feature articles (6,000–7,000 words), discussion papers, and book reviews. www.ephilosophy.uoregon.edu

The **Nature Institute**, in Harlemville, New York, will again be hosting summer programs in Goethean science, including the week-long seminar, “Experiential Learning in Science,” July 4–10. Sessions on “phenomenological science” focus on “characteristics and qualities of air through demonstrations and practical exercises.” www.natureinstitute.org.

The 24th Western conference of the **Timber Framers Guild** takes place April 22–25, 2010, at Lake Coeur d’Alene Resort in northern Idaho. Events include paper presentations and workshops like “Making a Ching Dynasty Dou Gong Bracket Set.” info@timberframe.org

Powers of Place

The **Powers of Place Initiative (PoPI)** works to gather, organize, and make visible knowledge, people, and organizations involved with places and place making. The group is a network of people with diverse perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds brought together by the Fetzer Institute “to catalyze a new field of study and practice based on the premise that right relationship between people and the places where they gather and inhabit offers the potential for transformative action toward what is needed at this moment in history.” The main areas of activity are: *research*, or exploring new frontiers; *resources*, or providing tools; and *connection*, or amplifying the field. www.powersofplace.com.

PoPI is looking for people interested in conducting small research projects into the dynamics of the relationship between place, space and environment and human groups. Small honorariums are available for studies aligned with this intention. For more information, contact **Renee Levi** at renee@powersofplace.com.

EAP Panels at IHSR Conference

There will be two *EAP*-sponsored panels at the annual meeting of the **International Human Research Conference** to be held in Seattle, August 4–8. The first panel is “Phenomenologies of Place, Environment, and the Natural World.” Panelists include geographer **Angela Loder**; biologist **Leon Chartrand**; philosopher **Robert Mugerauer**; and nursing researcher **Francine Buckner**. The second panel is “Toward a Transpersonal Phenomenology of Nature: Conceptual and Applied Possibilities of Goethean Science.” Panelists include psychologist **Eva-Maria Simms**; German scholar **Fred Amrine**; and environmental historian **Gordon Miller, Jr.** www.seattleu.edu/artsci/psychology/Default.aspx?id=6314

EAP/IAEP Conference Session

Philosopher **Ingrid Leman Stefanovic** and *EAP* editor **David Seamon** have organized a special Monday-morning *EAP* session (Nov. 8) for the annual meeting of the **International Association for Environmental Philosophy (IAEP)**, to be held in Montreal, November, 6–8, 2010, immediately fol-

lowing the annual meetings of **SPEP** (Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy) and **SPHS** (Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences). The session title is “Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology: From Wildness to the Artifactual.” Presenters are: **Sarah King**, Wilfrid Laurier University (“In Search of Wildness in the Natural City”); **Angela Loder**, University of Toronto (“Cracks in the Pavement: Exploring Spaces of Possibility and Release in the Modernist City”); **Tamara Stefanovic**, University of Toronto (“Heidegger and Animals: a Re-Thinking of Worldhood and ‘Self’”); **David Seamon**, Kansas State University (“Crying at a Painting: James Elkins’ *Pictures and Tears* as a Phenomenology of Heightened Encounter and Caspar David Friedrich’s Landscape Paintings as One Lived Example”); **Robert Mugerauer**, University of Washington, Seattle (“Animating Ecological Change: Visualizing Scenarios”); and **Ingrid Lemana Stefanovic**, University of Toronto (“Schools My Father Built: Some Phenomenological Reflections”).

www.environmentalphilosophy.org.

EAP/EDRA Session on Alexander

An all-afternoon symposium on architect **Christopher Alexander** will take place Saturday, June 5, 2010, at the annual meeting of the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA), in Washington, DC. Organized by anthropologist **Jenny Quillen** and *EAP* editor **David Seamon**, the symposium is jointly sponsored by *EAP* and the Building Process. Conference information can be found at the EDRA website at: www.edra.org. Symposium participants, paper titles, and abstracts are as follows.

Using Alexander's Pattern Language to Design an Addition for F. L. Wright's First Unitarian Church in Madison, Wisconsin

Tom Kubala, Principal, Kubala Washatko Architects, Cedarburg, WI

In early 2005, The First Unitarian Society of Madison, Wisconsin, embarked upon a four-year effort to upgrade their facilities. The original Meeting House, constructed in 1951 and designed by Frank Lloyd Wright to accommodate 150 parishioners, was deteriorating while attempting to serve a burgeoning congregation of 1400 members.

Earlier attempts by the congregation to agree on a design approach had failed. Drawing on Christopher Alexander’s design approach, our architectural firm of Kubala Washatko Architects carefully organized a congregation-wide “pattern” writing exercise to identify the critical issues requiring resolution by the eventual design.

The transparency of the process allowed a broad range of concerns to be heard, reviewed, and approved by many layers of stakeholders, including the congregants, church leadership, neighbors, municipal administrators, friends of the Meeting House, State Historical Society lien holders, National Landmark administrators, and a national FLW advisory Board.

Patterns allowed the essential nature of the addition’s design to be maintained, even though wide swings in funding potential battered the project’s scope and budget. Eventually, these patterns became what everyone relied on as the vicissitudes of a highly complex project required continual creative and practical adjustments.

The Geos Net-Zero-Energy Neighborhood: Patterns for Sustainable Urbanism & Links with the Work of Christopher Alexander

Michael Tavel, Michael Tavel Architects, Denver

In this presentation, I overview the Geos Net-Zero-Energy Neighborhood. Breaking ground this winter in Arvada, Colorado, this project will be the largest net-zero-energy, urban mixed-use neighborhood in the United States. Earth and sun power will completely sustain the community’s energy needs and replace all fossil fuels; innovative sustainability patterns, typologies, and systems are deeply interwoven with classic town-planning components.

A winner of a national Honor Award for Analysis and Planning from the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), Geos is notable for the multi-scaled symbiotic relationships among urban design, architecture, and landscape. Passive solar orientation is optimized with urban density via carefully selected building/lot/block typologies.

The town plan is intertwined with natural systems, storm-water-fed landscapes, and civic places. Rain and snow melt feed street-tree rain gardens, fruit-tree terraces, percolation parks, plazas, and community gardens. Energy is generated from ground-source loop fields, solar thermal panels, and photovoltaics on every rooftop.

The architecture utilizes high-performance, “passive-house” building envelopes with heat-recovery ventilators in lieu of furnaces. The overall town plan aims to foster bio-civic relationships with natural processes, neighborhood ecology, and environmental stewardship.

As one of the lead designers of Geos, I studied and worked under Christopher Alexander in the late 1980s. The project is a relevant case study not only for sustainability patterns in urban design but also for a larger discussion of the relevance of Alexander’s *Pattern Language* and *Nature of Order* to environmental-design education and contemporary practice.

Using Alexander's Principles and Methods to Revive the Commuter-Crossroads Community of Fairview Village, Pennsylvania

Matthew Schelly, Montgomery County Planning Commission, Norristown, PA

This presentation overviews the process of assisting local leaders and residents of Fairview Village, Pennsylvania, in developing a plan to transform their auto-oriented, commuter-crossroads village into a more livable place, using Christopher Alexander's principles and methods.

Located on Philadelphia's suburban fringe, Fairview Village (approx. pop. 700) is the largest of three villages in a 10,000-acre rural township surrounded by suburban sprawl. The village is at the crossroads of two two-lane commuter routes for many of these suburbanites.

In following Alexander's approach to place design, I began with my own ideas for village redevelopment but then enlisted input from the Building Process Alliance—an on-line community of design and planning professionals involved in an Alexander approach to architectural and community design.

Drawing on their expertise and responses from Fairview Village leaders, I am guiding a design to improve Fairview Village's sense of place and community. In my presentation, I describe how the village design has developed so far and hope to involve symposium attendees in a discussion of ideas as to how the design might further evolve.

More than just a Home: Using Alexander's Discoveries to Create a Living Environment

Stavroula Conrad, Architectural Designer, Neosys Corporation, Hartwood, VA; **Mark Eitt**, Independent Home Builder, Mark Eitt Construction, King George, VA

A designer and builder share their experience implementing Christopher Alexander's genetic code of built environments, generating a house and successful home environment in Northern Virginia. In using Alexander's dynamic design and construction process—which allows for design decisions unfolding in a natural sequence through real time and real space—the designer and builder were themselves transformed. The process resulted in not only a very beautiful, living structure but enriched the lives of those designing, building, and inhabiting it. It is especially fascinating to observe visitors' reactions as they experience the home for the first time.

The process of *designing* a house, or any building, has generally become isolated, separated and alienated from the process of *building* it. This disconnect has led to the often strained relationships between designer and builder, with the resulting deep internal tension being directly transferred to the buildings themselves and consequently to the human beings occupying them. This project demonstrates how Alexander's

process enhances human life at many levels and can heal the antagonistic relationship between designer and builder. Through Alexander's approach to designing and building, a more beautiful built environment can result.

Silence, Exile, and Cunning: Beatific Expression & Alexander's Nature of Order

Steve Madison, Madison+Partners Architecture, Dallas, TX

In this presentation, I explore Christopher Alexander's public acknowledgement that "the presence of God in matter is inevitable." I argue that this recognition is both brave and necessary if architecture's claim to truth is ever to surpass mere political didactic and become deeply relevant to ordinary human beings who struggle more than ever, in a virtual world, with their origin, identity, and ultimate destination.

I suggest that, by honoring the mystery of what Alexander identifies as the "eternal I AM," architecture might surpass polity to become a sort of magic carpet—the warp, eternity; the weft, time; woven alone in silence and with cunning by the architect who knows well the stinging lash of the critic, the hard stones of the pitiless economy, and the betraying kiss of the traitorous client or colleague.

I contend that Alexander knows the craft of the architect-weaver and speaks for the power of the carpet to transport us beyond the myopic realm of our cultural and familial epistemology to an encounter with the Beatific—safe passage to sacred ground and perhaps a chance at authentic life.

Exploring a More Modest Framework for Alexander's Insights in Nature of Order

Jenny Quillien, Faculty, Laboratory of Anthropology, Santa Fe, NM

In *The Luminous Ground*, volume 4 of *The Nature of Order*, Christopher Alexander elaborates a vast cosmology about the nature of the universe, its orderliness, and God. This presentation entertains the possibility that Alexander's material can be equally well "housed" within frameworks more modest and better documented.

Following an idea first proposed by architect David Week ("A Hermeneutic Approach to the Practice of Architecture in a Foreign Culture," doctoral thesis, University of Sydney, 2000), I review Alexander's 15 properties of wholeness as a "re-invention" of image-schemata of lived space, most concisely described by M. L. Johnson in *The Body in the Mind* (Chicago Univ. Press, 1987).

In addition, the "I" described by Alexander in volume 4 will be reconsidered in the light of anthropologists Robert Plant Armstrong's phenomenological explanation of artifacts embodying what Armstrong calls "affecting presence."

Citations Received

Annmarie Adams, 2008. *Medicine by Design: The Architect and the Modern Hospital, 1893-1943*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press.

This architect examines how “hospital design influenced the development of 20th-century medicine and demonstrates the importance of these specialized buildings in the history of architecture.”

David Aims & Richard Wagner, eds., 2009. *Design and Historic Preservation: The Challenge of Compatibility*. Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press.

The 14 papers in this collection focus on “a critical look at design in historic preservation.” Questions explored include: “How much does a successful project depend on the approach taken and how much on the skill of the designer? Must new design be subservient to existing fabric to be compatible? What enrichment does a contrasting new design bring to a district that compatibility does not? To what degree do the specific attributes and character of an historic district or property affect the nature of new design? Do guidelines stifle or encourage creative design? How flexible should guidelines and their interpretation be? What are the virtues of highly specific guidelines? Of general guidelines? How specific should guidelines be to a community or district? How can guidelines avoid fostering inaccurate, historicizing treatments? What are the most effective ways to address the use of historical versus substitute materials?”

Thomas Barrie, 2010. *The Sacred In-Between: The Mediating Roles of Architecture*. NY: Routledge.

This architect interprets sacred architecture through “the recognition of its role as an ‘in-between’ place.” Includes chapters entitled “The Middle Ground of Interpretation: Phenomenology, Hermeneutics and the Sensory Experience of Architecture” (chap. 2); “Earth and Sky: Place and Primordial Architecture” (chap. 6); and “Ordering the World: The Symbolism of Proportion and Geometry” (chap. 8).

Peter Berry, 2009. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. NY: Palgrave.

This English professor provides a lucid overview of major conceptual perspectives in literary and cultural theory, including structuralism, poststructuralism, postmodernism, and psychoanalytic, feminist, gay/lesbian, and Marxist criticism. Berry includes a chapter on “ecocriticism,” which is said to “re-read major literary works from an ecocentric perspective, with particular attention to the representation of the natural world”—see sidebar, right.

Arnold Berleant, 2010. *Sensibility and Sense: The Aesthetic Transformation of the Human World*. Thorverton, UK: Imprint Academic.

This philosopher “offers a philosophically comprehensive account of humans’ social and cultural embeddedness encountered, recognized, and fulfilled as an aesthetic mode of experience. Extending the range of aesthetic experience from the stone of the earth’s surface to the celestial sphere, the book focuses on the aesthetic as a dimension of social experience.”

“Nature really exists...”

Perhaps the most fundamental point... is that ecocritics reject the notion (common to most of the other theories considered in this book) that everything is socially and/or linguistically constructed.... For the ecocritic, nature really exists, out there beyond ourselves, not needing to be ironised as a concept by enclosure within knowing inverted commas, but actually present as an entity which affects us, and which we can affect, perhaps fatally, if we mistreat it. Nature, then, isn’t reducible to a concept which we conceive as part of our cultural practice (as we might conceive a deity, for instance, and project it out onto the universe).

Theory in general tends to see our external world as socially and linguistically constructed, as ‘always already’ textualised into ‘discourse’, but ecocriticism calls this long-standing theoretical orthodoxy into question, sometimes rather impatiently, as in Kate Soper’s frequently-quoted remark (in her seminal book *What is Nature?* p. 151) that ‘It isn’t language which has a hole in its ozone layer’.

Ecocriticism, then, repudiates the foundational belief in ‘constructedness’ which is such an important aspect of literary theory. Of course, that belief in the universality of social constructedness was always vulnerable to the objection that if true it would necessarily be unknowable (since ‘everything’ would include the idea itself that ‘everything is socially and linguistically constructed’).

In the 1980s, social-construction gangs seemed to be everywhere, digging up and replacing the academic sidewalks, and for the most part their work is still in place, constituting the main academic thoroughfare in the Humanities. So the difficulty of either verifying or falsifying the view that everything is socially or linguistically constructed has not diminished its grip on day-to-day debate about literary theory. Nevertheless, the essence of ecocritics’ intervention in theory has been to challenge it

—from Peter Berry’s *Beginning Theory*, p. 243

A. F. Blackwell, C. M. Eckert, L. L. Bucciarelli, & C. F. Earl, 2009. Witnesses to Design: A Phenomenology of Comparative Design. *Design Issues*, vol. 25, no. 1 (winter), pp. 36-47.

Drawing on the evidence from six research workshops involving 24 designers from various professions (including three architects and two product designers), these researchers aim “to develop a rich understanding of recurring [design] behaviors across different domains...” They conclude that “the most striking finding... was the recognition by our witnesses [i.e., the participating designers] of the commonality of their experience.”

Brett Buchanan, 2008. *Onto-Ethologies: The Animal Environments of Uexküll, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

This study examines how three major philosophers—Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze—have entertained the thought of biologist Jakob von Uexküll (1864–1944), particularly his *A Stroll Through the Environments of Animals and Men* (1934), which, from one perspective, might be called a “proto-phenomenology” of the lived worlds of animals. Buchanan emphasizes that these three philosophers in particular found in Uexküll’s portrayal “a compelling case for an ontology of living beings.” Uexküll wrote: “We no longer regard animals as mere objects, but as subjects whose essential activity consists of perceiving and acting. We thus unlock the gates that lead to other realms, for all that a subject perceives becomes his perceptual world and all that he does, his active world. Perceptual and active worlds together form a closed unit, the *Umwelt* [lifeworld]... [T]here are, then purely subjective realities in the *Umwelten*; and even the things that exist objectively in the surroundings never appear there as such.” The drawing, “Blind man and his dog,” on the front page of this *EAP* issue is one of the many striking illustrations in Uexküll’s *Stroll*.

Elizabeth Burton & Lynne Mitchell, 2006. *Inclusive Street Design*. London: Architectural Press.

This architect and planner examine the urban design needs of older persons and the less abled. The book is organized around six design principles identified as familiarity, legibility, distinctiveness, accessibility, comfort, and safety.

Tom Butler & George Wuerthner, eds., 2009. *Plundering Appalachia: The Tragedy of Mountaintop-Removal Coal Mining*. San Rafael, CA: Earth Aware.

Described as “a searing expose of the greatest environmental calamity now being wreaked upon America as the coal industry turns a formerly beautiful landscape into an undeclared

national energy sacrifice zone.” Large-format aerial photographs and essays by Wendell Berry, David Orr, and others.

Taylor Carman, 2008. *Merleau-Ponty*. London: Routledge.

An accessible introduction to the difficult ideas of phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, including a penetrating chapter on “body and world.” In regard to the notion of *flesh* in Merleau-Ponty’s later work, Carman writes: “The underlying ontological foundation of sensory receptivity and motor spontaneity is what Merleau-Ponty now calls *flesh* (*chair*).... [Flesh is] the *sensibility* of things, the perceptibility both of the perceptual environment and of ourselves as perceivers—the *visibility* of vision, the *tangibility* of touch, the *exposure* of anything to which the world itself can be exposed in experience, including the bodily sense or experience of motor intentionality.... [Body and world] are not two distinct things, but sinews of a common flesh, threads in the same fabric, related to one another not as situation and reaction..., but as a single woven texture, like the overlapping and interlocking lizards and birds in an Escher drawing.”

Richard Coyne, 2008. *The Tuning of Place: Social Spaces and Pervasive Digital Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

How do digital devices like cell phones, iPods, and GPS systems play a role in how people use spaces? This professor of architectural computing argues that “these ubiquitous devices and the networks that support them become the means of making incremental adjustments within spaces”—what he calls “the tuning of place.” He highlights various “tuning processes” that include intervention, calibration, wedges, habits, rhythm, tags, taps, tactics, thresholds, noise, and interference.

Allan Doig, 2008. *Liturgy and Architecture*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

This book examines the relationship between liturgy and architecture from the early church to the Middle Ages. Special attention is given to the Abbey of Cluny and the origins of Gothic architecture at St. Denis.

Kim Dovey, 2010. *Becoming Places: Urbanism/Architecture/Identity/Power*. London: Routledge.

This architect works to “rethink conceptions of ‘place’ and to move on from the view of place as essentially closed and stabilizing. Another [focus] is the nexus of place to power; the ways that the sense of place is inextricably wrapped up with questions of authority and authenticity ...” Draws heavily on the ideas of Deleuze and Bourdieu and is highly critical of “foundational” phenomenologists like Heidegger.

Linda Finlay, 2009. Debating Phenomenological Research Methods, *Phenomenology & Practice*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 6-25.

In this perceptive and helpful discussion of current phenomenological research methods, this psychologist addresses six questions: (1) How stringently should 'phenomenology' be defined? (1) Is the phenomenological aim normative description or idiographic analysis? (3) To what degree should description involve interpretation? (4) Should researcher subjectivity be emphasized or set aside? (5) Is phenomenology both science and art? (6) Is phenomenology a modernist or postmodernist project? Or neither? Or both? For selections from Finlay's article, see sidebar, right.

Andrew Foran & Margaret Olson, 2008. Seeking Pedagogical Places, *Phenomenology & Practice*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 24-48.

This article focuses "on significant relations between teachers, students, and the various places in which they appear to find pedagogical thoughtfulness." Drawing on teacher accounts, the authors conclude that "different places are appropriate for engaging in different kinds of pedagogical activities with students; activities can be experienced as in place or out-of-place; [and] dwelling pedagogically is being absorbed, being able to dwell authentically in a learning experience without interruption or distraction."

Lisa Foster, 1997. *Access to the Historic Environment: Meeting the Needs of Disabled People*. Shaftesbury, Dorset, UK: Donhead.

This disabled architect provides "case studies of the most varied types of historic building—everything from town halls to a converted prison." Foster writes: "I know at first hand... how difficult it is to provide satisfactory access in historic environments. You might say—and I have often said—that the more valuable and historic a building is, the more difficult it will be to solve the problems of accessibility."

Jan Gehl & Lars Gemzøe, 2006. *New City Spaces*. Copenhagen: Danish Architectural Press.

This book presents "examples of public space strategies as well as projects illustrating developments in the area of public space architecture." Case studies from around the world include 39 public spaces; 3 streets; and 36 squares. The two American examples are Pioneer Courthouse Square, in Portland; and Welcome Park, in Philadelphia. Well illustrated with photographs, plans, and drawings. Unfortunately, quite a number of the open spaces illustrated don't appear to generate the kind of urban vibrancy the authors advocate.

The Nature of Phenomenological Research

"[M]y own position... is that phenomenological research is phenomenological when it involves both rich description of the lifeworld or lived experience; and where the researcher has adopted a special, open phenomenological attitude which, at least initially, refrains from importing external frameworks and sets aside judgments about the 'realness' of the phenomenon" (p. 8).

"[P]henomenological research characteristically starts with concrete descriptions of lived situations, often first-person accounts, set down in everyday language and avoiding abstract intellectual generalizations. The researcher proceeds by reflectively analyzing these descriptions, perhaps idiographically first, then by offering a synthesized account, for example, identifying general themes about the essence of the phenomenon. Importantly the phenomenological researcher aims to go beyond surface expressions or explicit meanings to read between the lines so as to access implicit dimensions and intuitions" (p. 10).

"Phenomenology is sometimes linked to a modernist agenda. Some would argue that it offers an inductive methodology to explore human subjectivity systematically in terms of what individuals are *really* feeling and experiencing.... Here, phenomena are seen to be made up of essences and essential structures which can be identified and described if studied carefully and rigorously enough. In such characterizations, phenomenology can be seen as tending toward being a realist, modernist project where there is a belief in a knowable world with universal properties (at least in some senses), and the aim is to examine the 'real world out there'...." (p. 15).

"The question at stake is: Where does phenomenology fit in a post-modern world of ironically shifting boundaries and plurality of perspectives, a world in which construction and deconstruction (of both language and lived embodiment) seem twin imperatives? In the world of qualitative research, where cultural and historical contingency are highlighted and discursive, poststructuralist, feminist/alternative approaches dominate, is there a plausible space for assertions of authentic selves and universal truths?... Can phenomenology embrace the twenty-first-century future without casting regretful backward glances to earlier times?"

"I believe phenomenology needs to move forward and take its place beyond the modernist-postmodernist divide—the era some call post-postmodernism.... In the current climate, phenomenologists... are challenged to recognize that any knowledge produced is contingent, proportional, emergent, and subject to alternative interpretations. At the very least, research that is anchored in a more critical realist, modernist position deserves some healthy questions and can expect critical challenge. The practice of returning to participants to validate researchers' analyses, for example, could be disputed as a problematic throwback to empirical, realist ideals. At the same time, while phenomenologists may embrace more ironically playful, creative presentations and relativist understandings, they must also ensure they do not lose the speaking, experiencing subject.... We need to go beyond the lines drawn by both modernism and postmodernism embracing both and neither" (pp. 16-17).

—from Linda Finlay's "Debating Phenomenological Research Methods" (2009)

Karsten Harries, 2009. *Art Matters: A Critical Commentary on Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art."* Berlin: Springer.

This book is based on a series of seminars given by philosopher Karsten Harries and dedicated to Heidegger's essay, "The Origin of the Work of Art". The book partially follows the structure of the German philosopher's essay, but Harries has added four other chapters: one that discusses the opposition between Heidegger's approach and an aesthetic one, regarding art; another that links the analysis of authenticity from *Being and Time* (where it remains dangerously incomplete, because of its too formal character) to the demand for art; a third indicating how the incomplete analysis of authenticity became dangerous and made possible the dangerous path in Heidegger's life (the option for National Socialism); and a fourth that underlines the need for art in our modern world led by metaphysics (which forgot its roots) that culminates in technology."

Herman Hertzberger, 2008. *Space and Learning*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers.

This book is architect Herman Hertzberger's "theoretical study of the spatial conditions of learning, lavishly illustrated throughout with the architect's own work and that of others." Several exceptional photographs of students' learning life-worlds, both in terms of schools and elsewhere (e.g., streets, playgrounds, and open spaces).

Oliver Herwig, 2006. *Dream Worlds: Architecture and Entertainment*. NY: Prestel.

This journalist "traces the idea of architecture as entertainment from its early incarnations to the late 20th century and "architainment's" dramatic expansion." Includes discussion of Las Vegas, Disney World, and the Mall of America. Many photographs, most in color.

Tim Ingold, 2007. *Lines: A Brief History*. London: Routledge.

This anthropologist offers an "inquiry into human line-making in all its forms," including "walking, weaving, observing, singing, storytelling, drawing, and writing." All "proceed along lines of one kind or another. In this book, I aim to lay the foundations for what might be called a comparative anthropology of the line." One question asked is "how, in the modern world, the line became straight, only to be ruptured and fragmented by the dislocations of postmodernity?" Includes more than 70 illustrations.

Simon P. James, 2009. *The Presence of Nature: A Study in Phenomenology and Environmental Philosophy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Drawing on the philosophical tradition of phenomenology as well as literary sources, this philosopher considers such topics as "animal consciousness, the moral imperative to conserve nature and the view that the natural world exists independently of human concerns."

Bruce Janz, 2008. The Terror of the Place: Anxieties of Place and the Cultural Narrative of Terrorism. *Ethics, Place and Environment*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 191-203.

This philosopher considers "the ways in which terrorism has become a feature of place, and how we can expect to see the terror of the place in the future." Two of Janz's seven conclusions are: "a relative diminishment in 'place-making imagination'—the ability to see places as rich, ambiguous, and multipurposed"; and "the death or fear of the agora, the true 'agoraphobia', as the public space of discourse is closed down, and the private space of patriarchally enforced agreement gains ascendancy."

Bruce Janz, 2009. *Philosophy in an African Place*. Lexington Books.

This philosopher works to establish what he calls a "philosophy-in-place"—i.e., a "mode of philosophy that begins from the places in which concepts have currency and shows how a truly creative philosophy can emerge from focusing on questioning, listening, and attending to difference." Janz argues that African philosophy has sought to define what African philosophy is and, in doing so, has "ironically been unable to properly conceptualize African lived experience." He argues that such conceptualization can only occur when the central question is changed from the spatial to a new, platial one.

Akel Ismail Kahera, 2002. *Deconstructing the American Mosque: Space, Gender, and Aesthetics*. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press.

This scholar of Islamic studies "explores the history and theory of Muslim religious aesthetics in the United States since 1950," drawing on the concepts of "jamaal" (beauty), "subject," "object," and other Islamic philosophical ideas.

Lynne C. Manzo, 2005. For Better or Worse: Exploring Multiple Dimensions of Place Meaning, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 25, pp. 67-86.

This paper examines "people's emotional relationships to places... to learn about the kinds of places that are meaningful for people, the role these places play in their lives, and the processes by which they develop meaning... Qualitative analysis reveals the diversity and richness of people's emotional relationship to places, indicating that place meaning develops from an array of emotions and experiences, both positive and negative."

Understanding Wholeness: Goethe's *Metamorphosis of Plants*

Eva-Maria Simms

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 2009 [originally 1790]. *The Metamorphosis of Plants*, with an introduction and photographs by Gordon L. Miller, Jr. Translated by Douglas Miller. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

In spring 2009, I participated in a symposium on “Morphology and Modernity” organized by the *Klassik Stiftung Weimar*, the organization that administers Goethe’s legacy of buildings, gardens, museums, libraries, archives, and research projects. Weimar was Goethe’s home from 1775–1832. This beautiful German town still maintains most of its classical eighteenth-century architectural style and generous garden designs. Traces of Goethe’s life and work can be found everywhere.

From his study and library in the *Goethe Haus*—filled with cases upon cases of botanical specimens—one can walk directly into his garden, still planted with the same flowers and shrubs that Goethe cultivated as a living laboratory for his studies on the metamorphosis of plants.

The garden and the study make it clear that, although Goethe is best known today for his literary achievements as a poet and playwright, he spent much of his time in scientific investigation of botany, geology, meteorology, anatomy, and color theory. He was well known by many prominent scientists and philosophers of his time with whom he corresponded.

Goethe considered his botanical studies and his small monograph, *The Metamorphosis of Plants*, to be one of his most important scientific contributions. This work has just been reprinted by MIT Press in a beautiful new edition incorporating remarkable plant photographs taken by environmental historian Gordon L. Miller, Jr., who also writes a thoughtful introduction.

Goethe conceived *morphology* as “a science of organic forms and formative forces aimed at discovering the underlying unity in the vast diver-

sity of plants and animals” (Goethe 2009, xvi). Goethean morphology is a qualitative, descriptive science that searches for the underlying principles determining how organic forms change through time, a process he called *metamorphosis*.

Through his observations of growing plants in his own garden and in different habitats visited during his travels to Italy, Goethe recognized that the various appearances of plant organs, such as stem, leaf, calyx, and so forth are variations of one *archetypal form*: “Thus we can say that a stamen is a contracted petal or, with equal justification, that a petal is a stamen in a state of expansion” (ibid., 102).

Through all the changing forms of a plant’s metamorphosis, Goethe recognized the archetypal, protean *idea* of the plant (the *Urpflanze*) that realizes itself in each specific plant by following a lawful process of intensification and polarity. Through intensification the plant strives toward greater refinement and complexity, while through polarity the dynamic and creative interplay of opposing forces unfolds (seen, for example, in the expansion from seed to stem leaf or the contraction from petals into pistils and stamens). Goethe’s careful observations, documented in *The Metamorphosis of Plants*, are an excellent example of a practical, applied phenomenological study.

Goethe’s discoveries of these applied morphological principles helped lead him to other significant discoveries in anatomy and in color theory. The second part of his drama *Faust* was written alongside his scientific studies, and it, too, exemplifies the principles of morphology and the metamorphosis of an entelechy—but now translated into the human realm. Goethe did not see a sharp distinction between his poetic and scientific works because

they both required the use of an exact poetic imagination and flowed from a deep desire to understand nature and the place of the human being within it.

The interdisciplinary applications of Goethean science have a venerable but underground history. Herder, Hegel, and Schelling were deeply influenced by Goethe in their philosophies; Cassirer, Dilthey, Wittgenstein, Adorno, and Benjamin saw themselves as morphologists; and Uexküll and Goldstein applied Goethean principles to ethology and neurology. Goethe's qualitative science is often seen as a forerunner of Husserlian phenomenology and can be characterized as an attempt to develop a phenomenology of nature.

The connection between Goethean science and architecture, however, is particularly fascinating. Goethe's color theory and plant morphology played a seminal role in the development of the early Bauhaus school of design founded in Weimar in 1909, a few minutes' walk from Goethe's study. In 2009, the *Klassik Stiftung Weimar* organized a large exhibit to honor the Bauhaus' centennial, an exhibit also shown at New York's Museum of Modern Art in the winter of 2009–10. For me, one of the most amazing aspects of this exhibit was the extensive collection of paintings by Bauhaus artists Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, and Lyonel Feininger. Goethean color studies by other members of the Bauhaus faculty dominated an entire section of the exhibit.

The curators of the Bauhaus exhibit in Weimar had created an additional from documenting the influence of Goethean plant studies on the morphological studies of the Bauhaus artists: Here, right next to Goethe's drawings of plant metamorphosis, were the journal pages of Paul Klee's metamorphic plant studies, which led to the development of abstract forms in his paintings and spurred his musings on nature's basic forms of design and how they might be translated into art and architecture. Goethe's modest, 200-year-old *Metamorphosis of Plants* reappears time and again and in the most unexpected places!

As mentioned above, *The Metamorphosis of Plants* is now available in English in the lush new MIT Press edition edited and introduced by

Gordon L. Miller, Jr. The translation from German is a reissue of the fine 1988 version by German scholar Douglas Miller (Goethe 1988). What makes this newest version unique, however, is Gordon Miller's exceptional plant photographs. Goethe had hoped that his work would someday be illustrated, and Miller took on the task to photograph all the plants Goethe highlights in his essay. Miller searched nurseries and swamps, climbed mountains, and canoed rivers to find the more than 50 species in the United States. (His sister-in-law even sent him a sprouting Tennessee potato specimen all the way to Washington State!)

Miller's introduction gives a well rounded overview of Goethe's scientific ideas, but the photographs are the truly stunning and innovative addition to Goethe's text because they beautifully illustrate the metamorphosis of plants.

Goethe, I think, would have been pleased not only with the content but also with the quality of the book production: It is one of the loveliest volumes I have ever held in my hands. The clarity of the photographic plates and illustrations and the overall design of the book are outstanding. The hardbound edition has a simple, classical black design with an intriguing, almost abstract, pinecone photograph (by Gordon Miller) on the cover.

Throughout, the volume is a labor of love—something not seen very often today in academic publishing. You might consider purchasing more than one copy: One for yourself and another for someone who loves nature!

Reference

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 1988. *Goethe: Scientific Studies* (Douglas Miller, editor & translator). NY: Suhrkamp [reprinted by Princeton Univ. Press, 1995].

Eva-Maria Simms is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She has written The Child in the World (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 2008).

Non-Ordinary Architectural Phenomenologies: Non-Dualist Experiences and Husserl's Reduction

Julio Bermudez

Bermudez is an Associate Professor at the University of Utah College School of Architecture + Planning. He has received national and international recognition for his pedagogic work in design process and media as well as for his interdisciplinary research in information visualization. Over the past five years, Bermudez has focused on developing a philosophy and practice of "Voluntary Architectural Simplicity" (VAS) and studying the phenomenology of architectural experience and making. On the latter, see EAP, spring 2008, p. 4; also see his website at: www.arch.utah.edu/julio.htm, bermudez@arch.utah.edu. © 2010 Julio Bermudez.

Although phenomenological studies address the structures and processes underlying ordinary consciousness of places and architecture, little attention has been given to non-ordinary, more intense experiences. Yet understanding these less common environmental and architectural encounters may prove helpful in a variety of ways ranging from a better understanding of what is "typical" to dealing with environmental and ethical issues associated with uncontrolled growth.

This essay contributes to these possibilities by examining the nature of exceptional aesthetic experiences of the built environment. I begin with five exhibits offering a representative survey of what I call "non-dualist experiences." Each exhibit includes a statement summarizing the main point of the italicized quotation that follows. I have attempted to include just enough commentary to provide context for the particular citation.

Exhibit 1

Exceptional aesthetic experiences occur suddenly, involve important time-space perceptual anomalies, collapse boundaries separating self and other, are extraordinarily vivid, and may elicit an experiential epiphany. Educator and artist Frederick Franks describing an extraordinary experience of place:

At that moment something happened: all my fear evaporated, but so did bee and sun and grass... and I. For at that instant sunlight and sky, grasses, bee and I merged, fused, became one—yet remained sun and sky and grass and bee and I. It

lasted for a heartbeat, an hour, a year... Then, as abruptly, I was I again, but filled with indescribable bliss...[1].

Exhibit 2

Exceptional architectural experiences are beyond self-control, raise the mind to higher consciousness, and may cause a fundamental transformation of being. Scholar of religion Lindsay Jones:

[Once one accepts] the alluring invitation of architecture... [he or she can be] profoundly transformed by it in ways that are beyond one's control and powers of self-conscious deliberation. [Such experience] lifts one to higher levels of consciousness and spiritual awareness in ways that the ordinary acquisition of knowledge cannot. [The result may be] transformations that entail not simply new ways of thinking but even new ways of being [2].

Exhibit 3

The essence of architecture and place may be experienced but not defined, pointed to but ultimately remaining ineffable. Architect Christopher Alexander describing what he calls "the quality without a name":

There is a central quality which is the root criterion of life and spirit in a man, a town, a building or a wilderness. This quality is objective and precise, but it cannot be named... This quality in buildings and in towns cannot be made, but only generated, indirectly, by the ordinary actions of the people, just as a flower cannot be made, but only generated from the seed [3].

Exhibit 4

A deeper appreciation of architecture involves an exceptional phenomenology that confers fundamen-

tal intuitive understanding and is therefore the source of the highest learning. Architectural journalist Robert Ivy recalling a story told by an architecture student overwhelmed by his experience of the Pantheon:

That story telling took many of us in the audience back to our own moments of recognition—the fortunate, transcendent instant when the universe clicked into adjustment and we understood the power of architecture. For some in the audience, the moment of architectural recognition might have occurred at the Salk Institute; for another, at Ronchamp. Not everyone has experienced an ‘Aha!’: Some find a ripening of appreciation over time. The route is an individual, inevitable one... Beside that intuitive understanding, all learning pales and the lights go dim [4].

Exhibit 5

Exceptional architectural experiences suspend ordinary interpretative frameworks and induce a sense of well-being, harmony, and presence. Architect Heinrich Herman describing his wish to design buildings that deeply enrich people’s experiences:

[I] came to realize that an environment’s contemplation-inducing, poetic/spiritual dimension is ultimately its capacity for making a visitor/user’s concern of day-to-day reality recede temporarily into the background in favor of an openness to contemplative beholding. The ensuing processes of contemplation effectively cause one to step outside one’s typical frames of reference of time, space, and self, and can lead to a greater feeling of being in the present and partaking in a greater harmony of all being [5].

These five exhibits provide strong evidence that exceptional architectural aesthetics involve situations falling outside what is considered ordinary experiences of architecture and place. Their highly attentive state, significant perceptual irregularities, dissolution of the subject-object division, intimate depth, overwhelming sense of well-being, transcendence of culture and language, and transformative potential challenge our understanding regarding architecture, self, and beyond.

Here I argue that two interdependent lived events are responsible for these radical outcomes: first, an *extraordinary aesthetic experience* itself; and, second, an operation enabling this experience—that is, a *sweeping “reduction”* of intellectual, emotional and sensorial “noise.”

Non-Dualist Experiences

If we rely on accounts in the literature and on our own life experience, we realize that exceptional aesthetic events are not encountered by too many people or are they easy to come by. This begs the question: Why are these experiences so unusual?

In his *Pictures and Tears*, art historian James Elkins offers one possible answer [6]. Elkins considers the perplexing inability of most art academicians and critics to be experientially moved by art, in particular, painting. This is especially puzzling because these professionals are highly educated and supposedly the most likely to fully appreciate the arts. Elkins uses “crying” to empirically gauge the loss of conscious control over one’s reaction to an aesthetic event. In other words, crying demonstrates a lived state of intense aesthetic joy.

Elkins argues that the failure of art professionals to reach an aesthetic rapture is due to their hard-earned intellectual proficiency. For example, when art experts encounter a painting they cannot avoid but to use their knowledge and critical skills. Because this approach is basically logical-analytical, it depends on establishing an “objective” distance between the critic and the artwork. The ensuing intellectual detachment results in a cognitive shield that impedes the development of enough intimacy with the work to trigger the aesthetic arousal. The very way of looking generates the gap!

The experiential cure to this aesthetic impotence is simple but not easy to effect. The need is a *shift from dualist to non-dualist experience*. Phrased in the language of philosopher Ken Wilber, extraordinary aesthetics requires a fundamental lived turn from “third-person” detachment to “first-person” intimacy [7]. This turn means that “my” experience of a place (“it”) must shift from “me” and “it” as a duality to an experiential oneness where subject and object merge (“I” = “it”).

Traditional phenomenological methods enable us to move from the limiting, instrumentalist view of architecture as inert matter to be approached externally (an “it”) to one of materialized intentionality evoking a direct conversation (a “you”). This shift, however, is still not enough to move us away from a lived dualism. A radical transition to first-

person identification (I = you = it) is necessary to reach a deeper aesthetic experience.

Such first-person identification manages to be simultaneously selfless and intimate. This integration of lived opposites explains why a moving aesthetic experience can simultaneously overpower one's will and yet be so intimately and deeply intuited. Elkins provides many examples in which viewers of paintings find themselves weeping in joy for beauty without quite knowing why or how they got there.

But how is this possible? Let us consider a specific exceptional experience. Although it is evident that a self is present during intense experiences (and therefore aware of what is happening), it is also evident that this awareness is not my "ordinary" self. As soon as my "usual" self observes my aesthetic epiphany, that very feeling begins to recede in direct proportion to my increase in self-monitoring.

As I begin to slip from first-person to second- or even to third-person identification, I realize the shift and work to hold the intensity of the moment. But the more I try, the faster the ineffable moment slips away until I am left with "me" and "it" as separate.

Who hasn't had this frustrating experience? The shift feels like falling from grace. In the cases described by Elkins, the self-conscious realization of crying is the "kiss of death" for that stirring aesthetic experience as it rapidly descends from first-person to third-person presence.

Let me emphasize that consciousness is never absent during the aesthetic arousal. Rather, what is absent is *self*-consciousness. There is no disturbing ego-watcher that comments, judges, and ends up sabotaging the more intense experience. In other words, exceptional aesthetic encounters are highly conscious experiences without ego.

This is what is meant by a non-dualist experience: a lack of separation between subject and object and a sense of lived mergence between the two. In this state, all is subjective or objective—or, more precisely, just experience-as-happening.

If so, however, we must ask who or what is thus consciously present but not interfering with the unfolding, deeper moment? As an answer to this question, we can speak of a perceptual awareness

uninhibited by normal frameworks of interpretation, including of the self. We may call this awareness *being-as-consciousness*.

Implicit in this argument and made unmistakably clear in the five exhibits above is that extraordinary architectural experiences circumvent the cognitive filters and noise occupying the usual mind. Such bypass guarantees the necessary transparency to see into the fuller nature of things (world) and being (consciousness).

This possibility implies a mode of phenomenology that transcends cognition! Though grounded in cognition, the exceptional aesthetic experience shifts toward a *post*-cognitive mode of being. Claiming that an intense aesthetic experience brings forth post-cognitive apprehension is not insignificant, since many twentieth-century efforts in philosophy and the social sciences have sought to demonstrate the impossibility of a phenomenological transcendence.

Husserl's Reduction

In the early twentieth century, Edmund Husserl proposed a far-reaching philosophy grounded in the phenomenological method of "bracketing"[8]. This reductive procedure consists of filtering out biases unrelated to the ongoing experience so one might access the unspoiled contents of consciousness alone—in other words, pure reality.

Husserl built the phenomenological reduction on two key philosophical insights. One insight arose from Kant's epistemological distinction between *phenomenon* (the thing as experienced) and *noumenon* (the thing itself). Kant's argument that the noumenon is forever beyond direct access established all reality as irremediably "phenomenological."

A second important source of Husserl's phenomenological reduction was Descartes' act of doubting. By pushing doubting to its limits, Husserl was forced to pursue a meticulous re-examination of every tenet of philosophy. In the end, he was left with "just being" as phenomenological consciousness. In attempting to review thoroughly the phenomenology of being, Husserl faced the challenge of finding a method to remove any veil of prejudice without inhibiting conscious operation [9].

The phenomenological reduction is an act of suspension rather than an act of transformation. This effort neither changes an idea or belief into its opposite nor converts any idea or belief into a presumption, suggestion, or doubt. Rather, as Husserl explains,

We set it as it were 'out of action'; we 'disconnect' it, 'bracket' it. It still remains there like the bracketed in the bracket, like the disconnected outside the connectional system. We can also say: The thesis is experience as lived, but we make 'no use' of it [italics in original] [10].

Although there is considerable difference in the role that intention plays in Husserl's phenomenological reduction versus intention's role in an exceptional aesthetic experience (the former demands an initial act of willful intention, whereas the later tends to happen spontaneously and, in one sense, unintentionally), there is nonetheless some commonality in actions and results.

One source for demonstrating this commonality is other intentional reductive methods—for example, the meditation practices of Mahayana Buddhism. Meditation is a progressive, deliberate act of letting go of sensory and cognitive awareness so that one might access a state of unconditioned awareness [11].

This reductive method leads potentially to a state of intense conscious concentration (*samadhi*) that silences conditioning and moves the meditator toward a state of non-dualist mindfulness with access to reality-as-it-is (*tathata*). Drawing on the Buddhist literature and on the personal accounts of expert meditators, one can argue that the lived reduction possible through deep meditation has much in common with Husserl's reduction and extraordinary aesthetics [12].

Common to both these reductions is their liberation of the individual from ordinary cognitive practices. By suspending knowledge, belief, and normal perception, these reductions aim at seeing what is *really* there and not what conditioning "wants" to see. This manner of bracketing is so radical that not even the self-as-we-know-it escapes; what remains is a highly alert, unfolding event.

In other words, a fundamental transposition from a dualist to a non-dualist perspective results in non-ordinary "illuminated" experience—i.e., an ex-

tremely vivid, direct, and transparent intuition of the contents and forms of consciousness.

As indicated above, much has been written about the fundamental flaw of the phenomenological reduction. Language philosophers, behavioral and cognitive psychologists, reception aestheticians, and other critics have sought to demonstrate the impossibility of overcoming referential frameworks, be they linguistic, cultural, social, or behavioral [13].

On the other hand, one can find many trustworthy reports of extraordinary aesthetic experiences that are difficult if not impossible to account for using standard Western-philosophical frameworks. Other well documented accounts of intense non-dualist encounters such as peak experiences [14], deep meditation [15], and highly creative states [16] all strongly suggest that the arguments opposing the phenomenological reduction are incorrect.

Another source of resistance and skepticism is the actual difficulty in performing any phenomenological reduction: Bracketing language, culture, and emotional and intellectual "inessentials" is hugely difficult but not insurmountable. Learning how to successfully accomplish a reduction requires substantial training and practice. Meditators, for example, typically spend many years in practice, and artists invest great amounts of effort, time, and involvement to reach high creative states. The rarity of exceptional aesthetic experiences only adds evidence to the difficulty inherent in reaching intensive non-dualist events. But the fact that they do happen demonstrates the power and reality of such intense experiences.

An Integral Phenomenology

Although a great achievement of phenomenology has been to understand and legitimize the deep relationship between self and place, it has fallen short of making the full leap to non-dualism. The examination of exceptional aesthetic experiences indicates that what usually passes for phenomenological accounts (e.g., empathetic descriptions, holistic intellectual constructions, hermeneutical interpretations, archetypal relationships, and so forth) are still experiences caught midway between non-dualist states and ordinary dualist perception.

Just as one paradigm cannot comprehensively describe all the phenomena of physics, so one mode of phenomenology cannot address the inexhaustible realm of human consciousness and experience. It would be more realistic and useful to consider different phenomenologies to describe different modes and intensities of experiences. The resulting integral phenomenology would permit us to carry out a much wider range of inquiries than is possible today. This broader phenomenology would also allow us to build a much larger map of human being.

To move in this direction, I propose a systematic, threefold research effort geared to: (1) understanding non-dualist aesthetic experiences; (2) studying the built environment's role as a potential gateway to transcendental insights; and (3) developing a thorough, well-balanced phenomenological model that coordinates first-, second-, and third-person experiential perspectives.

Endnotes

1. F. Franks, *The Awakened Eye* (NY: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 11.

2. L. Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2000), vol. 1, p. 97, p. 102.

3. C. Alexander, *The Timeless Way of Building* (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979), p. ix, xi.

4. R. Ivy, "The Essence of Education," *Architectural Record* (2006), p.17.

5. H. Hermann, "On the Transcendent in Landscapes of Contemplation," in R. Krinke, ed., *Contemporary Landscapes of Contemplation* (NY: Routledge, 2005) pp. 36-37.

6. J. Elkins, *Pictures and Tears* (NY: Routledge, 2001).

7. K. Wilber, *Integral Psychology* (Boston: Shambala, 2000).

8. E. Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1931).

9. Husserl often described phenomenology as a "philosophy of beginnings"; he argued for the necessity to reconsider all philosophical assumptions.

10. Husserl, *Ideas*, p.108.

11. A. Brahm, "Degrees of Seeing", *Buddhadharma* 5, 1(2006): 42-47; A. Watts, *The Way of Zen* (NY: Pantheon, 1957).

12. For example, T. Hiss, *The Experience of Place* (NY: Knopf, 1990); C. Howett, "If the Doors of Perception Were Cleansed," in D. Seamon, ed., *Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993); B. Jacks, "Reimagining Walking. Four Practices," *Journal of Architectural Education* 58, 3 (2004): 5-9; R. Krinke, ed., *Contemporary Landscapes of Contemplation* (NY: Routledge, 2005).

13. E.g., T. Eagleton, *Literary Theory* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1983).

14. M. Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow* (NY: Harper & Row, 1990).

15. J. Austin, *Zen and the Brain* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998); S. Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (NY: Weatherhill, 1970).

16. B. Edwards, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* (NY: Putman, 1989); B. Ghiselin, *The Creative Process* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1952); J. Sloboda, *Generative Processes in Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

Husserl's Coal-Fired Phenomenology: Energy and Environment in an Age of Whole-House Heating and Air-Conditioning

Dennis E. Skocz

Skocz received his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Duquesne University. He uses phenomenology to pursue thematic interests in media, environment, and, most recently, economics. He has published chapters in Heidegger and the Earth, L. McWhorter & G. Stenstad, eds. (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2009); and Symbolic Landscapes, G. Backhuus & J. Murungi, eds. (NY: Springer-Verlag, 2008). His articles appear in Analecta Husserliana and other philosophical journals. Skocz was President of the Society for Phenomenology and Media from 2006–2009 and is a member of the Husserl and Heidegger Circles. A retired career diplomat, he now works as a consultant in strategic planning and professional development. skocz@verizon.net. © 2010 Dennis E. Skocz.

It is easy to imagine phenomenology founder Edmund Husserl sitting at his desk in his study on a winter's day, toasty warm and comfortable from the heat of a porcelain stove in a corner of the room, a stove fired by coal. Husserl makes it possible for readers to imagine him in this setting by what he writes in *Ideas II*. The imagery emerges from the text of Section 50: "The person as the center of a surrounding world" [1].

And what a vivid image of egoic-bodily centrality it is! This is not the ego-center from which rays of consciousness radiate to illuminate the immediate landscape of the self's emplacement. Nor is it the zero-point of consciousness "holding sway" though its body over its environs, an ego that we meet in the *Cartesian Meditations*. This ego-body—just as central as the others—is absorbed in its thought, passive and comfortable, absorbing the warmth emitted by the coal in the stove. The warmth is a function of the heat released by coal that has been set on fire, a heat that radiates from the coal and suffuses the room.

In this reflective scenario, the coal enjoys its own centrality in the room and in relation to the warm and reflective ego [p. 197]. Between them, the coal and the ego, sender and receiver, the object and the subject serve to define the phenomenon addressed in the scenario; they describe the beginning and end of the event and experience that "fires"

Husserl's reflection and fuels the reflection ventured here.

This reflection alters the scenario in keeping with our contemporary life-situation in a post-industrial world. It endeavors to anticipate and ponder the consequences of changing the scenario even as the underlying phenomenological structures that govern our experience of near and distant worlds continue to hold sway.

The reflection ventured here draws implications from distinctions implicit or operative in Husserl's account, namely between natural and built environments, causal and intentional linkages, and the relationship of *Welt* and *Umwelt*. Specifically, the reflection takes the following steps:

1. A reprise of Husserl's account of the *Umwelt* via his analysis of "being-at-home" in a room heated with coal.
2. An imaginative variation of that *Umwelt* scenario in which key phenomenological structures illuminated in Husserl's account are not in play. The variation will envision a surrounding world—a climate-controlled environment—not unlike that created by domestic technology in use throughout much of the developed world.
3. Phenomenological speculation about the implications for the broader natural environment of lives lived in a surrounding world made increasingly hermetic.

Between the coal and the person it warms is a heated room, a room suffused with heat. One could begin to unfold the brief narrative of hot coal and warmed thinker with the coal. Ignited, it burns; burning, it emits heat throughout the room; with the spread of the heat, the thinker comes to feel warm. Herewith, an objective, cause-effect sequence, starting with the first cause and ending with its most remote effect.

Alternatively, one might begin at the end: I feel warm; I relate my warmth to the heat of the room; the heat is perceived to radiate from the coal in the stove. With the latter, a subjective sequence, starting with what one feels and regressing back to the perceived cause of that feeling.

From object to subject or from subject to object, the internal logic of the phenomenon, differently regarded, prevails. But the brief schematization given here oversimplifies. It misses the nuance and subtlety of the Husserlian account. I suggest that one might usefully begin with the heated room. It is after all the site of the phenomenon in question and the setting of the scenario. More importantly, in the context of *Ideas II*, it is an *Umwelt*, a surrounding world or environment, and that is the explicit object of investigation in Section 50.

The environment of the room lies between the coal and its warm occupant. It is “the between” that merits the most careful attention because this “between,” the surrounding world, the world that surrounds the ego is not just an adventitious concomitant of the ego. The ego is inseparably related to the surrounding world. The ego *is as* the subject of the surrounding world [p. 195, 6-7].

With this understanding of surrounding world, what may one say of the room, the environing world in question? Obviously, this environment is heated. As a surrounding world, its being heated is known in and through the experience of warmth, my warmth. The surrounding world is not a world in itself but rather a world as given for me in experience [p. 196, 3-9]. The analysis might end in the subjective experience of warmth, but warmth is not defined by some kind of subjective interiority. My warmth is a function of my position in the room [p. 197, 26-27]. It rises or falls in relation to my proximity to the coal, which I identify as the source of

heat in the room, the heat that I experience as warmth.

In moving toward and away from the hot coal, several distinctions and relationships come into play. Heat and warmth are correlative but not identical. If my experience of warmth were radically subjective and interior, it would not vary with my position in the room.

There is more. The heat (experienced as warmth) appears to emanate from the coal [p. 197, 22-24], and experience, aided by memory, confirms that the heat is an attribute of the burning coal [p. 197, 20-22], so that now the heat that manifests as warmth to a subject comes to be understood as a property of an object.

Husserl is quite clear here. The heat in the room is an objective property of the coal and it issues from the coal: Both that objective property (heat) and its propagation through the room are *experienced phenomenon* [p. 197, 22-24]. Thus, it is both an objective property of the coal and an *experienced phenomenon* that, when burning, coal is a cause of heat—and conversely, that heat is an effect of the burning coal. The causal connection between firing the coal and releasing its heat is also experienced [p. 197, 27-29] and *founds* the objective determination “combustible” [p. 197, 29-31] that, in the end and without reflection, gives itself immediately to experience as a property of the coal.

Combustibility, however, is both a founded and founding determination. By becoming linked to heat and warmth and, in turn, comfort, the combustible (coal) acquires value or utility to us, i.e., a source of heat that gives itself as good, pleasant, comfortable [p. 197, 29-35]. Value, like other determinations, is an attribute of the object (coal) but has its *experiential basis* in the subject’s value perception—“I apprehend it [the coal] from this point of view [i.e., that of value or utility]: I ‘can use it for that,’ it is useful to me for that” [p. 197, 35-36]. Well outside the immediate environment of the room, the value of the coal (as a utility to chilled thinkers seeking warmth) acquires commodity value in trade and commerce [p. 197, 35-198, 2]. Thus, the founded use-value of the coal serves to found the exchange-value it will have in the market for combustibles.

Within the short space of his coal-fired phenomenology, Husserl elides from founding to founded experiences and objects, and he rises from the base experience of warmth and comfort to the threshold of the greater social-world horizon of the market [p. 198, 3-8]. Back and forth, up and down, following the intentional references implicit in phenomena to trace the genesis of structures like *cause* and *utility*—with the worlds of science and commerce in the offing—Husserl’s reflection moves. All the while and thereby, he roots the most distant and complex and expansive worlds in the nearest world, the immediately surrounding world that defines the self.

Let me recount the results of this reflection as it bears on what is to come. The room-environment is warm, inviting, and comfortable. Its occupants might well enjoy their time in the room without a thought that goes beyond the comfort the heat affords. From time to time, however, they will get up from their seats to move closer and farther away from the hot coals in the stove [p. 198, 26-27].

As soon as they do, the play of founded and founding experiences begins. Occupants are reminded that their warmth is a function of the heat in the room that, in turn, is function of the coal burning in the stove. The heat in the room they had unthinkingly enjoyed as warmth, without further ado, is now understood as an effect of burning coal.

For its part, the coal is then imbued with efficacy and utility. Moreover, because the coal—as combustible and useful—is present in my immediate environment and is experienced in its combustibility and utility, occupants are left to infer that their immediate condition as warm and comfortable is not self-contained and hermetic. They *see* the cause of their happy state burning in a stove in a corner of the room. It is perceived as a necessary condition of their animal comfort [p. 197, 16-18].

It may even occur to them that if the fire goes out and the coal is used up or if they go so far from the burning coal as to leave the room, they will likely be left cold. The self-evidence of their predicament is entailed by the *self-evident* causality and utility of the coal. That the coal makes them warm is *perceived* as a property of the coal. That the coal

is instrumental to their comfort is *perceived* within the ambit of the world around them, in the room.

The environment that Husserl describes is largely a built environment, yet it is one in which the natural world and its causal laws are “represented” by the coal and the effects of its burning. The coal, by virtue of its objective properties (combustibility), will produce heat in the room, an effect.

Herewith, we see a cause-effect relationship. All these physical properties—the combustibility of the coal, the heat of the room, and the cause-effect nexus itself—are *all experienced*. Finally, the surrounding world described by Husserl points to a bigger world outside, one in which the “use value” of the coal founds exchange value in a commodity market.

The environment I next imagine is at once familiar and descriptive of the world that most of us for the most part inhabit, and it will be found to be quite opposite to the one described by Husserl. The room is again a study that is toasty warm and comfortable. But no coal burns in a stove in a corner of the room. The room is evenly heated. The diffusion of heat throughout the room is constant. It does not appear to emanate from one spot or several discrete openings or points of origin.

For all intents and purposes, my warmth and the heat of the room are indistinguishable. There is no perceptible source of warmth and comfort; for their part, warmth and comfort are not perceived as the effect of anything. They simply are experienced phenomena without a history or an anchor in anything outside themselves.

Obviously, my warmth does depend on the heat in the room, and the heat comes from a source (outside the room) and through conduits (all around the room). The point, however, is that neither the source of the heat nor its propagation through the room is a distinct perceived phenomenon. My situation in the room—my being-in-the-room—is holistically experienced but not objectified. It is not experienced as a discrete phenomenon or object that might itself stand in relations of causality and utility to other phenomena or objects.

So long as I experientially remain with the immediacy of my situation in the room—a room that does not itself contain the material conditions of

existence as perceived phenomena—I am oblivious to the empirical or factual underpinnings of my well-being.

This scenario is not a figment of pure fantasy. It is approximately descriptive of living conditions in dwellings throughout the developed world. Whole-house heating and air-conditioning names the domestic infrastructure that underlies the scenario. My point in turning phenomenological reflection upon the experience of warmth in the immediate environment created by whole-house systems is not to evoke nostalgia for less sophisticated systems or to make a pitch for “worry-free” life with central heating. Rather, the intent is to examine how the material conditions of domestic living and well being shape our perception of energy, the larger natural environment, and, with recursive irony, our relationship to the material conditions of our existence themselves.

A comparison of the two scenarios discloses implications for broader energy and environment issues. The occupant of Husserl’s study is recurrently, if not constantly, educated in energy-dependency. She is reminded with sensory-motor evidence that her animal well being is bound up with the consumption of energy sources. Regulating heating conditions in Husserl’s study requires deliberate first-hand intervention by the occupant.

By way of contrast, the homeostatic regulation of room climate minimizes the occupant’s involvement with ensuring her well being. In the second scenario, one may, without contradiction from any lived experience in one’s lifeworld, ignore one’s link and dependency on the natural world.

In the coal-heated room, however, one is experientially reminded of the natural and material underpinnings of our lifeworld. It is possible but arguably more difficult to ignore that life in a comfortable but coal-heated room is tied to nature and the earth. The coal is a product of the earth, a veritable piece of the earth. Its burning is a natural cause-effect process evident to us in our occupation of the room.

To be sure, the lifeworld “education” in energy and environment described here may not lead to green convictions. Coal-burning makes heat that affords warmth and gives comfort. Such a chain of

reasoning and concatenation of causes and effects—experientially evident—could invest coal with a positive value that predisposes social-policy judgment in its favor, notwithstanding the environmental harms from mining, digging, and burning coal.

On the other hand, the firsthand use of coal also makes evident its downsides—smoke, soot, odor, grime, and not-so-remote damage to property and health. The occupant of a room with central heating, a controlled environment, is isolated—as a matter of lifeworld knowledge—not only from an awareness of dependency on energy but also from any firsthand experience of the harms of her energy consumption.

To be sure, firsthand experience or lifeworld awareness of nature does not necessarily translate into a green agenda or knowledge useful to environmental protection. I have argued elsewhere, with Husserlian phenomenology enlisted in support, that long-term environmental change and the operation of causes with delayed effects escape the temporal horizon of immediate experience arising in the surrounding world [2]. Global climate change, scientist and environmental thinker Jared Diamond points out, eludes close-to-the-earth local knowledge [3].

The suggestion made here is that firsthand, surrounding-world experience of the kind that Husserl’s scenario describes in experiential terms and on a microcosmic level parallels our mediated relationship to nature at a macro-cosmic level. It bears notice that Husserl’s room is not a natural environment. It is a surrounding environment in which the experience of nature is mediated through the burning of coal, through a relatively primitive technological process.

It is not likely the developed world will revert to an earlier lifestyle. Husserl’s coal-fired phenomenology points to a nexus of relationships that breaks down or gets forgotten in a post-industrial world that makes the material conditions of everyday existence remote from that very experience. If it does not describe the immediate living conditions of the developed world in the present, it nonetheless points to relationships between the domains of subjective experience, natural processes, and social structures that remain determinative for human dwelling on the earth.

The two scenarios present two very different surrounding worlds, but both describe a relation—or perhaps in the case of the second—a *non*-relation to the greater world outside and beyond the room. The first suggests in microcosm the structure of our relationship to the world at large. The second covers over those structures. Energy dependence is a lived experience in the first. In the second, one could read about it in comfort but it would not present itself experientially.

Global climate awareness is also at issue between the two scenarios. In the climate-controlled environment, the micro-climate is never an issue or concern so long as the auto-regulation of room temperature and humidity functions without a hitch. The technologically mediated surrounding world not only works to alienate occupants from the climate outside the room but also suggests that climate is a human artifact, manageable and conformable to our “settings.”

To be sure, I am not imprisoned for life in artificial climate-controlled environments. I venture forth to experience the vagaries of weather outside. Yet, for the time that I am inside, in climate-controlled environments, I am “taught” that climate is not an issue and is controllable. The language of conditions teaching us something alluded to here is not at all remote from Husserlian notions. He might speak of expectations as meaning intentions being continuously fulfilled so as to fuse in a judgment that says “thus it is.” Stated conversely, so long as my expectations of continuous warmth (or coolness) are not disappointed, I take it for granted that the micro-climate of the room—and by extension the macro-climate of the world as such—is adjustable to my liking.

There is an element of falsification to the experience of climate generally that derives from the experience of the artificial micro-climate of the climate-controlled room. To the degree that climate manifests itself in lived experience, it is lived in the experience of weather as encompassing. Often it goes unnoticed but then can unexpectedly become intrusive, problematic, and variable.

Weather is not an object within my surrounding world but the pervasive element within which I live, move, and feel. I can only accommodate to the va-

garies of weather. Because it lays siege on me and my fellow humans—attacks from all sides and does not present an object that I can grasp and dominate—it has something of the quality of destiny or fate.

I have, in the preceding, used “weather” and “climate” interchangeably. One may object that weather is not climate. The point is well taken. The experiential or phenomenological manifestations of weather, nonetheless, do apply to climate. However remote and abstract the concept of climate and climate change is, that concept has its experiential basis in our sufferings of and dealings with weather.

Like weather, climate is encompassing, even more so. The future climate conditions that only scientific investigation and causal method can predict are conditions that will be experienced as weather. With appropriate adjustments in temporal and spatial scale, weather experience fills in with sensible content the “big picture” effects of climate change. So when the climate-controlled micro-environment alienates us from weather conditions, it diminishes our awareness of climate.

The micro-climate can falsify our experience of climate because it presents itself ambiguously. Inside the room, the controlled climate is the element within which I move. It has the property of climate or weather—when its weather/climate “is well-behaved”—as the encompassing and unnoticed. If some small variation in room conditions arises to call some attention to it, then through the mediation of thermostatic regulation, I can adjust it (room climate) to me and my specifications.

Thus, the micro-climate manifests both as the encompassing element within which I move, act, and feel and the “encompassed” and controlled object of my actions. As “the element,” it is largely unnoticed and unobtrusive, unproblematic. Its manipulation via the thermostat cancels that feature of the encompassing weather or climate that presents itself as beyond control. The climate-controlled habitat then supports and reinforces a *habitus* of desensitization to climate and climate change and a sense that climate is easily within the control of technology.

Revisiting Husserl’s room might help to make points about climate awareness. In the Husserl sce-

nario or the micro-environment he describes, the room-climate is an encompassing element but one that is by no means uniform in our experience. Adjusting it to our needs is an elusive goal, and strategies for dealing with the vagaries and variations of the micro-climate include moving about and adjusting my behavior and location to conditions in the room rather than trusting to a pre-existing technology to ensure that every position in the room is equally suitable for my comfort.

The speculations ventured here are not predictions of what might happen regarding energy availability or climate change. The speculations are phenomenologically inspired and guided. This is to say that they deal with awareness and the lack of awareness of what lies in our surrounding world and the greater world beyond.

Awareness, of course, can lead to needed action and lack of awareness to unhappy surprises. The reflections ventured here suggest that the built-configuration of the immediate lifeworld can bode ill for an awareness of emergent difficulties, reinforcing habits of mind that foster an unawareness of problems or a false sense of control over the material conditions of our existence.

A reflection that exposes the structures of lived-experience that foster indifference and false security is—need one say it?—the first step to addressing issues that are “there” but “below the radar.” Perhaps in the style of the analysis undertaken here, one can see a role for phenomenology in environmental consciousness-raising. Or perhaps, the outcome is more modest: an explanation of how we come by our unawareness and indifference.

Endnotes

1. Husserl, E., *Ideals Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book*, R. Rojcewicz & A. Schuwer, trans. (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), pp. 194-99. References in the text are to page numbers of this edition, followed by the line numbers over which the text runs.
2. Skocz, D., “Husserlian Variations of Nature, Environment, and Earth: Toward a ‘Green’ Phenomenology,” *Phenomenology 2005, Selected Essays from North America, Part 2*, L. Embree & T. Nenon, eds., Zeta Books, 2007
3. Diamond, J., *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (NY: Norton, 1999).

Two poems by Vicki King

Atelier Cezanne

Walking steeply uphill
on a narrow concrete pavement
in mid-day heat in early summer
on the outskirts of the city Aix,
an undistinguished metal gate
with number 9 and plaque announces
“*Atelier Cezanne*”; we finally have arrived.
Greenery immediately surrounds us, and coolness,
as we walk along an enigmatic garden path
on land where five years before he died
Cezanne built a country studio
amongst olive groves and fig trees.

Through a door of Chinese red,
up silent winding stairs,
I enter into light,
it is not the climb that takes my breath away,
this large high-ceilinged studio
feels like a place of worship,
three walls the color of soft rain
and one of glass, outside a forest glade.

An unfinished humble canvas square
with earthen ground
allows me to understand
the soil of Cezanne's birthplace, *Aix-en-Provence*,
was for him (as for indigenous tribes)
a sacred signifier and when he painted
he went below the surface,
the place was in his blood.

In pigments he recorded life in flux,
les petit sensations, he taught himself to see,
a simple but embodied vision,
a dance from eye to hand on paper and on canvas.
The surface was alive, a constant touchstone,
almost shamanic, magic, a sacred space
for relationship between the seer and the seen,
not just a picture plane.

Upon an easel obelisk that reaches to the ceiling
He painted *les Grand Baigneuses*,
the clumsy but heroic compositions of the bathers
inspired by life-room drawings from his youth.
Did these iconic masterpieces
begin as exercises during foul, inclement weather
as he began to age?

On shelves high upon the walls vessels gather dust,
a ginger pot of sky-washed blue,
ceramic and glass bottles, jugs and pitchers,
tres ordinaire with no conceit or affectation.
A sentimental plaster cherub stands in contrast
to the wooden table just large enough for two
(the one with the scalloped edge, familiar, like a friend),
where with loving care he juxtaposed so tirelessly
apples, oranges, all those pots,
his pipe, a knife, a carafe and a wineglass
to paint again the *nature mortes*
etched clearly in my memory.

Here, too, card players sat,
intent upon their game
and in the middle of the room
a black pot-bellied stove
gave warmth on chilly days.
A straight-backed chair on a wooden platform,
a decorated screen behind, a backdrop
for portraits infused with overwhelming dignity
(and love, I feel his wife and son here, too).
Wooden palettes casually placed
bear traces of his mixing, subtle and restrained,
the colors of his lifeworld.

Beneath the massive wall of windows
bookcases of mahogany, glass-fronted,
are filled with volumes leather-bound
of philosophy and religion,
and on the top rest three skulls,
memento mori, reminders of impermanence,
although more poignant is his walking stick
with metal-pointed tip still ready to support him

through beech forests to the quarry,
to paint again the mountain *Sainte-Victoire*
not just as homage but to record
the essential act of seeing;
it had become his only aspiration.
He was an extraordinary ordinary man
who through close attention, effort, and perception
changed how I and many others see the world.

His leather satchel, coats and smock,
black bowler hat and black beret
hang upon the coat-stand hooks
in the sanctuary of his studio.
Upon one wall is hung a simple crucifix,
in the corner hangs a rosary
of heavy wooden beads,
what were his sins, his penances?

Hours pass and last light saturates
this silent room
permeated with the presence
of a solitary man.
Each object evokes paintings
every artist knows, they are our bible,
revered in every country,
enshrined in gold
on museums' whitened walls,
our secular cathedrals,
but true pilgrims come to this humble site
to sense the lingering spirit
of a man who truly knew his place.

18.5.09

—*Aix-en-Provence*

Shimmy

Amid chrome-orange native
blossoms
you dangle upside down
then perch upon a twig,
head cocked and eyes intent
before a quick descent
and full immersion
with ecstatic fluttering wings.

Rising, dripping,
ruffling feathers,
shaking fluffed out breast,
you raise a foot to scratch
a pointed beak
before you plunge again
into a ritual bath.

Fan-tail's cheeky choreography
acts on me like gospel chants,
I watch transfixed and tap my feet,
the rhythm found
my shoulders raise like wings;
I praise angelic avian hosts
who share their place with me.



With her life partner John Cameron, artist and writer **Vicki King** lives on a rural homestead on Bruny Island, just off the southeastern coast of Tasmania. Five of her woodcuts of Bruny Island birds were reproduced in the winter 2010 EAP. Her most recent project is creating bird sculptures from local driftwood. See: www.bettgallery.com.au/index.htm.