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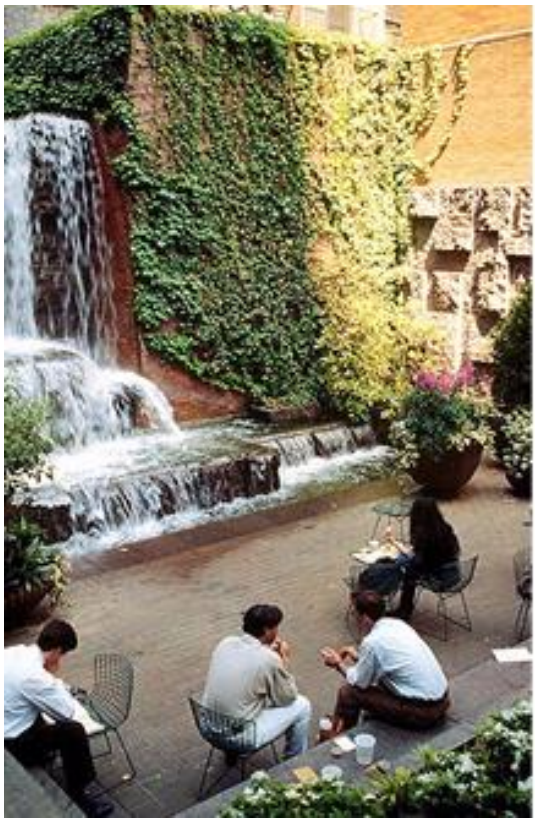
35th-year anniversary issue

This issue marks 35 years of publication and includes "items of interest," "citations received," and a "book note" on *American Urbanist*, a biography of urban researcher **William H. Whyte**, who particularly admired New York City's Greenacre Park, photographs of which are featured here on this cover page. To mark 35 years of *EAP*, philosopher **Ingrid Leman Stefanovic** begins this issue with a celebratory commentary. Next, *EAP* editor **David Seamon** draws on philosopher **Paul Ricoeur's** "hermeneutics of restoration of meaning" as one thematic means to identify *EAP's* major aim over the years.

This issue includes four essays, beginning with geographer **Edward Relph**, who considers artificial intelligence as it might be critiqued via the thinking of philosopher **Hannah Arendt** and her insights on modernity's invention of totalitarianism. Next, philosopher **Kenn Maly** examines the phenomenon of water via the four qualities of substance, flow, non-duality, and freedom.

Third, Chinese geographers **Xu Huang** and **Zichuan Guo** offer an ethnographic picture of Chengdu, China's He-Ming Teahouse, opened in 1923. Fourth, artist and writer **Vicki King** considers how the paintings of Canadian-American abstract-expressionist artist **Agnes Martin** "evoke sensual memories of New Mexico."



*Built in 1971 on New York City's East 51st Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues, **Greenacre Park** was envisioned by its designers as an "urban oasis," though it has high user density with as many as 25 people/1,000 square feet. Greenacre Park was used by urbanist **William Whyte** as an excellent example of a well-designed plaza facilitating bustling activity and loyal user attachment. See the book note, p. 5, on* American Urbanist, ***Richard K. Rein's** biography of Whyte as a central figure in understanding and designing robust urban places.*

Items of interest

"The Poetics of Silence—The Mountain in Art and Literature" is an on-line international symposium to be held at the College of Fine Arts at Huaqiao University, Xiamen, China, October 18, 2024. Topics to be discussed include: Mountains as allegory and in visual representation; journey and quest; spiritual aspects of mountains; solitude and silence. info@shanshuiprojects.net.

Sacred Sites is the occasional newsletter of **Sacred Sites International**, an organization that contributes to saving endangered sacred sites around the world. The current issue includes reports on Mongolia's World Heritage Site; the Deer Stone Monuments; and New York City's Black Madonna of East Fourteenth Street. Currently, SSI is requesting nominations of sites that should be included in their list of "Endangered Sacred Sites." sacredsite1@gmail.com.

The ***Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology***, Vols. 1–4 (1971–1983), have been digitized by the Philosophy Documentation Center, and are now available online at Online Browse + Free Previews. Chapters approach the field of psychology as a human science through philosophical tenets of existential phenomenology. The series' founding editors were **Amedeo Giorgi**, **William F. Fischer**, and **Rolf von Eckartsberg**. Contributors include such leading phenomenological psychologists *as* **Frank M. Buckley**, **Paul F. Colaizzi**, **Constance T. Fischer**, **Steen Halling**, **Bernd Jager**, **Robert Romanyshyn**, **Emily Stevick**, and **Frederick J. Wertz**. The Center's website is: https://www.pdcnet.org/dspp.

Citations received

David Canter, 2023. *Readings on the Psychology of Place*. London: Routledge.

Canter is a major figure in environment-behavior research, and the chapters in this volume, organized by the author, run from the 1960s to the present. He was a founding editor of *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, and well-cited entries in this volume include "Architectural Psychology," "The Psychology of Place," and "Putting Situations in Their Place." Canter is currently completing a new edition of his seminal *The Psychology of Place*, originally published in 1977 by London's Architectural Press.

Alex Cockain, 2024. Learning Disability and Everyday Life. London: Routledge.

This ethnographic study focuses on "Paul," a middle-aged, autistic man with "severe" learning disabilities. The author describes Paul's everyday life both inside and outside his home. The book is said to be "markedly ethnographic in its orientation to the gritty graininess of everyday life—eating, drinking, walking, cooking, talking, and so on—in, with, and alongside learning disability. However, preoccupation with, the 'small' coexists with a gaze intent upon capturing a bigger picture, to the extent that the things constituting everyday life are deployed as prisms with which to critically reflect upon the wider worlds of dis/ability and everyday life."

Tonino Griffero, 2024. *Being a Lived Body from a Neo-Phenomenological Point of View*. London: Routledge.

This Italian philosopher introduces a theory of the lived body grounded in the work of the German philosopher **Hermann Schmitz**. The author begins with the distinction between the so-called lived body or felt body (*Leib*) and the physical body (*Körper*), tracing the conceptual history of this distinction and discussing "human being-in-the-world via a felt-bodily communication and resonance."

Thomas Heatherwick, 2023. *Humanise: A Maker's Guide to Building Our World*. London: Penguin.

A glib, unconvincing attack on architects and modernist architecture by designer and principal of Heatherwick Studio, a British design firm the work of which includes London's New Routemaster bus, the 2012 Olympic Caldron, and Kings Cross's Coal Drops Yard. As a way to "humanize" future buildings, Heatherwick's principal tool is what he labels the "humanise rule"—"a building should be able to hold your attention for the time it takes to pass by it" in terms of three distances: "city distance" (40+ meters); "street distance" (around 20 meters); and "door distance" (around 2 meters).

Oddly, the book is poorly designed, and photographs and other graphics are of uneven quality. The book's 496 pages could readily be halved if more attention had been given to layout. A much more useful work is the third edition of planner and urban designer Matthew Carmona's *Public Places, Urban Spaces* (Routledge, 2021—see *EAP*, winter/spring 2022).

Quill R Kukla, 2021. The COVID-19 Epidemic and the Loss of the Urban. In Jean-Louis Denis, Catherine Régis, and Daniel Weinstock, eds., 2021. *Pandemic Societies,* pp. 83–98. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press.

This philosopher considers what a pandemic might do to cities if "the market" should take its course. The author examines planning and policy steps that might prevent cities from emptying out and dying. Kukla points out that, even with workable planning, urban life as currently known may be dramatically altered: "[T]he basic experience of living in cities, and of being a city dweller, and the human value of cities, may be changed in substantial ways." See the sidebar, below.

An embodied existential crisis

Agency in cities is deeply unequal and cities are fractured in all sorts of ways, and the pandemic has made these divisions even more vivid. But at the same

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time, cities are materially built on principles of proximity, shared space, and close-up interaction, and so the current moment is fundamentally anti-urban, insofar as we are minimizing and stigmatizing such uses of space. We can avoid romanticizing cities while acknowledging that many city dwellers are facing an embodied existential crisis on top of the economic and health crises the pandemic has wrought.

We may need to redesign city space in order to keep it safe and populated, by building in design features that keep the flow of people distanced and orderly, and which encourage home-based activities and privilege intimate encounters over mixing with strangers. But these redesigns risk compromising both our embodied sense of home, and the distinctive virtues of urban life.

Of course, humans are creative and resilient, and new forms of life with their own distinctive value will likely emerge. It is also possible that as the pandemic fades into a memory, urban life in its traditional form will resurface, at least to an extent. Despite such hope, those of us who love and feel at home in cities have real reasons to grieve (pp. 96–97).

Elena Mancioppi, 2024. *Osmospheros: Smell, Atmosphere, Food*. Milan: Mimesis International (Vol. 12 in the publisher's series, "Atmospheric Spaces").

This food researcher examines the relationships between smell and atmospheres. She uses the word "osmospheres" to describe the "cross-sensory, affective and ecological modality of perceiving." Food is a main focus because "it exemplifies the porous boundaries between subject and the environment, identity and alterity, knowing and feeling."

John Peponis, 2024. *Architecture and Spatial Culture*. London: Routledge.

Drawing mostly on space-syntax theory, this architect considers how spatial configuration plays a central role in how buildings and cities work, particularly their movement patterns and the ways these patterns integrate or fracture human life. He makes his arguments via a blend of conceptual analysis, personal experience and remembrance, and careful study of building and place layouts.

The book's major focus is the functional and experiential linkages between design, space, and spatial culture. Chapter 2 is a useful overview of "A definition of spatial culture," and Chapter 4 considers a manner of architectural imagination grounded in "an understanding of building as intelligible and animated setting for the everyday life of individuals, communities, or organizations." In Chapter 3, the author considers the "pedagogic functions of the city" by drawing on his adolescent experiences of Athens, where he grew up in the 1960s and early 1970s. These place memories set the stage for a chapter that is "part nature, part montage, and part collage." Below are his entries on "shops" and the "Acropolis."

Shops

The shops, at least those that the band of friends to which I belonged frequented, were … often holes in the wall on side streets, densely packed so that you could hardly circulate inside, and each uniquely specialized. Where does one find affordable high-quality replacements for record player styluses? Are Ibanez guitars and Farfisa amplifiers, then cheaper, able to imitate the sound of Fender? Where does one get army surplus sleeping bags, preferably of US origin because they are lighter and more comfortable? And, more often, where can one get to leaf through books, books in Greek, English, or shared over the network of friends, and information imparted by the shopkeeper.

Each shop had two addresses, one in the geography of the city, and one in the geography of the collective expertise developed by bands of friends. And it had two faces, that of the shopkeeper, and that of the friend who could be trusted to know how that shop compared to others of the same kind that one had not visited or could not visit.

In general, the shops were empowering. They provided instruments that made other things possible: books to fuel discussions; equipment to enable performances; equipment to play music; equipment to travel with.

I remember this intense instrumentality associated with shops as competing with their other evidence function: image making. Finding the right faded blue jeans or Converse All Star shoes was important; as important as finding barbers who could make your haircut look as though it complies with government-imposed school norms while actually being longer, particularly the part tucked behind the ears.

But none of that was more important than books, record player cartridges, and sleeping bags (p. 47, p. 49).

The Acropolis

Few places in Athens could simultaneously respond to the desire to situate oneself in the landscape and the desire to situate oneself in society. The hill of Areopagus was such a place. When you looked at it at night, you had to try hard to distinguish bodies from rock formations. Single people, couples, small groups, all sat in silence or conversation, on occasion brought together by song.

Sometimes I left the hill with an inner illusion that while sitting there, I could see, between myself and the stretching surface of night lights, any movie I wanted to project, always aware that the Acropolis stood behind me, and looked at the city over me, through me, and subtracting me, all at the same time. Not quite the Acropolis

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of schoolbooks, certainly not the Acropolis of 19th-century paintings, nor even just the Acropolis of the Funerary Oration by Pericles, so often evoked by my father, but some other Acropolis.

A more intimate Acropolis that existed as a promise whispered every time one saw it in the course of life, from streets, balconies, windows, and terraces, every time the everday got punctuated by the recognition of sight, every time that what one had learned about the Acropolis got filtered, quite involuntarily, by the circumstances of one's life.

Movie theatres were the commons of the imagination, Areopagus was a shrine to the power of imagining, and the Acropolis stood as the witness of everything (p. 54).

Mark F. Riegner, 2023. Parrots and People: a Morphodynamic Convergence. *Jahrbutch für Goetheanismus 2023*. DOI:10.18756/jfg.2023.39.

Drawing on a Goethean perspective, this ecologist draws on the many species of living parrots (398 species) to propose that these birds "share many morphological, developmental, and behavioral features with humans," for example, head shape, cognitive ability, vocal learning, delayed maturity, strong family bonds, and the prehensility of parrots' feet used for manipulation of food. Riegner concludes that "evolution can be understood as not only the result of the organism's cumulative response and accommodation to shifting external conditions of the environment but also to the internal integration and coherence of dynamically interacting anatomical, morphological, behavioral, and developmental processes" [that can be labelled] "convergent morphodynamics." See the sidebar, right.

Embodying humanlike features

[O]ur strong fascination with parrots, and the close association between these birds and ourselves, especially in regard to the worldwide keeping of parrots as pets …, is that we seek a striking reflection of ourselves in these remarkable birds …. Not only can they learn to speak to us verbally; they speak to our subconsciousness, to the resonance of a shared bond that grows out of similar evolutional trajectories. In a certain sense, perhaps even more so than monkeys and apes, parrots embody humanlike features and offer an opportunity to learn about ourselves.

Tragically, however, our relationship with parrots is not without consequences. A number of species have declined precipitously due to the illegal collection of wild birds for the pet trade, and the fragmentation of habitat and loss of forest due to large-scale agriculture and logging have also taken their toll on populations of wild parrots. By cultivating an appreciation of their unique constellation of attributes, such as through various studies and perhaps your own observations, and by informing oneself of the plight of particular species and supporting conservation initiatives, we can work to ensure a future for these most humanlike birds (p. 60).

Hermann Schmitz, 2024. *Atmospheres.* Milan: Mimesis International ["Atmospheric Spaces" No. 13].

German philosopher Hermann Schmitz (1928–2021) was the founder of a research tradition called the "New Phenomenology," which focused on less effable qualities of human experience, including atmospheres and the "felt body." This volume is a collection of his writings and is said to point to a "new theory of embodiment and feelings based on atmospheres, unstable but powerful phenomena that fill the 'surfaceless spaces' of lived experience." Includes an introduction by philosopher of atmospheres Tonino Griffero.

Tabb, Phillip James, 2024. *Thin Place Design: Architecture of the Numinous.* London: Routledge.

This architect aims to understand environments with a striking sense of place, which he relabels with the term "thin places"—places with special atmosphere evoking a sense of sacredness and mystery. The odd label "thin" is used to suggest an accessible break experientially between this everyday world and the realm of unusualness and holiness. Case studies include Ireland's Skellig Michael Island; Omen's Wadi Bani Oasis, the Chapels of Ronchamp and Rothko, and Siena's Piazza Del Campo.

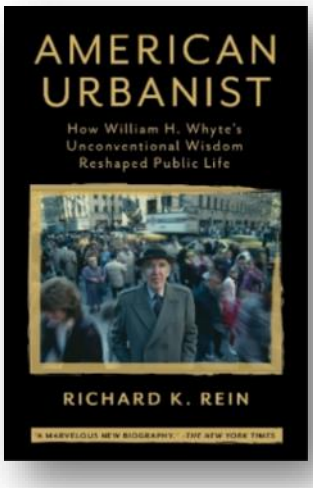
Zhneshan Yang, Xu Huang, Yi Sun, and Hanyan Li, 2024. Street Ballet in the Context of Population Contraction: A Case Study in Rugao City, *Cities*, Vol. 139; doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2024.104980.

This study draws on interviews and place observations to consider the street vitality of Dongda Street in Rugao City, located in the Yangtze River Delta of China's Jiangsu Province. The researchers suggest that, "while Dongda Street is an aging neighborhood, the survival of the original street pattern and old buildings has allowed the neighborhood to retain its historical flavor." In addition, there has arrived "creative industries and merchants" who inject "new vitality into the neighborhood." The authors write:

[W]hen exploring street ballet, it is important to note that the locals (insiders…) may be more accustomed to the ballet. Nevertheless, for the newcomers (the outsiders…) is street ballet considered old-fashioned? What are the patterns of interaction between the locals and newcomers? Can the contradictions and conflicts be reconciled? Can the local experiences of these two groups merge into new street ballets? (p. 3)

Book Note

Richard K. Rein, 2022. *American Urbanist: How William H. Whyte's Unconventional Wisdom Reshaped Public Life*. Washington, DC: Island Press.



This writer and journalist provides an instructive biography of the urbanist William H. Whyte, best known for his 1980 *Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* and the accompanying film that has instructed at least four generations of urban designers and environment-behavior researchers on the subtleties of good city design, especially the making of bustling central-city plazas.

Rein begins with Whyte's high-school education and studies at Princeton. After serving as a Marine in World War II, Whyte worked for *Fortune* magazine and wrote several books, including the 1956 bestselling *Organizational Man*, in which Whyte warned against "group-think," an expression he invented to describe "rationalized conformity."

Also at *Fortune*, Whyte spearheaded *The Exploding Metropolis*, an edited collection that included the influential chapter, "Downtown Is for People," by urbanist Jane Jacobs, whom Whyte would courageously support in writing her 1961 controversial blockbuster *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, one of the great twentieth-century studies of the workings of vibrant urban places.

In the early 1970s, Whyte and a team of research interns began to study New York City public spaces and how people used them. His research team recorded plaza sitting and movement behaviors via mappings, photographs, verbal descriptions, and time-lapse photography. The aim was to identify plaza features that strengthened or undermined plaza social life. Whyte demonstrated how small design variations could radically shift how hospitable a public place could be.

Like Jane Jacobs' city studies, Whyte's work, particularly *Social Life*, continues to play an integral role in environment-behavior research and in urban studies, architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design and planning. Toward the end of his life, Whyte confided the worry that "No one will ever remember what I've done." In fact, Whyte is one of the great figures in urban place studies, and Rein's biography is a valuable signpost demonstrating why his work remains so insightful.

A connected critic

By the end of his time at *Fortune* [1959], Whyte was well known as a journalist and author. But he was moving quickly to a larger role. Cornell historian Robert Vanderlan sized up the literary lions of Time Inc., including Whyte, in a 2010 book, *Intellectuals Incorporated: Politics, Art, and Ideas inside Henry Luce's Media Empire*. To Vanderlan, these writers, including among others, James Agee, Daniel Bell, John Hersey, Dwight Macdonald, Archibald MacLeish, T. S. Matthews, Theodore White, and John Kenneth Galbraith, as well as Whyte, were more than journalists and authors. There were "connected critics," [defined as] "one who operates in the 'everyday world' and is able 'to study its internal rules, maxims, conventions, and ideas …' The everyday world—especially its rules, maxims, conventions, and ideals—had become William H. Whyte's oyster (p. 76).

Idiosyncrasies of urban life

While it was not the product of a skilled film documentarian, the *Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* movie clearly benefited from a prolonged evolution, with many screenings and much editing …. Eventually, … Whyte gathered enough [financial] support to have the film edited with his own narration included in the soundtrack.

Whyte's observations in the film reflected the idiosyncratic aspects of urban life. The film shows the flows of city life that could never be explained by a planner's checklist or a zoning amendment. Two businessmen are on a collision course as they cross the Seagram plaza. One holds up and adjusts his course slightly, and they pass without incident.

The vitality of a public space depends as much on its entrance to the sidewalk as it does on the space itself. Whyte catches people taking notice of Paley Park with no intention of walking into it, and then, in some cases, veering off their course and into it anyhow ….

The film celebrates the serendipitous delights of the urban scene. While most of its brightest moments were filmed in the streets of Manhattan and a few other metropolitan centers, some variation of the joys experienced there can be found in just about any place where people gather.

Now four decades old, Whyte's observations stand the test of time. Fashion-conscious viewers might find the clothes out of date. Otherwise, most of the scenes could have been filmed yesterday. The film was—and still is—authentic. It is proof that Whyte's urbanism was as much art as it was science (p. 200, p. 201).

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Celebrating 35 Years of Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology

Ingrid Leman Stefanovic

Stefanovic is Professor Emerita, University of Toronto; and Professor and Dean Emeritus, Simon Fraser University. Her books include *Safeguarding Our Common Future: Rethinking Sustainable Development* (2000); *The Natural City* (2015); and *The Wonder of Water* (2020). www.ingridstefanovic.com; ingrid.stefanovic@utoronto.ca.

Remember to celebrate milestones as you prepare for the road ahead.
—Nelson Mandela

Years ago, I had the great fortune to see a film called "Babette's Feast"—what critics call "a timeless Scandinavian treat" [1]. Based on a book by Karen Blixen, this moving 1987 Danish drama describes how a refugee chef from Paris transforms and inspires a small community of friends in bleak, nineteenth-century Denmark by preparing a single, celebratory dinner.

The film is one of my favorites, and I recommend it highly to *EAP* readers. In my eyes, it shows how an *e-vent*—what Heidegger might have called an *Ereignis* and genuine, fateful gathering of Being—constitutes a disclosure of truth itself. Celebratory moments are important because, though fleeting, they help to articulate and unveil meaning and remembrance as one stops to mark a shared event.

So accordingly, today, we stop to celebrate and commemorate 35 years of an extraordinary newsletter, *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology*, compiled, and sustained by an equally extraordinary scholar, editor, and friend, David Seamon. We may not share dinner, but we can, each of us, raise a symbolic glass of good cheer to honor, applaud, and revel in the moment that marks three and a half decades of unique offerings and a feast of shared insights, graciously provided by David to each of us [2].

To this day, I still remember encountering the newsletter the first time. Having studied within traditional philosophy departments for some years, it was a breath of fresh air to see David explicitly bringing together both the "environmental" and "architectural" in conversation with phenomenology. No one had done so previously. Yet, it made sense that building, dwelling, and thinking as introduced by Heidegger should continue to elicit dialogue, learning, and inspiration to help us construct our architectural places in an environmentally sustainable way. Not only was philosophy shown to be impactful, but phenomenology itself was guiding that vital excursion into a meaningful dialogue with our built and natural worlds.

Today, *EAP* not only inspires but provides practical benefits by ensuring that we are kept up to date on one another's work. David puts some hard work into publishing selections and synopses of recent books and articles, as well as highlighting conferences and symposia—all useful measures to ensure that we remain apprised of the most important, recent environmental and architectural phenomenology research. Without thinking, we each make our way through this section of the newsletter, informing ourselves—and taking for granted that David will continue to keep us informed. We should each stop and acknowledge our gratitude for such regular, informative updates!

The fact is that, over the years, *EAP* has played an important role in educating us about building, dwelling, and thinking, exploring interpretations of place, city planning, climate change, lived experience, and a range of lifeworlds. Open even a few recent *EAP* issues, and you will encounter a multitude of themes, from the meaning of embodiment to the role of archetypes and space syntax, *genius loci*, and ethnographic research, exploring geographical locations from deserts to Alaskan snowscapes. What incredible richness in these pages! And such a plethora of knowledge to celebrate!

Through the newsletter, David has enlarged on many levels, the very world of phenomenology itself. And for this achievement, we thank him. The field has certainly evolved over the decades. From postmodernism to philosopher Don Ihde's "post-phenomenology," or excursions into areas such as critical, historico-transcendental phenomenology, scholars have built on the historical work of Husserl, Heidegger, and other earlier Continental thinkers, struggling to take inspiration from original works while critically engaging with a growing range of issues, from science as a social construct to technology and digital media.

Some contributors continue to seek essential truths from Husserlean transcendental reflections, while other authors share postmodern critiques of metaphysical "grand narratives." These various experiments, pushing phenomenology into new areas of discourse, are inspirational to some, unsettling to others [3].

I submit, however, that this occasional disagreement and continuing dialogue is a good thing for us all. Despite the differences, it is important to keep talking. And *EAP* is one tool that meaningfully enables such continuing discourse. Society today is increasingly divisive. Respectful, critical engagement and dialogue are the only way in which we can continue to learn and to grow. At its very origins, phenomenology challenges us to better understand the richness of lived experience in all its diverse revelations.

And so, as we raise our glass to this feast of phenomenological options that *EAP* offers, let us remember

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that there is always more that brings us together than drives us apart. Our shared sensibility toward the ever-expansive richness of our lived world collectively excites us and reminds us that the task of environmental and architectural phenomenology is to help to better understand not only philosophical truths but how to leave behind a better world.

Albert Schweitzer suggests that "each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us." For lighting such a flame through a forum whereby we can continue to engage in meaningful discourse, we applaud David Seamon and extend our thanks to him for his dedication, over 35 years, to the cause of environmental and architectural phenomenology.

We are grateful and delighted to celebrate this important milestone as we continue to travel the road ahead together.

Notes

1. See "Babettes Gaestebud (Babette's Feast) (1987)". *Rotten Tomatoes*. Flixster IOnc. Retrieved March 4, 2016.
2. *EAP* was originally envisioned in the spring of 1989 by philosopher Robert Mugerauer, interior-design educator Margaret Boschetti, and Seamon. The first *EAP* issue was published in winter, 1990. Boschetti and Seamon were *EAP* co-editors until Boschetti retired from her academic post in spring, 2003. Seamon has been *EAP* editor since fall, 2003.
3. For instance, see Elisa Magrì and Paddy McQueen, *Critical Phenomenology: An Introduction* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2022); for post-phenomenology, see https://postphenomenology.org/.

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A Hermeneutics of Restoration

Pinpointing EAP's Major Aim

David Seamon, *EAP* Editor

Recently, sociologist Alexis Gros published an important article in *Human Studies* that drew on the ideas of hermeneutic philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) to "analyze the complex relationship of tension between critical theory and phenomenology" (Gros 2024, p. 1). To clarify the conceptual aspects of this tension, Gros discussed Ricoeur's designations of a "hermeneutics of suspicion" versus a "hermeneutics of restoration of meaning"—what I call here for short, a *hermeneutics of restoration* (Ricoeur 1970, pp. 26–36).

In this commentary for the 35th-anniversary issue of *EAP*, I draw on this designation to answer a question I am occasionally asked as *EAP* editor: What is the central aim of your publication? Here, I answer that *EAP* aims for *a hermeneutics of restoration as possibilities arise in relation to environmental, architectural, and place themes*.

First, I describe Ricoeur's two designations and then illustrate how *EAP* can be portrayed as an exercise in the hermeneutics of restoration.

Contrasting manners of meaning

Hermeneutics is the study of interpretation, giving particular attention to the lived nature of understanding and meaning (Mugerauer 1994; Palmer 1969). What does it mean to understand, how does understanding unfold, and what is the range of modes of understanding and meaning? For Ricoeur, hermeneutics involved a disciplined gathering together of the interpreter and the text, thing, or situation to be understood (Ricoeur 1970, p. 21). One may speak of obvious texts such as novels, paintings, photographs, or films, though it's important to recognize that more complex phenomena can also be understood as texts—for example, a place, a place experience, a building, an architectural experience, and so forth. As readers know, these are central topics covered by *EAP*.

In his 1970 *Freud and Philosophy*, an interpretive study of Freudian psychoanalysis, Ricoeur (1970) described the two contrasting modes of interpretation. Broadly, these two modes involve contrasting motivations grounded in whether one distrusts or trusts the text one wishes to understand: "willingness to suspect, willingness to listen; vow of rigor, vow of obedience" (ibid., p. 27). Ricoeur emphasized that neither mode of understanding is better than the other, and that both might be necessary for a thorough explication of the text. These two modes can be detailed as follows.

1. A hermeneutics of suspicion

This manner of interpretation incorporates a style of understanding that distrusts the veracity of real-world experience and knowledge, which are seen as a "false front" that obscures more relevant philosophical, psychological or societal aspects of the situation. The assumption is that "consciousness is not what it thinks it is" because it is distorted by an unnoticed fog of misunderstandings and falsities (ibid., p. 27, p. 32). The aim is to "purify discourse of its excrescences, liquidate the idols, go from drunkenness to sobriety, realize our state of poverty once and for all" (ibid., p. 27). One works for "a tearing off of masks, an interpretation that reduces disguises" (ibid., p. 30).

Ricoeur's three exemplars of a hermeneutics of suspicion are Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud. Though these three thinkers had vastly different points of view, what they held in common was an understanding of "the whole of consciousness primarily as 'false' consciousness" (ibid., p. 33). Though they may not have articulated the claim directly, these three thinkers assumed that the role of interpretation is "demystification" and "a reduction of the illusions of consciousness" (ibid, p. 32, p. 34).

Ricoeur emphasized, however, that this manner of interpretation should not be misunderstood as skepticism. Yes, its approach can be described as "destructive," but destructive in a useful way, since "a moment of every new foundation" replaces some older structure (ibid., p. 33).

Gros explained that the hermeneutics of suspicion is represented in current-day philosophies related to critical theory, originating in the post-World-War-II Frankfort School of philosophy represented by Theodor Adorno, Jürgen Habermas, Max Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse (Gros 2024). This intellectual tradition considered "the phenomenal lifeworld, as it appears to lay agents, as nothing but a 'context for deception' [*Verblendungszusammenhang*] fabricated by 'obscure powers' lying behind the visible surface" (Gros 2024, p. 5).

2. A hermeneutics of restoration

In contrast to suspicion, a restoration mode of meaning assumes the integrity and good will of the text, which has reason to be what it is and must be interpreted via a manner of understanding that allows the text to be present accurately, thoroughly, and as itself is. Ricoeur associated restoration of meaning with *faith*: "The contrary of suspicion, I will say bluntly is faith" that "seeks through interpretation, a second naivete" (Ricoeur 1970, p. 28).

Ricoeur explained that the major vehicle for restoration is phenomenology, the "instrument of hearing, of recollection, of restoration of meaning" (ibid., p. 28). A hermeneutics of restoration approaches experience and meaning not as "false consciousness" but as "a 'manifestation' of a true 'message' which deserves to be heard and comprehended in its own terms" (Gros 2024, p. 9). A central aim is to see the text anew, with the hermeneuticist and phenomenologist as "perpetual beginner" (Spiegelberg 1982, p. 680).

This style of understanding requires "faith in the revelation through the word," which in turn requires "care or concern for the *object*, a characteristic of all phenomenological analysis" (Ricoeur 1970, p. 28). Doing phenomenological study involves an openness to the thing with the aim of providing a supportive aperture via which the thing can most clearly reveal what it is. One looks and listens with a tireless, generous attention giving focus to the thing.

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Ricoeur pointed out that this careful, attentive way of encountering the thing is reflected in phenomenology's reaction against reductive approaches that simplify or rearrange experience and meaning to something else apart from their presence as lived experience and meaning (ibid., pp. 28-29). As Gros (2024, p. 10) explained,

... [T]his listening attitude [of restoration] is paradigmatically reflected in phenomenology's struggle against explanatory reductionism in its various forms—psychologism, historicism, sociologism, naturalism, etc.—when it comes to analyzing immediate consciousness. Generally speaking, reductionist approaches aim to explain phenomenal experience by reducing it to something else—its alleged "causes" (psychological, social, etc.), "genesis" (individual, historical, etc.), or "function" (affective, ideological, etc.) (Ricoeur 1970, p. 28).

This way of proceeding inevitably leads to disregarding the lived experience and meaning being studied—the explanandum*—as it solely focuses on its explanatory factors—the* explanans*. For this reason, restoration hermeneutics chooses descriptive and/or understanding strategies over explanatory ones.*

EAP and a hermeneutics of restoration

For better or worse, the dominant mode of intellectual understanding today is the hermeneutics of suspicion, which pervades academic journals and books via current-day offshoots of critical theory like post-structuralism, deconstruction, assemblage theory, post-phenomenology, post-colonialism, non-representational theory, and related conceptual thinking that calls the "reality" and "normativity" of human experience and human life into question by interrogating some aspect of "false consciousness."

In envisioning what *EAP* might be, we founders were aware even back in 1989 that the hermeneutics of suspicion was coming to dominate academic thinking, but all three of us—philosopher Bob Mugerauer, interior-design educator Margaret Boschetti, and I—were part of a minority movement grounded in the 1970s development of humanistic psychology, humanistic sociology, humanistic geography, and phenomenological philosophy, all of which assumed a hermeneutics of restoration whereby things and experiences had a reality true to themselves and the intellectual right to be studied and understood in terms of their integral integrity.

Coincidentally, one reads on page 2 of this *EAP* issue that the Philosophy Documentation Center has recently digitized an open-access version of the four volumes of the *Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology* (1971–1983). This free digital availability is a wonderful development, since these four volumes ably illustrate the conceptual and empirical possibilities for research grounded in a hermeneutics of restoration [1].

Originally envisioned by Duquesne psychology faculty and founding editors Amedeo Giorgi, William F. Fischer, and Rolf von Eckartsberg, these four volumes remain one of the best examples of how hermeneutic-phenomenological research sheds innovative light on taken-for-granted aspects of human life and experience.

When I was a doctoral student in the 1970s, these edited collections were a revelation because their contributors moved away from phenomenology as philosophy and instead studied real-world phenomena relevant to my research interests like at-homeness, privacy, lived space, and environmental attitudes. More important, chapters in the four volumes illustrated a range of methodological possibilities for doing empirical phenomenology, including interviews and focus groups. One hopes that this open-access digital version of these valuable texts will introduce a new generation of students and researchers to the wide-ranging possibilities of hermeneutic and phenomenological investigation.

In his chapter on "Experiential Methodology" in Volume 1 of the series, von Eckartsberg described three principles readily relatable to a hermeneutics of restoration: (1) emphasis on individual uniqueness; (2) utilization of an ecological perspective; and (3) priority of lifeworld structures. These three principles remain enlightening, accurate, and essential to a future of scholarly thinking that is real, whole, and useful. Because von Eckartsberg's principles are so important, we reproduce them in the sidebar, next page.

A restorative understanding

If one reviews the 35 volumes of *EAP*, beginning in 1990, one notes that there has been an honorable effort to review and promote entries that illustrate von Eckartsberg's three principles in a wide range of ways relevant to environmental, architectural, and place topics and concerns.

Though a hermeneutics of suspicion dominates mainline academic venues today, the alternative possibilities of restoration remain robust if much less well known. As *EAP* editor, I hope that, in time, a hermeneutics of restoration may regain intellectual and practical traction. I envision *EAP* as one promotion of this possibility. The intensifying environmental, ecological, and human crises we face today may be best addressed by a restorative mode of understanding that helps generate thoughtful, appropriate decisions and actions for the betterment of people, places, and the natural world.

Note

1. These four volumes are Giorgi, Fischer, and Von Eckartsberg 1971; Giorgi, Fischer, and Murray 1975; Giorgi, Knowles, and Smith 1979; and Giorgi, Barton, and Maes 1979. Their open-access, digital versions are published by the Philosophy Documentation Center and available at: Philosophy Documentation Center : Home (pdcnet.org).

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Methodological principles

1. Emphasis on individual uniqueness. In the realm of experience, we cannot deny the fact that human experience is unique, although there may be common structural principles and even shared experiences. This view is … indebted heavily to existential phenomenology.

2. Utilization of the ecological perspective. Experience is always somebody's unique experience. It is given to the unique individual who is living a unique life in concrete situations and who has achieved a dynamic balance in his or her everyday life-praxis.

We must adopt the individual's natural and real-life perspective if we are to describe and understand his or her experience. We cannot rely on general knowledge or even the pre-established conceptual and dimensional categories of laboratory-based and isolated-function oriented psychology.

We must ascertain what is relevant to the individual within his or her existential matrix and tie it to the existing concepts and theories only if they are existentially meaningful as applied to the lived individual under study. This does not mean that we must reject traditional conceptual and theoretical notions. It does mean, however, that this pre-established knowledge is not automatically assumed to be relevant to the concrete individual ….

3. Priority of living life structures. Husserl coined the term "Lebenswelt" to denote the matrix of taken-for-granted meaningful life-praxis which is the ground for all reflective activity of human beings. Even the highly specialized sciences are founded upon the meaningful life patterns that we live out in praxis long before we become aware of it.

It is the task of an experientially oriented psychology to describe the functioning of these life structures in human interaction and inter-experience as well as in individual experience. This of course, necessitates that we use an ecological point of view …. We must … study the individual in his or her real-world context. This argument leads us to the formulation of the object of study as *experiential ecological psychology*.

We must study actions and experiences of an individual and individuals together in the concrete setting of their life. We must study "lebenswelt-phenomena," i.e., how persons live and experience their lives (Von Eckartsberg 1971a, pp. 68–69).

In-dwelling awareness

The only kind of awareness that offers itself as a promise, in my estimation, is the consciousness of being and feeling at home. I call this *in-dwelling awareness*, being at home in one's awareness, and hence in oneself and in one's embeddedness in the world and with others and taking full responsibility for it.

We all know what this means, we all have probably experienced being-at-home in privileged moments of our lives and in intimate circumstances with intimate others. But we cannot afford to let the tension and discrepancy between our home—in which we hopefully feel really at home—and the world beyond our home through which we must move and in which we must work—often feeling not "at home" at all—become too violent.

We need to explore and foster our at-homeness in the world. This involves experimentation. We have to up-level our awareness of all of our interfaces—of how we rub with artifacts and people.

We must become aware of awareness. Only if you are aware, can you make a wise choice. Becoming aware means to recognize the total context of a situation and the interrelationship of all components. Let me call this awareness of awareness: *ecological awareness*.

This is what we need now: ecological awareness on all levels. It has to be a particular kind of ecology, however, what we might properly call *human ecology* or *existential ecology*, meaning thereby that it has to be an ecology that includes human beings as part of the system ….

I am always part of the ecology in which I move and my being there and of it—whether as an individual or as humankind—has the greatest consequences because humans are the most pervasive, persistent, and powerful agents of change. Therefore, we must learn to be more careful….

Existential ecology … points to the interrelationships of all people and components of a situation and the subtle interchanges. Existential ecology, i.e., the way in which an individual or a group of individuals together find themselves already embedded and in communion with one another and with their environment, is a very subtle but extremely interesting phenomenon. It circumscribes a situation and an atmosphere, a climate, a type, and style of awareness, a *style of life*.

Becoming ecologically aware, to me, is the most exciting venture to get into. To become aware of your awareness as an individual or as a group is the "ultimate experiment," and it yields increasing autonomy and independence as well as self-realization.

It is also a life-necessity at this point in human history because without it, all our change-actions and remedial programs will have to remain stop-gap measures and never reach the root of the problem, which is voluntary and permanent transformation of the experiaction-patterns [sic] of individuals based on deeper understanding and awareness.

People must become aware of and develop viable lifestyles based on ecological principles, and they must do it themselves. It cannot be legislated (Von Eckartsberg 1971b, pp. 376–77; pp. 378–79).

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Artificial Intelligence and Hannah Arendt's Phenomenological Insights

Edward Relph

***Relph** is Emeritus Professor at the University of Toronto and a key founder of research that has come to be identified as "phenomenologies of place." His books include* Place and Placelessness *(1976; reprinted 2008);* Rational Landscapes and Humanistic Geography *(1981; reprinted 2016); and* Toronto: Transformations in a City and its Region *(2013). Ted.relph@gmail.com.*

A twenty-two-word statement on the risks of extinction posed by artificial intelligence, signed by hundreds of computer and AI scientists, was published in May 2023. It echoed the slightly longer but more suggestive comments made in 2016 by Stephen Hawking at the opening of the Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence at the University of Cambridge. He explained that:

[S]uccess in creating AI, could be the biggest event in the history of our civilisation. But it could also be the last, unless we learn how to avoid the risks. Alongside the benefits, AI will also bring dangers, like powerful autonomous weapons, or new ways for the few to oppress the many.

These suggestions of extinction and oppression reminded me of the insights of philosopher Hannah Arendt. More than half a century ago she argued that the modern age had taken a radical and destructive turn with the invention both of totalitarianism—"a novel form of government ... that uses terror to subjugate mass populations"—and atomic weapons that could destroy civilization.

Arendt had been a student of Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl, and Karl Jaspers. All her work is profoundly, though implicitly, phenomenological, which is to say it is an attempt to unravel human experiences without denying their complexity and contradictions.

In the prologue to *The Human Condition*, first published in 1958, she wrote: "For some time now a great many scientific endeavours have been devoted to making life 'artificial' … in other words to escape ties to nature." But in the same paragraph she wrote: "... life itself is outside this artificial world" (Arendt 1998, p. 2). Phenomenology is primarily about life outside this artificial world and the experiences that inform it.

I have two questions about AI that follow from Arendt's philosophy. First, do her insights, especially those about totalitarianism, apply to the possibility that self-serving individuals or groups might use AI's capabilities for conveying misinformation to oppress the many? Second, might phenomenology, as a way of thinking about human experiences of the life-world, offer some resistance to the incursions and challenges posed by AI?

Two initial caveats

'Artificial intelligence' is a widely used term, but what it means is not altogether clear. 'Artificial' apparently refers just to the use of computers to perform tasks normally associated with human abilities, such as analyzing data. 'Intelligence' is trickier. The Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence states bluntly on its website that "… intelligence, both natural and artificial, is notoriously difficult to define." It is not a uniquely human attribute because in various ways it is apparent in all living things.

Nevertheless, computers, which can process complex data far faster than humans, are now beginning to write their own code, to make independent decisions, and to respond to social situations much as a human would. Hawking (2016) suggested that in theory there is no deep difference between what can be achieved by a computer and human brain, and that it follows that computers should be able to emulate and perhaps supplant human intelligence.

I have two caveats here. One is that human brains are attached to human bodies, not computer networks, and our bodies have feelings, emotions and meaningful interactions with other humans. Precisely because it is artificial, AI is asocial, emotionally sterile, devoid of meaning, and literally thoughtless because computers process data rather than think.

The other caveat, especially close to my interests, is that AI is placeless. It is unrooted. It exists in chips, semiconductors, circuit boards, and networks that are everywhere yet nowhere. Human intelligence is grounded in the brains and bodies of individuals living in and visiting specific places. Experience of those places is shared with other individuals, each of whom has their own perspective that is nevertheless intersubjectively shared with others.

Whatever we think or do, we do it *somewhere*, in a specific place that conditions our activities and thoughts, and in the context of others. An important theme in Arendt's work is that the shared, intersubjective character of human existence in places is the foundation of political life. Insofar as AI undermines place, it undermines both politics and a fundamental aspect of what it means to be human.

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The political risks of AI

In spite of a wide range of concerns, research and investment in AI is being promoted enthusiastically by businesses, governments, and universities because of its potential to replace routine tasks, reduce inefficiencies, improve productivity, and increase profits. There are also claims that its ability to identify otherwise indiscernible patterns in data will enable it to detect fraud, crack down on human trafficking, eradicate poverty and disease, tackle overfishing, and solve climate change (see, for example, Hartwig 2023, Berkeley 2023, World Economic Forum 2021).

On the other hand, there are concerns that AI will trigger job losses, increase inequality, and accidentally spread disinformation (during wildfires in California, navigational programs directed drivers toward the fires because roads heading that way had less traffic). And long before self-replicating, data-processing devices bring civilization to an end, there is the likelihood that AI will become a tool to undermine politics.

The historian Yuval Noah Harari (2023) argues that human culture is based in telling stories—for instance, about money, religion, politics, democracy, human rights—that are then inscribed in laws and institutions. Harari asks what might happen when ChatGPT and other AI technologies are used by malevolent individuals or groups to generate and spread convincing stories that have almost no basis in facts or reality yet further authoritarian ambitions.

This is the context in which Arendt's phenomenological interpretation of totalitarianism has relevance. She was especially interested in the fact that Nazi and Stalinist totalitarian regimes were based on popular compliance with ideas and practices manifestly abhorrent. Terror and secret police played a great part. But no less important, in her view, were the stories people were told about a glorious national identity and promises of a better future. In these narratives, what mattered were not facts and evidence so much as a consistent ideology offering all-embracing explanations and assurances. Negative consequences and inconsistencies were ignored or perhaps dismissed as aberrations because they did not conform with the better, 'truer' reality implicit in the ideology (Arendt 1951, pp. 270–71).

One reason these stories were so widely accepted was that in a world where so much appeared to be accidental and incomprehensible, they offered a simple alternative both to apparently ineffectual government policies and to complicated explanations provided by scientists and intellectuals (Arendt 1978, p. 3).

It has already become clear from instances such as the AI invention of fake legal cases that the power of generative AI could be used to fabricate convincing stories based on little or no empirical evidence but using effective language gleaned from databases of hundreds of thousands of books to suggest simple solutions to complex problems [1]. These fabrications could then be spread through the echo chambers of social media.

Another reason that Arendt identified for popular compliance with totalitarian government was what she called "loneliness," not in the sense of solitude but as a feeling of not belonging, of being uprooted and superfluous. She regarded this situation as having become an everyday experience for the masses of modern society. "To be uprooted means to have no place in the world recognized and guaranteed by others; to be superfluous means not to belong in the world at all" (Arendt 1951, p. 475).

In March 2023, the US Surgeon General published an advisory on *Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation*. This advisory indicates that loneliness poses serious risks for the health of individuals, has harmful social effects, undermines engagement essential for healthy communities, and fosters ideological division. The advisory also identifies innovations that enhance capabilities for spreading misinformation:

> *A variety of technologies have quickly and dramatically changed how we live, work, communicate, and socialize. These technologies include social media, smartphones, virtual reality, remote work, artificial intelligence, and assistive technologies (US Surgeon General 2023, pp. 18–21).*

These electronic-communication technologies divide as much as they connect, and the role of AI may be to act as an accelerant, intensifying deleterious effects on the epidemic of loneliness and superfluousness.

There is nothing new about lies, deception, and contrived stories used to further political ambition. What is new with AI is that it has the potential to dramatically increase the sophistication of how these deceptions are employed because it reinforces the strategies of surveillance capitalism that use the analysis of meta-data to target susceptible groups, in combination with the creation of alternative facts; the invention of plausible false histories; and hyper-realistic deep fakes of photos, videos, and voices.

Arendt's insights suggest that these developments could well facilitate a drift toward authoritarianism.

Phenomenology as resistance to AI

At least in terms of its social and political effects, AI is a powerful supplement to electronic media that provides instantly processed, secondhand knowledge about what is happening in the world and how we should respond. Phenomenology differs in a radical way from AI because phenomenology is a way of understanding the life-world as we encounter it with our own ways of engagement and through unmediated, everyday experiences.

Arendt rarely mentioned phenomenology in her writings, but its perspective is implicit in her statement about the purpose of *The Human Condition*:

> *[T]his book does not offer an answer to the perplexities of the modern world [but] is a reconsideration of the human condition from the vantage point of our newest experiences and most recent fears …. What I propose, therefore, is very simple: it is nothing more than to think what we are doing (Arendt 1998, p. 5).*

In practice, phenomenology is neither simple nor easy (and is mostly used for more modest topics than Arendt's). It involves the difficult work of observing, thinking about, reconsidering, elaborating, and explicating the character and the meanings of what we encounter in the everyday world, including things and activities that may seem obvious because they

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are usually taken for granted, but are, as Arendt's writing illustrates, complex, subtle, ambiguous, and sometimes inconsistent.

There are two insights in Arendt's phenomenological investigations that suggest limits to the aspects of everyday human life that AI can displace. The first, which she elaborated at length in *The Human Condition*, is that human beings

... are totally conditioned existentially by the time span between birth and death, subject to labor in order to live, motivated to work to make themselves at home in the world, and roused to action to find their place in the society of fellows (Arendt 1978, pp.70–71; see also 1998, p.7).

Arendt understood labor, work, and action as the basic condition of human life on earth. By labor, she meant all activities involved in meeting the necessities of biological life—breathing, giving birth, finding food, and so on—that are essential yet leave no lasting trace on the earth. In contrast, work corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence: "the work of our hands as distinguished from the labor of our bodies" makes the diverse things of the artificial world to create things that endure and places fit for "action and speech" (Arendt 1998, p. 7, p. 136, p. 173).

AI extends Arendt's realm of artifice to work of the mind. Action is the intersubjective process that happens directly between people without the intermediary of things. Action is clearly expressed whenever people organize for a shared purpose through a combination of consent and rational persuasion (Arendt 1978, p. 202). The basis for such cooperation follows from what she called "plurality," the fact that we live on earth with others (Arendt 1998, pp. 7–8).

In practice, obviously, there are no neat boundaries between labor, work, and action. Improvements in tools and the realm of work have made the labor of life easier, for instance, by reducing the effort of providing food and the pain of giving birth; and smart phones have infiltrated social and political life and distorted the character of plurality.

The consequence is that it has become increasingly difficult to recognize and remember that "life itself is outside the artificial world" (Arendt 1998, p. 121). Nevertheless, what Arendt's phenomenological explication indicates is that natural life and plurality are conditions of everyday human life that at their base are distinct from the artificial products of work. It follows that, although they may be poached on by AI, they cannot be entirely displaced.

The second insight is that everyday experiences and actions are connected through commonsense, an idea that permeates Arendt's thinking (see Arendt 1998, pp. 208–09; 1978, 50ff.). Commonsense is a sixth sense that ties together the five biological senses so that they apprehend the same object (Arendt 1978, p. 19, pp. 50–53). In the context of action and plurality, commonsense is the intersubjectivity that makes it possible for people in plural to trust their sense experiences about how the world appears and then to act together (Arendt 1951, p. 476).

Arendt argues that, since the seventeenth century, modern science and philosophy have, in their search for a reality in the atoms, cells and electrons that lie behind the appearances of the everyday world, undermined the importance of commonsense. Nevertheless, it remains:

a fact of everyday life which neither the scientist nor the philosopher can ever escape, to which they must always return from their laboratories and studies, and which shows its strength in never being in the least changed or deflected by whatever they may have discovered when they withdrew from it (Arendt, 1978, p. 24; 1998, pp. 275–77).

In other words, without commonsense, the human world with all its scientific theories and technological marvels cannot function. It is what ties together the ordinary, everyday experiences that make possible the existence of places and communities, including those where all the codes and devices of AI are created and used.

Computer technologies, smart phones, ChatGPT, and the other emerging forms of AI may disrupt everyday life, but they will remain dependent on the world of natural life, plurality, and commonsense. Short of total replacement of humans by robots, we will still live, breathe, encounter joy and sorrow, make friends, work with others, engage with places, walk along streets, drive on highways, get meals in restaurants, and otherwise use commonsense to conduct our everyday lives.

A role for phenomenology

David Seamon (2023, p. 19) recently defined phenomenology in terms that echo Arendt's ideas:

Most simply, phenomenology is the description and interpretation of human experience .... A central focus is the lifeworld—the typical, taken-for-granted context of everyday experience of which, most of the time we are unaware ... an integral structure of the lifeworld is the lived body, which, through unique modes of encounter and interaction with the world at hand, contributes to the generative structure of each person's experiences.

Description and interpretation require looking carefully and thoughtfully at the lifeworld without a priori assumptions or ideological biases, finding their significance in a way comprehensible to others, and considering implications and consequences. Looking for oneself in this way, trusting the evidence of one's own senses and commonsense, recognizing and remembering that life "is outside the artificial world," has become essential because the artificial world is increasingly infected by misinformation, loneliness, and shades of authoritarianism.

Phenomenology offers neither solutions nor answers to such profound problems; it will not slow the widespread adoption of AI. But it is an alternative, relatively independent, thoughtful way of demonstrating that not everything human can be reduced to and replicated by electronically artificial processes. In that respect, I think it has an important role to play in identifying, challenging and perhaps mitigating the potential dangers in AI that Stephen Hawking and others have identified.

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Note

1. The database of pirated books being used to train artificial-intelligence systems, includes Hannah Arendt's books (see the list of books accessed here, September 2023).

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Symphonic Ode to Water

Kenneth Maly

***Maly** is a professor emeritus of philosophy at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse. In an email, Maly writes: "What I'm working to illustrate in the following essay is that environmental issues are intimately and inseparably one with who we are, including our inseparable oneness with the nonphysical realm, which is really who we are essentially. Being environmentally responsible is part and parcel of being human. Water as a substance and then as flowing and then as a nondual, formless dynamic takes us to what physicist David Bohm called the immeasurable—the quantum potential. Or the dao and buddha mind." kenn.maly@icloud.com.*

Overture

Thales of Miletus (624–545 BCE) is acknowledged by Aristotle to be the first Greek philosopher:

Most of those who first engaged in philosophy thought that the only origin of all things was that which underlies the form of things [hyle, ὕλη] … For there must be some dynamic unfolding [physis, φύσις] from out of which other things come into being, while it stays the same … Thales says that it is water. (Meta. 983b 7–22).

Now, if that which underlies the form of things and from out of which things come to be stays the same, is without change, is unmixed (989b 3–5), then it cannot be physical or have form. But then, how does water as nonphysical origin-source-mother fit in with water that is something?

To clarify this scenario, I focus on four things:

- What belongs to water in the obvious sense, i.e., the qualities of water as we know it, e.g., molecules.
- Opening up to what Thales wanted to say, beyond the physical.
- How the intertwining of these two enrich our feel for water.
- Images of water-watering that mirror the no-thing and no-form dynamic.

First Movement: Water as Element

Opening the mind, setting the stage, allegro

Water is one of the four elements, among earth, air, and fire. Several centuries after Thales, Galen (*Galēnos*, 129–c. 200 CE) reported Thales to have said that water is the "first of the four elements" [1]. Galen also said that for Thales "water is the principle [origin, *principium*] of all things, and from it [water] all elements of the world as well as the world itself and everything given birth in it exist" [2].

Water is the only substance, i.e., with "form," that has three states: liquid, solid, gaseous. Liquid as in water, mist, rain, fog, dew; solid as in snow, ice, frost; gaseous as in vapor, steam, clouds. We find liquid water in springs, rivulets, streams, rivers, and the sea or ocean. And in waterfalls. And in floods, monsoons, hurricanes, tsunamis. And in saliva, tears, sweat, perspiration.

We find solid water in the winter's snow and ice. We find gaseous water in evaporation or sublimation of ice, which passes directly from solid to gas without being liquid. This includes dry ice.

Earth is mostly water: seventy percent of the earth's surface is water. In general terms, the human body can survive thirty to forty days without food, but only about three days without water. Fetuses and babies have an above ninety percent concentration of water, which decreases as we grow older. Still, throughout our lives we are mostly water!

Water is unique in that it does not have its own shape but is shaped by its "container." In that sense, water is wild, i.e., "untamed" or "free." Moving water purifies, washing away the stains. Its active flow carries energy—witness the creation of negative ions in waterfalls.

The chemical composition is two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen, H_2O. This is the "form" of water. But, in a sense, water as it flows is "formless," taking on the shape of the jug, the mountain lake, the waterfalls.

Second Movement: Water as Flowing Process

Relaxing, andante, adagio

Let us hear Nietzsche from *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*:

Greek philosophy seems to begin with an absurd notion, with the proposition that water is the origin and womb of all things…. Had he [Thales] said, "water turns into earth," we should have but a scientific hypothesis, a wrong one but difficult to disprove. But he went beyond the scientific … Thales did not overcome the low level of empirical insight prevalent in his time. What he did was to pass beyond its horizon …. What drove him …was … to see [just how] "all things are one" [3].

For Nietzsche, Thales was exploring a new way of seeing the world. Thales's word *water* is a marker, an image—not a metaphysical "reality." The magnificence of the image of water is that it mirrors flowing, movement, change, dynamic unfolding. First, "all is water" says that all is non-dually one. Then, the no-thing nondual dynamic within which phenomena appear is, "like water," changing, becoming, dynamic—flowing.

That by which all things are. That which underlies the form of things, as its source or origin. Water is indeed physical but also names the no-form nondual no-thing dynamic of unfolding, coming to be. For Thales, water goes beyond the physical, mirroring those qualities of movement,

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change, even force … all names for a dynamic that is *not* physical! I repeat:

Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, 983b 10:
Most of those who first engaged in philosophy thought that the only origin of all things was that which underlies the form of things [hyle, ὕλη] … For there must be some dynamic unfolding [physis, φύσις] from out of which other things come into being, while it stays the same … Thales says that it is water.

I add, again Aristotle (984a 27):

> *… something else [besides the physical] is responsible for the change. But to inquire after this is to seek that other kind of source, which we would call that from which the origin of motion is.*

Rather than seeing Thales' thinking as a quest of empirical science and for proof and certainty, it is philosophical thinking. For Nietzsche, the philosopher

is ever on the scent of those things that are most worth knowing, the great and the important insights … The philosopher seeks to hear within himself the echoes of the world symphony and to re-project it … He grasps for it in order to get hold of his own enchantment … Thus Thales had seen the oneness of all that is [the way things are and not as a static unity!], but when he went to communicate it, he found himself talking about water! [4]

A nondual dynamic, nonphysical field of energy, immaterial, which is shone in the dynamic flowing and changing that is water—or "watering."

Third Movement: Watering as Nondual Dynamic

The two intertwined non-dually, minuet

What is it about water that allows it to mirror that "dynamic unfolding from out of which other things come into being while it stays the same"? For the dynamic unfolding that stays the same can only be essentially without form and no-thing. What are the qualities of this no-form and no-thing dynamic that "water" shows?

First, we see how the qualities named in snow and water and ice and steam and clouds are ever changing and moving. We must resist the temptation to see, in these forms of water, only the definite substances, only water as "form." And if we focus on the changing aspect, we resist tying them down.

Daoism is one of the best mirrors for experiencing, thinking, and then saying these two aspects of water, distinguishable but not separable [5]. As Chang Chung-yuan says in his *Tao: A New Way of Thinking*:

The reality of Tao *… is formless and can only be experienced directly and spontaneously through* ming, *or primordial intuition. Discursive reasoning cannot grasp the nondifferentiated reality of things [6].*

As Chuang Tzu says: *"Since we are all One, how can we express the One?" Thus, for Taoism, non-being is inexpressible and unthinkable, not because there is nothing to express or to think about, but because non-being is the higher unity of Being and thinking [7].*

- Whatever dao is, it is nondual.
- The "unthinkable" says what is not dualistic or discursive or conceptual thinking. This thinking cannot say the nondual, because the no-thing dynamic of dao is itself beyond this kind of thinking.

And Roger Ames and David Hall in their *Daodejing* tell us that dao is "primarily gerundive, processional, and dynamic: 'a leading forth'" [8]. Following this statement, they say that they "can identify three overlapping and mutually entailing semantic dimensions" to the word *dao*:

1. Momentum: "sense of dao as unfolding disposition" as in "'life' or 'history' that resists resolution into familiar dualisms such as 'subject-object,' 'form-function' or 'agency-action' and so on."
2. Way-making: "Making way includes making productive adjustments in the direction of the lived experience by manipulating the more fluid and indeterminate opportunities that come with the unfolding of experience."
3. Decidedly verbal: "The swinging gateway—opening and then closing—is where and when dao spontaneously 'opens out' to provide creativity a space through which to make its 'entrance,' qualifying the processive nature of dao with the immediacy and specificity of the creative act." Here the image of nondual movement of all that is named in dao shines in its ongoing waying, way-making movement, with words like "the swinging gateway" that "spontaneously 'opens out'" or "the pervasive 'birthing' sense of an emerging world."

This way-making—dao, the hidden—is open and dynamic.

I now present parts of three chapters from *Daodejing* and from *Tao: A New Way of Thinking*. This will give us the "tools" for talking about the two aspects of water, namely water as a thing or substance or "form" and then water as "formless," in its no-thing dynamic, to wit: water as watering-unfolding as the nondual no-thing no-form dynamic of the one.

Chapter 1
Oftentimes without intention I see the wonder of Tao.
Oftentimes with intention I see its manifestations.
Its wonder and its manifestations are one and the same.
Since their emergence, they have been called by different names.
Their identity is called the mystery.
From mystery to further mystery:
The entry of all wonders! [9]

- *The wonder of Tao is the no-thing and no-form nondual dynamic, which is the "origin" of all things.*
- *The manifestations are the things or their aspects.*
- *Their being-one dynamic is called the mystery—also called the hidden or obscure.*

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Chapter 16
All things are together in action,
But I look into their non-action.
Things are unceasingly moving and restless,
Yet each one is proceeding back to the origin.
Proceeding back to the origin is quiescence.
To be in quiescence is to return to the destiny of being [10].

In the process of all things, emerging together,
We can witness their reversion.
Things proliferate,
And each again returns to its root.
Returning to the root is called equilibrium.
Now as for equilibrium—this is called returning to the
propensity of things [11].

- Phenomena-things: differentiation is manifestations of dao, "together in action," "all things emerging together," the myriad creatures all rising together, and
- The no-form no-thing nondual dynamic one: non-differentiation is the wonder of dao, attaining emptiness, seeing non-action of manifestations (as in noncoercive nonforcing action, like water that flows without force) or as "the absence of any course of action that interferes" with how things unfold, actions "uncompromised by stored knowledge or ingrained habits… unmediated … spontaneous" [12].
- The return from the manifestations of dao to the wonder of dao is the dynamic one-ing of the manifestations and the wonder of dao in their nondual at-oneness. This is the nondual dynamic of radiant emptiness.
- This return to the nondual oneness of dao is named here as origin and roots, whose being is quiescence.
- This return to origin-roots is called no-form nondual dynamic equilibrium, dynamically active stillness as powerful movement.
- Or equilibrium in the way that "muddy water, when stilled, slowly becomes clear" (98) or the sounding word's return to soundlessness or manifestations of dao returning to the wonder of dao.
- This equilibrium or quiescence is dao's natural inclination, its aptness, its way.

Chapter 52
When one is aware of the origin,
One knows its manifestations.
When one is aware of its manifestations,
Yet abides with its origin,
One never falls short in all of one's life [13].

- The origin is dao, and manifestations or phenomena-things emerge from within dao.
- Awareness means to abide in the origin-dao while at the same time being aware of its manifestations. With this awareness, we become one with the unfolding as such, the dynamic that Aristotle talks about with the word *physis*.

Water as oozing, flowing, moistening, bedewing, wetting, rushing, waving, splashing—taking the process aspect of all these words, we come to understand the difference between the water as molecules, as what we measure in volume, as a thing *and* the dynamic-unfolding as such, as it is mirrored in our experience of water as a verb.

Now we turn to water words that say the no-thing no-form and nondual dynamic mirrored within water as manifestation, aka things. Chapter 8 says:

The highest efficacy is like water.
It is because water benefits everything …
That it comes nearest to proper way-making [dao] [14].

Or:

That which is best is similar to the water.
Water profits ten thousand things and does not oppose them …
Thus, it is close to Tao [15].

These words mirror how water as a process is expansive, flows without self-set boundaries, without being inherently aggressive or pushy. In this dynamic, nothing is labeled or defined; and nothing is forced. This way of saying or naming "does not assign fixed reference to things" [16]. This water-as-process and unfolding stays open, without the duality of things.

Or, as Ames and Hall translate the first two lines of Chapter 34: "Way-making [dao] is an easy-flowing stream / Which can run in any direction" [17]. Chang offers this: "The magnificent Tao is all pervading. / It may penetrate to either this side or that side. / … It nurtures all things but does not rule them" [18].

Ames and Hall translate the last two lines of Chapter 65 thus: "Profound efficacy runs so deep and distant / Only to turn back along with other things to reach the great flow" [19]. The great flow is the no-form, no-thing watering-unfolding of dao.

Gathering up, we can say that water as dao—that aspect of water as flowing, dynamic unfolding as such—is undif-ferentiated, undefined, without form. Thus: one aspect of water is as molecules, a measurable and visible "thing," while another aspect is without inherent form, i.e., is not limited to any specific form. Thus, formless.

We can now return to Aristotle's comment:

the only origin of all things was that which underlies the form of things [hyle, ὕλη] … For there must be some dynamic unfolding [physis, φύσις] from out of which other things come into being, while it stays the same … Thales says that it is water. (Meta. 983b 7–22)

With these words in mind, here at the end of the third movement, we can agree that (a) there is some dynamic unfolding that stays the same, i.e., is without duality and form and is no-thing, while other things come into being within it and (b) the nondual and no-form dynamic as an aspect of water lets this be shown.

Perhaps now we can return to Nietzsche's Thales with a greater understanding:

Thus Thales had seen the [dynamic] oneness of all that is [the way things are and not as a static unity!], but when he went to communicate it, he found himself talking about water! [20]

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Fourth Movement

Images of water-watering that mirror the no-thing and no-form dynamic
Poi-etic saying, sonata

The poet writes poetry. Other names for poet are bard, troubadour, minstrel, lyricist. The language of the poet is indirect, hinting, elusive, figurative, melodic, legato, or flowing, alliterative—not conceptual or logical. For sure it is about creative words. But the word comes from the Greek *poiein-ποιεῖν*, which means to make, produce, create, celebrate, bring about or produce, do something. The Greek *poietes-ποιητής*—also spelled *poetes-ποητής*—is a maker, one who makes (Xenophon); the maker of a poem, a poet (Herodotus); more generally, a writer (Plato).

So the "poetry" that the "poet" writes is way more than just words. The word *ποίησις* has two meanings: One, poetry, poem. Two, creating, making, bringing forth. The hyphen here—*poi-esis and poi-etic*—keeps fresh our understanding that what is going on is more than "poetic" and gives our thinking-saying a space for staying open to what the word says-shows in the second sense.

Regarding water, poi-etic saying, then, does several things:

- It frees us from definitions, concepts, and stiff ideas about water.
- It frees us from dividing water as molecules and water as flowing that moves beyond water as "thing" or substance. It removes the edges or borders between the two.
- As a doing, it opens us to the *experience* of water-watering, beyond "just words."
- It opens us up to the no-form, no-thing nondual dynamic that belongs to water, is at work in the *flowing* that water does, and that we can experience—and *say, poi-etically*. This dynamic is the vastest and deepest nearness of what I call *full and enriching radiant emptiness*, which the flowingness offers to our experience.
- With all these ways of opening and freeing, we are left with awareness as such, with no center or limits.

Here at the end of the symphony, I offer three examples of poi-etic saying from Rumi. As you hear the words and pulse with their saying, perhaps you can become aware of and experience the no-boundaries of … water.

While fasting, one drinks in only the sound of water
And yet, eventually, that sound does its work
Sama *[21] is the gurgle of water as the thirsty dance*
You'll come to life with this call of babbling water
Water says: you've grown from me, you'll come to me
You'll return at last to where you first were
I swear by your precious head!
If any of this water spills on the head even one that is bald
a musk-black tangle of tufts will sprout

The imbiber did not mix the wine with this water
He'll be hungover on and on. Just wait, you'll see [22].

Whether the lover be Arab, Greek or Turk
This call [to the seeker] speaks to him, rings true
The winds lament, calling to you:
Come, follow me to the stream
I was water, turned to wind, I came
To free the thirsty from this mirage

That is the logos of wind that once was water
And will return to water when the veil falls off
This cry was heard beyond all dimensions of time and space:
Flee dimensionality, but never turn your face from me!
Lover, you're not less than a moth
And a moth never leaves the flame [23].

And finally:
Thinkers are cautious, avoid the water's edge
Lovers make deep-sea drowning their profession
Thinkers find ease in making things easy
Lovers find leisure's bindings disgraceful [24].

Here at the end and applying both aspects of water—as thing made up of molecules and as the no-form, no-thing nondual dynamic that is at work in the *flowing* that water does—we can see a greater richness in Galen's comment at the beginning:

water is the principle [origin, principium] of all things, and from it [water] all elements of the world as well as the world itself and everything given birth in it exist [25].

Notes

1. H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1903), 14.
2. H. Diels (ed.), "*Galeni Historia philosophia,"* in *Doxographi Graeci* (Berlin: de Gruyter,1929), 701. First published in 1879.
3. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks,* trans. M. Cowan (Chicago: Regnery Publishing, 1962), 38–39.
4. Ibid., 44.
5. *Tao* is the usual, traditional spelling of the word. I agree with Ames and Hall that spelling the word as dao is more accurate. In the quotations, I leave them as the translators have them. When I am not quoting, I write dao.
6. *Tao: A New of Thinking,* translated with introduction and commentaries by Chang Chung-yuan (Perennial Library, Harper and Row, 1975), xii.
7. Ibid.
8. *Daodejing: "Making This Life Significant": A Philosophical Translation,* translated with commentary by Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall (NY: Ballantine Books, 2003). Words in quotation marks here are from pages 57–59.
9. *Tao,* 1.
10. Ibid., 42.
11. *Daodejing,* 99.
12. Ibid., 39.
13. *Tao,* 132.
14, *Daodejing*., 87.
15. *Tao,* 22.
16. *Daodejing*, 45.
17. Ibid., 130.
18. *Tao,* 88.
19. *Daodejing*, 179.
20. Nietzsche, op. cit., 44.
21. "*Sama* involved listening to poetry accompanied by music, which sometimes moved the hearer to meditative or even ecstatic motion, akin to dance." In *Rumi: Swallowing the Sun. Poems Translated from the Persian* by Franklin D. Lewis (London: Oneworld Publications, 2013), 172.
22. Ibid., 39.
23. Ibid., 38.
24. Ibid., 120.
25. H. Diels (ed.), op. cit., 701.

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Experiencing a Chinese Teahouse

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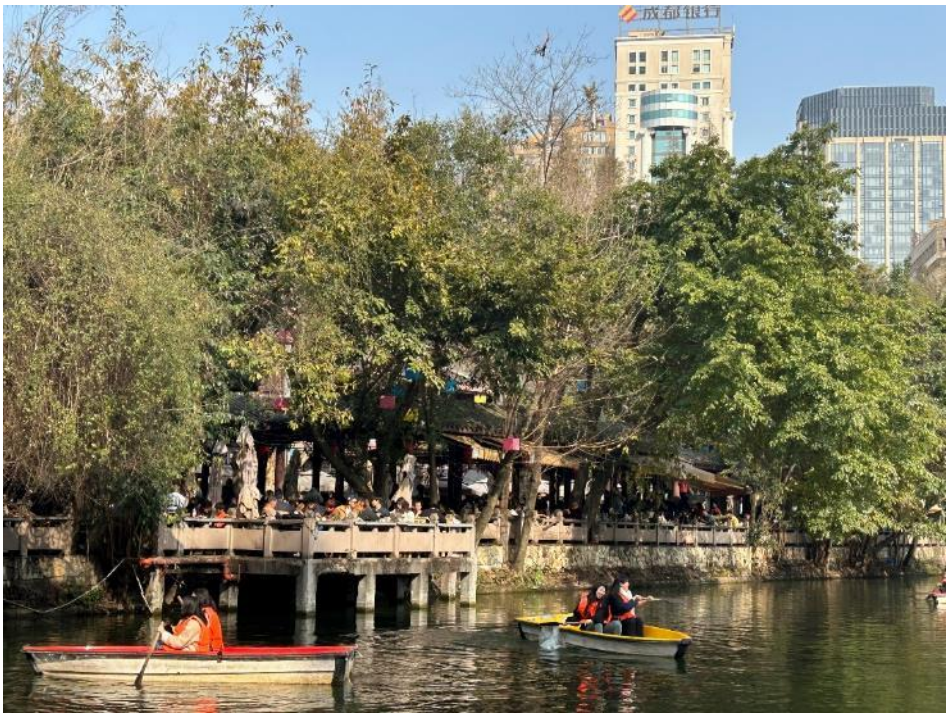
The streets of Chengdu, China, are full of teahouses of all sizes, from old teahouses in the woods in the open air, to closed teahouses hidden in larger buildings, to new teahouses with unusual décor styles. Like the cells of the human body, teahouses make up the daily life of Chengdu people and carry the local cultural genes of Chengdu (Wang Di 2021).

Unlike most of the old teahouses that have disappeared into obscurity during the city's recent development, the He-Ming Teahouse, established in 1923, has a one-hundred-year history (photo, right). In his second year of living in Chengdu, Guo entered He-Ming by chance and, in the last three years, has felt close to this teahouse. In this essay, we record these three years of experience through the method of experiential description. In the following text, "I" refers to Guo and "we" refers to Huang and Guo.



First encounter

October 2020 was the first time I went to the People's Park in Chengdu. It was China's National Day, and the park was crowded. I walked around aimlessly by myself. I stood before a wooden plaque of "He-Ming" in front of which was a large stone, on which the words "Hundred Years of He-Ming" were engraved in gold. This teahouse is surrounded by water on three sides, the pavilion-style hall building in the western Sichuan folk style hidden in the woods, with tree-shaded wooden tables and bamboo chairs where visitors drink tea.

Business at He-Ming was booming and, as far as the eye could see, not one empty seat. People crowded in the narrow aisles, with the sound of children shouting, tea drinkers laughing, vendors yelling, the sound of cards hitting the table. I weaved between the tables, trying to find an empty seat, but every step was like intruding into someone else's social space with no place to land. I eventually left the teahouse, like an immune rejection of the human body. This was my unceremonious first encounter with He-Ming. The teahouse was just a stop on my trip to People's Park.

Further experiences

April 2021, Qingming Festival. My friends from other provinces came to Chengdu to visit. It was People's Park's flower season, and we went to enjoy the blossoms and see the teahouse. This time in the bustle of the place, I was able to find an empty seat by the lake. The flexible bamboo chairs gently shifted with my body, and I felt relaxed. The trees were interspersed with shadows and the water sparkled, leisurely and self-indulgent. The chaotic scene I remembered from last time seemed much more in order.

Tea drinkers were sitting or leaning on bamboo chairs, playing cards, laughing, drinking tea, and watching the scenery. Tea workers shuttled between spaces, serving tea, pouring water, collecting money, and cleaning up. Theatre actors performed Sichuan Opera, with storytelling, singing, and art of the "long spout teapot." Venders sold their wares, tea sellers served tea and displayed tea art.

The teahouse and its patrons' body ballets together built up the rhythm of He-Ming's place ballet (Seamon 1979). At dusk, the light of the water reflected on the parasols, swaying. Spots of light fell, and the air became transparent, as if I could see the track of time. The hustle and bustle of shouts and conversations became background white noise with only the breeze and birdsong surrounding me. It seemed that this moment belonged to me alone.

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Drinking flower tea, I spent the afternoon chatting and joking with my friends. This time, I felt the rhythm of the place. It was as if I was a huge receptor. It was as if I had knocked on He-Ming's door and could see the complex world inside.

Becoming more familiar

On another national holiday in October 2022, I again visited He-Ming and thereafter frequented the place until May 2023. I studied its history and tea-drinking habits. As a photographer, I observed and recorded the way the place operated and patrons' behavioral patterns. I studied the teahouse's place ballet. The name "He-Ming" means "the cry of the white crane" and arose from dreams of the teahouse's builders. This name directs one's initial impression of the teahouse and adds an ethereal touch to its imagery.

As the twentieth century began, the significance of Chengdu's traditional teahouses was unrivalled, associated with water, gossip, entertainment, work, markets, media, and pubic "courts." Historic shifts in technologies and urban development greatly changed people's way of life in Chengdu, and the functions of the traditional teahouse gradually disintegrated. He-Ming has experienced shifts in local significance and in its place ballet over the last one hundred years. There has been a tug-of-war between place and placelessness, with the He-Ming Teahouse retaining a traditional core spirit of place while integrating a certain amount of placelessness to protect its sustainable development.

Today, as a typical representative of the image of old Chengdu, He-Ming is a "peephole" for tea drinkers to gain a glimpse of the past. From tea traders' demonstrations, I learned that one of the most popular teas in old Chengdu was "Piao Xue," a green tea with a base that is cured several times—the more times, the better the quality. Because of Sichuan's spicy, aromatic diet, the light flavor of Piao Xue is used as an antidote to fatigue [1].

The implements used by the Sichuan people to drink Gai Wan tea are called the "three-piece set" because they include a tealight, tea cover, and tea saucer. From He-Ming storytellers, I learned that different ways of placing these three pieces represent different meanings:

- Putting the tea cover down, with one side leaning against the tea saucer, signifies that water needs to be added;
- Putting leaves or tea tickets on the tea cover signifies that the patron has left but will return shortly;
- Putting the tea cover upright next to the tealight signifies that the patron cannot cover the bill and subtly hints for friends' assistance;
- Putting the cover upside down and on the tealight signifies that the patron has finished tea.

In past times, the water used in the teahouse was drawn by a waterman from the river outside the city and then boiled by a boiler man on a special hot-water stove—a *laohuzao* or "tiger stove." Today, these tiger stoves are no longer used, and hot water is drawn from the tap of a boiler and poured into a hot water kettle. The sterilized tea utensils and kettles are transported to a "transfer station" in the teahouse's front room.

Once patrons are seated, the waiter (*tang'guan* and, in the past, "Dr. Tea") provides tea leaves, tea utensils and kettle. After the patrons have finished their tea, "Dr. Tea" returns utensils and empty kettles to the transfer station from where they are taken to a back room for cleaning and sterilizing. It is via this dynamic process that the teahouse implements circulate for the enjoyment of the tea guests.

The teahouse is an open space that accommodates people of all sorts, regardless of wealth, occupation, gender, or age. One can walk into the teahouse, find their own pleasure, and no one will disturb them. In a typical day, the teahouse remains the same, with some people leaving and others entering, though as societal changes have unfolded, some of the older patrons forsook the teahouse as tourists have become more dominant, diluting and shifting the teahouse's original "ecology." An older patron explained that he and He-Ming are lifelong friends, and he has a strong sense of belonging to the place:

I've been sitting here for most of my life, and He-Ming is my second home. In the early years of urban renewal, I was worried that the teahouse would be demolished, and where to have tea in the future. Good thing that now He-Ming development is getting better and better, and even many young people come. The teahouse has a new vitality and can continue.

This patron is pleased that more and more young people come to the teahouse. He sits alone in a corner with a bowl of tea and a cigarette. Looking at the crowded place, he exhales a mouthful of smoke, thoughtfully. Perhaps he waits for a close friend who has drunk tea with him for many years, or perhaps he just looks at the scene of déjà vu in front of him, recalling the charm of the old days. After some music ends, he leaves with his hands behind his back.

Memories of He-Ming

That day, after observing diligently for several hours, I dragged my tired body from the teahouse. The old man alone, reminded me of being there with my friend. At the same time, I was saddened by how

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things had changed and how I, too, was alone just like him.

Leaving He-Ming provoked an emptiness after the bustle, and I was overwhelmed with frustration. The teahouse and the city did not seem to belong to me. In my walk home to my apartment, I traversed a flyover and noticed a busy familiar yet unfamiliar road. I felt a sense of alienation, even though I had walked this flyover many times. While I thought I had established some kind of connection with He-Ming, when I tried to find this sense of belonging, I found it was not there.

In early December 2022, Chengdu was mostly shut down because of Covid. There were few pedestrians on the streets, and He-Ming was mostly inactive. The teahouse's silence contrasted with its past bustling, as if it were an obsolete object no one had asked for. Yellowish bamboo leaves swayed in the cold wind and, under the pavilion, sat elderly tea drinkers who were patrons all year round, either alone or in groups of two or three.

For a time, I sat by the lake but left because of the unbearable cold. This visit seemed to illustrate another He-Ming in some parallel time and space. I pictured a teahouse no longer favored—just standing there forlornly, devoid of people, gradually coming to an end.

At the end of March 2023, in the blooming season of a hundred flowers, I walked toward He-Ming at my usual pace. But as soon as I entered, I was affected by the teahouse's positive ambience and unconsciously slowed down. I was more relaxed and relieved and didn't feel overwhelmed or lost. I was an ordinary tea drinker, immersed in the pleasant ambience of the place. I sat in a corner and observed an "old friend."

Opera music coming from a performance in the nearby theatre was like a time-travel machine, intimating the prosperity of the old He-Ming when first built. The older and younger people surrounding me seemed to represent some kind of inheritance and continuity. The older tea drinkers have been part of the teahouse for many years, and the place is special because of them and will be passed on to my generation. Enjoying the present is the answer they give. This song is not the song of the past and will never be extinct.

I have been to He-Ming a few times since, though now I have been away from Chengdu, walking the earth as a stranger in a foreign land as I used to do in the old days. The friends I made in Chengdu have gone their separate ways. Perusing photo albums, I miss my He-Ming encounters.

Looking back on those three years of experience, I recognize a surge of emotions that fueled my growing fondness for this place. Feelings of strangeness, novelty, ordinariness, detachment, distance, specialness, wonder, calmness, longing—all these emotions unfurled in my times with the teahouse. For me, "He-Ming" represents a fragrance of jasmine under dappled sunlight, an afternoon with my family and friends, the struggle and reconciliation between me and the place.

My relationship with He-Ming turned on moments of encounter and coincidence, was revitalized by any active push, and remained after departures. Always, I hold a closeness for this place.

Note

1. Piao Xue is a type of jasmine tea grown in Emei, Sichuan Province. The flowers are picked in the afternoon on a sunny day, and the snow-white, crystalline, budding flower buds are selected before they open, so that the tea leaves are fresh and fragrant, and then carefully handcrafted. The white jasmine on the tea broth is like dots of white snow, which has a strong ornamental value and is named Piao Xue.

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Wang Di. *The Tea Shop on the Street Corner*. Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 2021.

Photograph Captions

p. 19: He-Ming Teahouse, Chengdu, China, established 1923.

p. 20: Plaque of He-Ming Teahouse.

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p. 20: Teahouse patrons.
p. 20: Inside the teahouse.
p. 21: Ear pickers in the teahouse.
p. 21: Jasmine Tea “Piao Xue.”
p. 21: Three-piece “Gai Wan” set.
p. 21: Boiler room.
p. 21: Transfer Station.
p. 21: Back Room.
p. 22: He-Ming Teahouse, upper right.
p. 22: Older tea drinkers, left.
p. 22: Sichuan Opera, right.
p. 22: Teahouse patrons, lower left.

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Spirit Ground

Victoria King

King *is an artist, writer, and poet whose work is concerned with issues of place and displacement. She lived for many years in America and Australia, and now once again lives in England. Her artwork can be seen at: https://www.victoria-king.com. vkblackstone@gmail.com.* *Photographic captions are provided on p. 27.*

Where do the roads lead? It is not where we expected.
—Judith Wright [1]

There is no 'view from nowhere' for even the most scrupulously 'detached' observer.
—Martin Jay [2]

The American Southwest has a strong sense of genius loci. Its sublime beauty has long attracted notable artists and writers such as Georgia O'Keefe, John Marin, Marsden Hartley, D.H. Lawrence, Ansel Adams, Richard Diebenkorn, Judy Chicago, and Bruce Nauman.

Two years before she died, I travelled to Taos, New Mexico, to interview Canadian-American artist Agnes Martin [3]. For many years, the mystique surrounding her art and life had fascinated me. The horizontal and vertical pencil lines that she drew upon her large square canvases brought her critical acclaim and positioned her within the high canon of Minimalism.

Yet it was a placement to which she objected; she called herself an Abstract Expressionist [4]. When viewed on the walls of museums, her paintings appear to be Minimalist abstractions, but in New Mexico, her artworks clearly echo the landscape.

Martin lived alone on a remote mesa, and her abiding interest in Asian spiritual philosophies (whose sacred texts she often quoted) led some people to consider her a visionary mystic. For over three decades, she found inspiration, solitude, and the peace that was essential to her well-being in the spaciousness of New Mexico.

I, too, felt overwhelmed by its power and stark beauty, and by the strong presence of Native American and Hispanic cultures. Silhouettes of grey-black mountain ranges dissolve into expansive cobalt blue skies. Aromatic junipers and sagebrush dot the pinkish-orange plains, and flat-shelved mesas rest on the distant horizon. The sound of insects reverberates as the sun's heat shimmers off the baked ground.

This remarkable place touches all the senses. Paul Cezanne once said that a successful painting should contain within itself even the smell of the landscape that inspired it. For me, Martin's paintings evoke sensual memories of New Mexico [5].

The desert speaks to the soul, and spiritual seekers often seek such remote places where there are few outward distractions. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the early Desert Fathers, St. Jerome, and Meister Eckhart found that the austerity and spaciousness of the desert was conducive to a mystical life.

Yet Christian monk and Zen practitioner Thomas Merton warned of the dangers of a life of solitude: "… [developing an] attachment to one's spiritual excellence; the love of one's spiritualized, purified and 'empty' self; the narcissism of the perfect, of the pseudo-saint and of the false mystic" [6].

Rudolf Otto believed that "Empty distance, remote vacancy, is, as it were, the sublime in the horizontal. The wide stretching desert, the boundless uniformity of the steppe have real sublimity and even in us Westerners they set vibrating chords of the numinous" [7].

"The sublime in the horizontal" is an apt description of Agnes Martin's paintings. Before she moved to New Mexico, she had a successful career in New York and a loft studio at Coenties Slip overlooking the Hudson River. In 1967, fearing the imminent loss of her studio, she realized that it was essential for her to leave the city. She bought a pick-up truck and began an epic year-and-a-half road trip in search of a place where she could find peace.

A vision of a mud brick eventually led her to La Portales Mesa in Cuba, New Mexico, where she single-handedly built an adobe dwelling. She stopped painting for seven years and literally created a new life for herself on the land. It was an important turning point in her life and in her art. When she started working again, her artwork consisted only of hand-drawn parallel lines and grids. It was a discipline, she said, that kept her mind focused.

The initial inspiration for drawing horizontal lines upon her canvases came to Martin one day when she was driving out of the mountains onto the plains, and suddenly saw afresh the vast flatness of the horizon. It felt like a revelation. She said: "Simplicity is never simple. It's the hardest thing to achieve, from the standpoint of the East. I'm not sure the West understands simplicity" [8].

Throughout her life, she avidly read both Christian and Asian spiritual texts. The phrase "the people is grass" within Isaiah prompted her to intersect her horizontal lines with verticals, thereby creating one of the most fundamentally simple yet powerful dissections of space that is known [9]. Crosses and grids appear in Coptic, Celtic, Indian, Tibetan, and indigenous art. Symbolist painters used them in the nineteenth century to depict window mullions, a vehicle for light and as a metaphor for the

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spirit, and perspectival treatises of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries incorporated grids.

Martin's formative years in Canada endowed her with an undying hunger for space [10]. Loss punctuated her childhood in the great Saskatchewan prairies. Her father was a wheat farmer who died when she was two, causing her mother (who was, in Martin's words, a fierce "disciplinarian") to leave the farm and raise four young children.

In 2002, the year Martin died, she said: "I think it is more important to figure out where you want to be than it is what you want to do. First you have to find where you need to be, and then you can do what you need to do" [11]. She described her life on the thousand-foot-high isolated mesa:

Sometimes, nature calls to you and says, "Come and live with me." So I decided to experiment with the simple life. I think our culture is orientated towards ego, and winning… [it] is so chaotic and materialistic… I went up on top of a mesa that is eight miles long and six miles wide, and there was nobody up there and the nearest house was six miles away. There was no electricity and no telephones. I stayed up there for years and became as wise as a Chinese hermit [12].

Sparse, harsh beauty and silence surrounded Martin on the mesa where the Sangre de Christo Mountains rise like sentinels on the horizon. She told me that the adobe she built was next to the remains of an ancient twelve-foot square Navajo adobe, twice the size of her favored six-foot square canvases.

Native American and Hispanic-Christian adobe chapels and churches are ubiquitous in New Mexico, and folk art *retaro* figures of saints and flat, brightly painted designs adorn their interiors. Devoted pilgrims seek relief from their suffering by walking to the Sanctuario de Chimayo to take from its Shrine of the Holy Earth some of the sandy soil believed to bestow miracles.

The adobe mission church of St. Francisco de Asis has extraordinary, monumental simplicity. The local community unites each year to apply with their bare hands a mixture of local earth, water, and straw to renew the sensuous, curved surfaces of the church. Built between 1772 and 1816, the structure evokes pure awe. In *Spirituality in the Art of 20th Century New Mexico*, Sharyn Udall wrote: "To generations of Americans weary of accepting European cultural superiority, the notion that this continent possessed an indigenous artistic legacy was a breakthrough of real significance" [13].

Mabel Dodge Luhan, a flamboyant, early Taos resident and enthusiastic advocate of Native American and Hispanic art, invited Carl Jung and other prominent artists and writers from both sides of the Atlantic to Taos. Luhan believed that Native Americans derive their sense of design and aesthetics from a universal unconscious: "We find that he has discovered the law of form which states that all life is a manifest geometry, that every concrete expression of art or nature has a determinable mathematical structure" [14]. In *Man and His Symbols*, Jung wrote about Native Americans' integrated life and thought it important to preserve their culture, not least to remind Anglo-Europeans of what they had lost [15].

Indigenous peoples' daily lives, creative activities, and spirituality inform every aspect of their culture and identity. Native Americans' use of a linear geometry to describe a sacred vision in their art and architecture resonates with Martin's own aesthetic and spiritual sensibilities. She believed in the divinity of life and nature, engaging in a dynamic relationship with the land. She shared with her artist friend Barnett Newman a love of Native American art and a concern for "the metaphysical pattern of life" [16].

Traditional Navajo and Hopi art reflects a belief in the harmonious integration of person, place, nature, and spirit. Like the geometrical stripes on Navajo pottery and woven rugs and blankets, Martin's horizontal and vertical lines echo the step formation of the mesa's flat plateau and sheer vertical edges that touch the horizon.

There are also strong linear sensibilities in Native American rituals. Sand paintings often include in their center a cruciform of the four directions, a symbol of the Axis Mundi. Jung recognized sand paintings' power to focus energies for healing, and to energize the soul to bring a person "back into harmony with himself and with the cosmos" [17]. Like those of traditional Aboriginal Australians, Navajo sand paintings are part of elaborate ceremonies in which events of a mythic past are symbolically re-enacted. To describe their operation and function, Roger Cook used the term 'chantways', a word that finds parallels with Aboriginal 'songlines':

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At a certain point in the proceedings the patient is actually placed upon the painting, and sand from the figures is applied to his body. The purpose of this action is to plunge him, psychologically and spiritually, into mythical time and space. This is a dimension stronger and more vital than that of profane, everyday existence, because it is the time and space in which things first came to be. It is this experience of a "return to origins," at the axial centre of the world, that integrates the patient and affects the cure [18].

Martin told me that she went to ceremonies where Navajo people danced. I was fortunate to attend a Hopi ceremony in Arizona with Gary Nabhan, an ethnobotanist who works with that community. We were the only non-indigenous people amongst hundreds of Hopi who had gathered to chant and dance for rain. The ground literally moved as their feet emphatically stamped the earth to invoke the spirits and to welcome rain. Within the enormous scale of the ceremony was a strong sense of order, pattern, and rhythm. To my astonishment, the following day the heavens opened upon the parched earth with a great deluge of much needed rain.

Indigenous people around the world have reciprocal relationships with places for which they are custodians. Navajo anthropologist Harry Walters said: "Navajos believe that suffering results when one does not have a proper relationship with the surrounding world and consequently that relief is acquired by re-establishing relationships with everything in the environment" [19].

Similarly, anthropologist Maureen Schwarz recognized that "Being alive in Navajo philosophy is to have your feet planted into the earth and your head in the sky. In your Mother Earth and Father Sky. Everything that is alive has its feet planted in the earth and its head in the sky" [20].

This intersection, a sacred cross between earth and sky, finds resonance in Martin's grid paintings. The thinned down acrylic colors that she used most frequently in her late paintings were soft earth colors and the blues and whites of the sky.

Native American pueblos and adobe dwellings strongly reflect the relationship between human, earth, and sky. The Taos Pueblo, built between 1000 and 1450 C.E., and others like it are the oldest continuously inhabited dwellings in the United States. Tessie Naranjo said that "The roof or ceiling of the structure may be seen as the sky, or the father, which protects and nurtures the people who live inside. The floor is Mother Earth, which embraces us when we die" [21]. In a 1972 journal entry, Martin wrote about the adobe she built on the mesa:

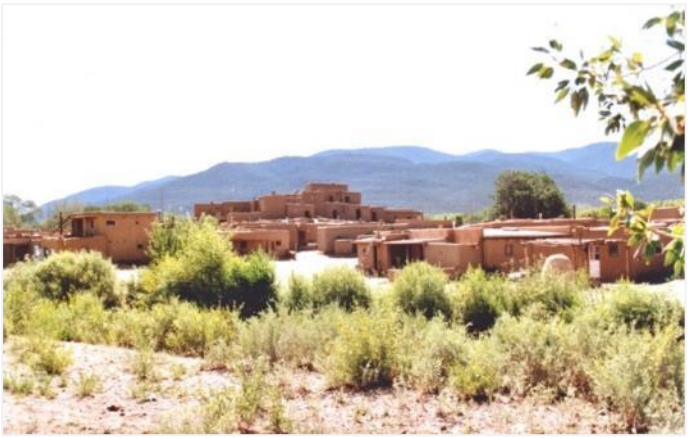
The silence on the floor of my house
is all the questions and all the answers that
have been known in the world
The sentimental furniture threatens the peace
The reflection of a sunset speaks loudly of days… [22]

Martin found peace in New Mexico's vast, silent expanses of land and sky. Throughout her life, she lived simply with few material possessions. She said that her 'voices' told her not to own property and to keep 'cutting back' [23]. Her austerity was legendary. She maintained that her paintings were about the world's perfection and beauty, which sustained her. It is a sentiment reflected in this Navajo chant:

In beauty I walk
With beauty before me I walk
With beauty behind me I walk
With beauty above me I walk
With beauty around me I walk
It has become beauty again… [24]

Art critics have recently appropriately placed Martin's artworks within the genre of the Abstract Sublime because of the encompassing effect of their shimmer. In describing her parallel lines and grids, Carter Ratcliff drew upon the writing of Edmund Burke: "[The] disparate forms ultimately unified or melted as it were into each other … [they] evoke phenomena so vast or elusive as to be unnameable and seem to shift from external to internal states" [25].

The brilliant white gesso grounds of Martin's canvases and her surprisingly thin



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acrylic stains gave her paintings a luminosity that radiate like an interior light. Her hand-drawn graphite lines create an often literally stunning shimmer that is mesmerizing. In 1972, Michael Fried wrote that in the most ambitious modernist paintings, "every grain or particle or atom of surface competes for presentness with every other" [26]. In his 1948 essay, "The Crisis of the Easel Picture," influential American art critic Clement Greenberg stated that the new uniformity of picture surfaces was "antiaesthetic." He maintained that "This very uniformity, the dissolution of the pictorial into sheer texture, into apparently sheer sensation, into an accumulation of repetitions, seems to speak for and answer to something profound in contemporary sensibility" [27].

Yet in 1988, British art critic Peter Fuller used the theological term *kenosis* (self-emptying) to describe modernist artists' "self-reduction towards blankness" [28]. He related this to an historical moment that recurred in cosmological, theological, mystical, and psychological writings from about 1910. Fuller believed that this 'blankness' represented a "literal wiping clean of the slate of consciousness given the realization that the structuring of the 19th century world view was wrong" [29]. With this new beginning came doubt, anxiety, and a longing for the sublime.

While Martin's paintings fulfil the criteria of the boundless, limitless aspects of the sublime and can be meditative, the surfaces can also produce a sense of engulfment that seduces, envelops, and overwhelms sensitive viewers. Kate Linville believed that "Once you are caught in one of her paintings, it is an almost painful effort to pull back from the private experience she triggers to examine the way the picture is made. The desire to simply let yourself flow through it, or let it flow through you, is much stronger" [30]. Linville's experience confirms Burke's 1757 definitions of the sublime as "Vacuity, Solitude, Silence and Infinity," and "tranquility tinged with terror" [31].

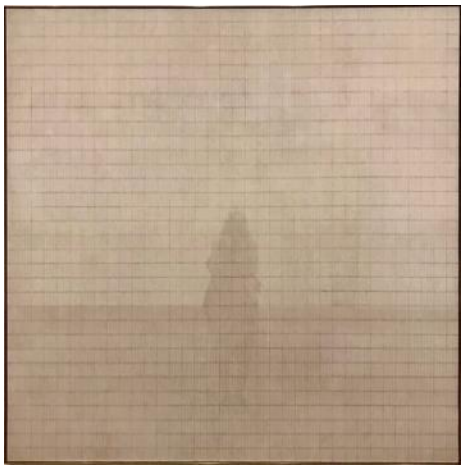
Freud used the term *unheimlich* to refer to the shift that occurs when the familiar becomes unfamiliar, unsettling, and terrifying [32]. Wounding and repression cause what is homely and intimate to become unhomely and uncomfortable. In my research and conversations with Martin, I discovered she carried deep psychological damage from earlier life experiences that repeatedly disrupted her sense of security. Trauma creates frozen time in the lives of those affected.

While her paintings undoubtedly have a contemplative quality, her obsessive linear repetitions are also trauma trails, tragically reinforced expressions of loss. She told me that her horizontal and vertical lines were her attempts to "stay above the line." These repetitive performances reflect not just the place of their creation but also a traumatic gap. They call to mind Jacques Lacan's concept of the *tuche*, a 'cut' which is an absence and abyss; and also what Sigmund Freud called the 'gap', the 'missed encounter', the 'primal repressed'. Lacan and Freud both understood the nature of never-ending repetition. When a person represses and denies trauma, dysfunctional behaviors repeat. Art theorist Rosalind Krauss wrote:

The traumatic event, the missed encounter, what Lacan comes to call the tuche, *produces not excitement but loss, or rather excitement as loss, as a self-mutilation, as something fallen from the body. The repetition automatism set in motion by this trauma will work thereafter to restore that unknown and unknowable thing, attempting to find it, that is, on the other side of the gap the trauma opened up in the field of the missed encounter. The structure of trauma, then, is not just that it initiates a compulsion to repeat but that it institutes the gap of the trauma itself—the missed encounter [33].*

The propensity to merge into the shimmer of the sublime in front of artworks and nature reduces the potential for psychological healing as well as environmental and political action. In Judy Atkinson's important work with Aboriginal Australians who suffer trans-generational trauma, she emphasized the importance of understanding their close relationship to land for which they are custodians. "Country can hold healing or traumatic memory and energy, by the human activity or ceremony that has made a place unique, sacred or profane" [34]. Places have power, and the negative effects of displacement and trauma have profound and long-lasting detrimental effects.

Martin told me that she always sought inspiration and guidance from her 'voices' for what to do both in her paintings and life. Indigenous cultures



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highly respect shamans' visions, and the sacred texts of many world religions contain pronouncements of divine voices. Yet the line between knowledge given by celestial or inner voices and emotional fragility is often precariously indistinct.

In contemporary secular cultures, people rarely admit to hearing voices. Martin swore those close to her to keep her schizophrenia a secret; only after her death was it revealed. Loss and displacement punctuated her early life, and she told me that she still felt nostalgia for Canada. New Mexico provided a place of safety, silence, and beauty where the vast sky and horizons resonated with the flat plains of her childhood. "I didn't come out West," she said, "I came home" [35].

Notes

1. J. Wright, 1990, p. 14. *A Human Pattern: Selected Poems*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson.
2. M. Jay, 1994, pp. 17–18. *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.
3. David Witt, then Director of the Harwood Museum in Taos and a close friend of Agnes Martin, kindly arranged for me to spend time alone with her at her Taos home and studio in July 2002. She left her isolated adobe on the mesa at the age of 80 and moved to Taos where she painted until her death in December 2004.
4. A. Martin in M. Lance, 2003. *Agnes Martin: With My Back to the World*. Documentary film, New Deal Films, Corrales. Martin told me that profits from her paintings went into a trust fund she set up to enable public museums to acquire American Abstract Expressionist paintings.
5. P. Cezanne in J. Gasquet, 1991, p. 151. *Cezanne: A Memoir with Conversations*. London: Thames & Hudson.
6. T. Merton, 1968, p. 125. *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*. NY: New Directions.
7. R. Otto in R. Haynes, 1998, pp. 28–29. *Seeking the Centre: The Australian Desert in Literature, Art and Film*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
8. A. Martin in M. Auping, 1998, p. 82. *A Metaphysics of Simplicity: Agnes Martin and Richard Tuttle*, exhibition catalogue, Modern Art Museum of Ft. Worth, Ft. Worth.
9. A. Martin (1972), 1991, p. 39. *Agnes Martin: Writings/Schriften*, D. Schwarz (ed.), Kunstmuseum, Edition Cantz, Winterthur.
10. D. Ashton, 1977, p. 7. "Agnes Martin," in *Agnes Martin*, Hayward Gallery exhibition catalogue. London: The Arts Council of Great Britain.
11. A. Martin in N. Rifkin, 2002, p. 14. *Agnes Martin: The Nineties and Beyond*. Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Verlag.
12. A. Martin in I. Sandler, 1993, p. 14. 'Agnes Martin', *Art Monthly* 169.
13. S. Udall, 1996, p. 39. *Spirituality in the Art of 20th Century New Mexico*. Santa Fe: Museum of Fine Arts of New Mexico.
14. M. Luhan in S. Udall, ibid., p. 42.
15. C. Jung, 1972, pp. 213–14. *Man and His Symbols*. London: Aldus Books.
16. H. Cotter, 1993, pp. 92–93. "Agnes Martin: All the Way to Heaven," in *Art in America* 81(4).
17. C. Jung, 1972, ibid.
18. R. Cook, 1974, p. 17, italics in original. *The Tree of Life: Symbol of the Centre*. London: Thames & Hudson.
19. H. Walters in A. Peterson, 2001, p. 108. *Being Human: Ethics, Environment, and Our Place in the World*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.
20. M. Schwarz in A. Peterson, ibid., p. 110.
21. Transcribed in 2002 from wall notes originally at Naranjo, Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico at the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
22. A. Martin, 1972, in H. Kern, 1973, p. 65. *Agnes Martin*. Exhibition catalogue. Munich: Kunstraum.
23. A. Wilson, 1998, p. 27. "Meetings with Agnes Martin," in A. Brandauer *et al*. in *Agnes Martin: Works on Paper*. Exhibition catalogue. Santa Fe: Museum of Fine Arts, New Mexico.
24. Transcribed at the *Dineh* Cooperative, Chinle, Navajo Nation, July 2002.
25. C. Ratcliff, 1973, p. 26–27. "Agnes Martin and the Artificial Infinite," *Artnews* 72 (5).
26. M. Fried, 1972, p. 50, emphasis in original. "Larry Poons: New Paintings," *Artforum* X (7).
27. C. Greenberg, 1986, p. 224. "The Crisis of the Easel Picture" (April 1948). *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume 2, Perceptions and Judgments: 1945–1949*, J. O'Brian (ed.). Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
28. P. Fuller, 1988, p. 215. *Art and Psychoanalysis*. London: The Hogarth Press.
29. Ibid.
30. K. Linville, 1971, pp. 72–73. "Agnes Martin: An Appreciation," *Artforum* IX (10).
31. E. Burke in P. Fuller, 1988, p. 188. *Art and Psychoanalysis*. London: The Hogarth Press.
32. I refer to the aspect of repression rather than Freud's later interpretation of the uncanny as taboo. S. Freud, 1981, p. 217. "The Uncanny," in J. Strachey (trans. and ed.). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud 17*, London: Hogarth.
33. R. Krauss, 1993, pp. 71–72. *The Optical Unconscious*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
34. J. Atkinson, 2002, p. 12. *Trauma Trails: Recreating Song Lines: The Transgenerational Effects of Trauma in Indigenous Australia*. Melbourne: Spinifex Press.
35. A. Martin quoted in D. Kusel, October 1999, p. 61. *"Agnes Martin: Rock of Ages."* Taos: *Pasatiempo*.

Photograph captions (all photographs by Victoria King)

p. 23: La Portales Mesa, Cuba, New Mexico.
p. 24: San Geronimo de Taos, Taos Pueblo, Taos, New Mexico.
p. 24: St. Francis de Asis Mission Church, Ranchos de Taos, Taos (detail).
p. 25: St. Francis de Asis Mission Church, Ranchos de Taos, Taos.
p. 25: St. Francis de Asis Mission Church, Ranchos de Taos, Taos (detail).
p. 25: Taos Pueblo, Taos.
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p. 26: Agnes Martin in her Taos studio, July 2002.
p. 26: Author's reflection in an Agnes Martin painting, Tate Modern, London.

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Questions relating to environmental and architectural phenomenology (from *EAP*, 2014 [vol. 25, no. 3, p. 4])

Questions relating to phenomenology and related interpretive approaches and methods:

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

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

- Can there be a phenomenology of nature and the natural world?
- What can phenomenology offer the intensifying environmental and ecological crises we face today?
- Can phenomenology contribute to more sustainable actions and worlds?
- Can one speak of a sustainable lifeworld?
- What is a phenomenology of a *lived* environmental ethic and who are the key contributors?
- Do the "sacred" and the "holy" have a role in caring for the natural world? For places? For lifeworlds broadly?
- Can phenomenology contribute to environmental education? If so, in what ways?
- Can there be a phenomenology of the two laws of thermodynamics, especially the second law claiming that all activities, left to their own devices, tend toward greater disorder and fewer possibilities? Are there ways whereby phenomenological understanding of lifeworld might help to reduce the accelerating disordering of natural and human worlds?

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

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

Questions relating to architecture and environmental design and policy:

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

Other potential questions:

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

Questions relating to Covid-19:

- Will demands of Covid-19 have a lasting impact on physical places and bodily sociality?
- Can social media and virtual realities effectively replace face-to-face presence and physical places?
- Will human beings return to physical place and firsthand intercorporeality once the pandemic ends?
- Can human life really survive if people lose their direct lived relationships with other human beings and an entrenched physical involvement in real-world places?
- Does the crisis of Covid-19 demonstrate the central phenomenological principle that human beings-are-inured-in place? If that inurement collapses, is human life at risk?

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Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology

Published digitally twice a year, ***EAP*** is a forum and clearing house for research and design that incorporate a qualitative approach to environmental and architectural experience, actions, and meanings.

One key concern of ***EAP*** is design, education, policy, and advocacy supporting and strengthening natural and built places that sustain human and environmental wellbeing. Realizing that a clear conceptual stance is integral to informed research and design, the editor emphasizes phenomenological approaches but also gives attention to related styles of qualitative research. ***EAP*** welcomes essays, letters, reviews, conference information, and so forth. Forward submissions to the editor.

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Exemplary Themes

- The nature of environmental and architectural experience;
- Sense of place, including place identity and place attachment;
- Architectural and landscape meaning;
- The environmental, architectural, spatial, and material dimensions of lifeworlds;
- Changing conceptions of space, place, and nature;
- Home, dwelling, journey, and mobility;
- Environmental encounter and its relation to environmental responsibility and action;
- Environmental and architectural atmospheres and ambiences;
- Environmental design as place making;
- Sacred space, landscape, and architecture;
- The role of everyday things—furnishings, tools, clothing, interior design, landscape features, and so forth—in supporting people's sense of environmental wellbeing;
- The progressive impact of virtual reality on human life and how it might transform the lived nature of "real" places, buildings, and lifeworlds;
- The practice of a *lived* environmental ethic.

For additional themes and topics, see the preceding page, which outlines a series of relevant questions originally published in the 25th-anniversary issue of *EAP* in 2014 (vol. 25, no. 3, p. 4).

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