

# Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology

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Besides “items of interest,” and “citations received,” this issue includes the following items: An “in memoriam” for phenomenological sociologist George Psathas, who died last November; “Book notes” on philosopher Dan Zahavi’s *Phenomenology: The Basics*; and naturalist Paul Krafel’s *Roaming Upward*; The third part of the late philosopher Henri Bortoft’s 1999 conference presentation on Goethean science; Sociologist Julia Bennett’s overview of her doctoral research relating to belonging among families who have lived in one English town for multiple generations; Environmental educator John Cameron’s continuing discussion of “lived interiority” via consideration of landscape character as understood by several well-known thinkers and writers; Australian artist and photographer Sue Michael’s introductory text and several works that were part of her recent painting and photography exhibit, “Settled Areas”; To mark EAP’s 30th year of publication, editor David Seamon’s discussion of current conceptual and methodological concerns relating to phenomenology as a philosophy and research approach; The issue ends with 23 definitions of phenomenology written by eminent phenomenological thinkers.

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# Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology

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## 1990–2019: Special 30<sup>th</sup>-anniversary issue!

This *EAP* completes thirty years of publication and includes “items of interest,” “citations received,” and an “in memoriam” for sociologist **George Psathas**, who died last November. Psathas was a co-founder of the **Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences (SPHS)** and a major advocate for phenomenological studies in the social sciences and humanities. We reproduce several passages from his influential 1973 *Phenomenological Sociology*.

This *EAP* issue begins with a “booknote” on philosopher **Dan Zahavi’s** *Phenomenology: The Basics*, an introduction to phenomenological principles and methods. A second “booknote” focuses on **Paul Krafel’s** recent open-access digital book, *Roaming Upward*, which continues this naturalist’s perspicacious efforts to reverse environmental and human entropy.

This issue includes five essays, the first of which is the third part of a 1999 conference presentation on Goethean science by the late philosopher **Henri Bortoft**. Second, sociologist **Julia Bennett** overviews her doctoral research relating to belonging among families who have lived in one English town for multiple generations.

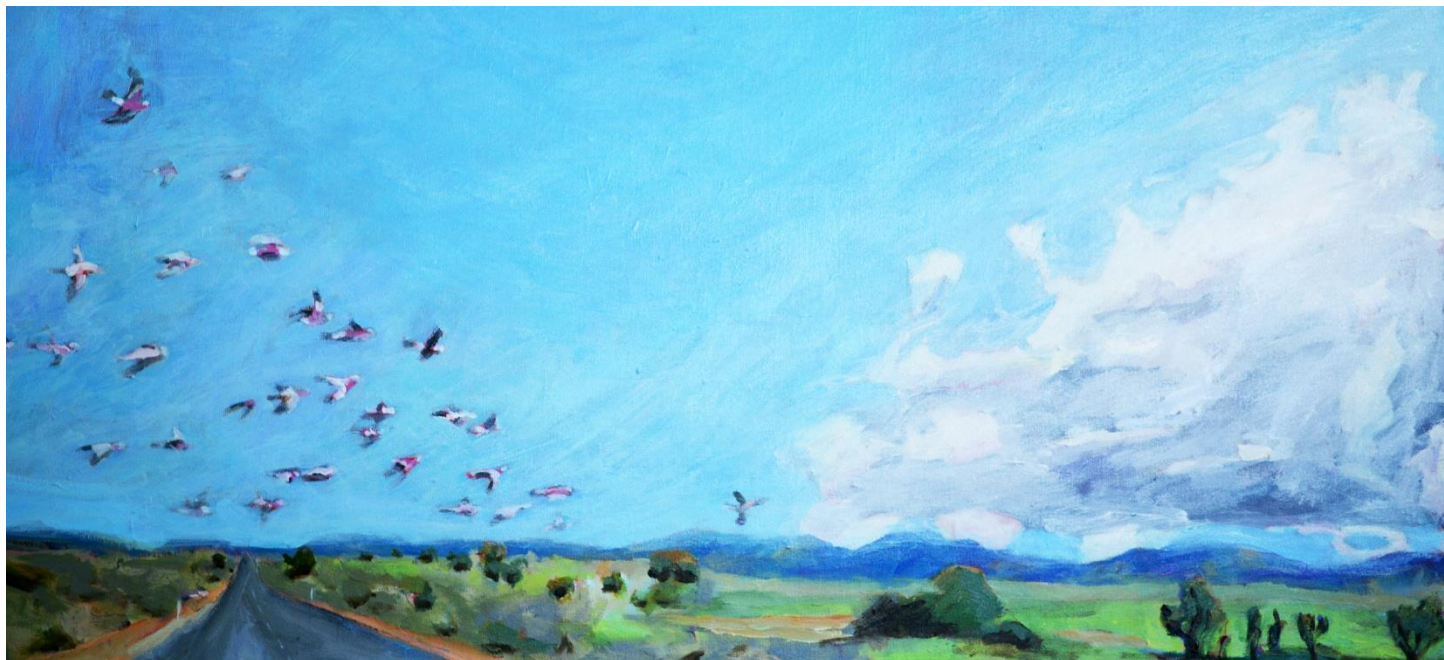
Third, environmental educator **John Cameron** continues his discussion of “lived interiority” by considering landscape character as understood by several well-known thinkers and writers. Fourth, Australian artist and photographer **Sue Michael** provides the introductory text and several works that were part of her recent exhibit, “Settled Areas,” sponsored by an art gallery in Thebarton, South Australia, a suburb of Adelaide.

Last, to mark a thirtieth year of publication, *EAP* editor **David Seamon** discusses

current conceptual and methodological concerns relating to phenomenology as a philosophy and research approach. He considers: (1) placing phenomenology; (2) displacing phenomenology; and (3) evaluating phenomenology.

We are often asked the question, “What is phenomenology?” One useful way to help newcomers understand is providing definitions that can be studied and used to identify commonalities and differences. We end this thirtieth-year issue with twenty-three such definitions written by eminent phenomenological thinkers.

*Below: Sue Michael’s* World’s End Highway (2019, acrylic on canvas, 46 x 91 cm) for her recent South Australia painting exhibit, “Settled Areas.” See her introduction to this exhibit and additional paintings (and one photograph), pp. 29–35.



## Items of interest

*Environment, Space, Place* is a “transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary journal dedicated to environmental, spatial, and place-oriented dimensions of knowledge.” The aim is to promote “conversations about how people think about and experience various environments, spaces, and places: real, virtual, mythical, or imagined.” Also important is understanding “how humanity interacts with and within its many environments.” *ESP* is the journal for the International Association for the Study of Environment, Space, Place (IASESP): [www.southernct.edu/iasesp](http://www.southernct.edu/iasesp). <https://www.upress.umn.edu/journal-division/journals/environment-space-place>.

*Buildings & Landscapes* is the biannual journal for the Vernacular Architecture Forum. One aim is to examine “the built world that most people experience everyday—houses and cities, farmsteads and alleys, churches and courthouses, subdivisions and shopping malls. The editors emphasize entries “strongly based on field work and archival research that views buildings as windows into human life and culture.” <https://www.upress.umn.edu/journal-division/journals/buildings-amp-landscapes-journal-of-the-vernacular>.

## Citations received

**Julie Campoli, 2011. *Made for Walking: Density and Neighborhood Form*. Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute.**

This volume provides detail guidance on ways to plan and design for density and includes a “density catalogue” of more than 1,000 aerial photographs representing a range of residential densities from less than one to more than 200 units per acre. The author highlights six key environmental elements: diversity, density, design, distance to transit, destination accessibility, and parking.

The book includes detailed descriptions of 12 urban neighborhoods, “each covering a comfortable pedestrian walk zone of approximately 125 acres” and chosen “to

show both their variety and their commonalities.” The neighborhoods include LoDo and the Central Platte Valley, Denver, Colorado; Short North, Columbus, Ohio; Kitsilano, Vancouver, BC; Flamingo Park, Miami Beach, Florida; Little Portugal, Toronto, Ontario; Eisenhower East, Alexandria, Virginia; Downtown and Reynolds Addition, Albuquerque, New Mexico; The Pearl District, Portland, Oregon; Greenpoint, Brooklyn, New York; Little Italy, San Diego, California; Cambridgeport, Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Old Pasadena, Pasadena, California.

**Antonio Carvalho, 2018. *Architecture as Space for People*. Lisbon: Caleidoscópio.**

This volume is a compilation of recent buildings and other designs by this Portuguese architect, who writes in his introduction that “To me as an architect, it makes no sense to create spaces devoid of people.... It is people who inspire me to create spaces, imagining what they will need to perform their activities, the eventual pleasure they will get from a special view, the surprise of turning a corner and discovering a different space, ambience, or material.”

Architectural theorist **Juhani Pallasmaa** writes in his introduction to the volume that he is touched by the “quiet and unpretentious considerateness and appropriateness [of Carvalho’s designs]. These works respect their context and even the minute features and values of the place, and the architect attempts to fuse these signs into the re-orchestrated entity.”

**Alexander Garvin, 2016. *What Makes a Great City?* Washington, DC: Island Press.**

This architect writes: “To explain what makes a great city, I decided to describe the ways in which the people who use great cities continually change the public realm so that it meets current needs.... The first two chapters explain what exactly is meant by the expression “the public real” and what the characteristics of a great public realm are. The next six chapters describe each of those characteristics in detail, as well as when and how they work or don’t

work.... At the end of the book, I present twenty-first-century initiatives undertaken in Paris, Houston, Atlanta, Brooklyn, and Toronto that are making an already fine public realm even better—initiatives that demonstrate how any city can improve its public realm.”

Garvin argues that a great public realm incorporates the following six characteristics: (1) it is open to everyone; (2) it offers something for everyone; (3) it attracts and retains market demand; (4) it provides a framework for successful urbanization; (5) it sustains a habitable environment; and (6) it nurtures and supports a civil society.

**Jonathan Hale, 2017. *Merleau-Ponty for Architects*, London: Routledge.**

This architectural theorist summarizes “what Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy has to offer specifically for architects. It locates architectural thinking in the context of his work, placing it in relation to themes such as space, movement, materiality and creativity, introduces key texts, helps decode difficult terms, and provides quick reference for further reading.”

**Thomas Hünefeldt and Annika Schlitte, eds., 2018. *Situatedness and Place*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.**

Edited by two philosophers, this volume’s 11 chapters consider “the spatio-temporal contingency of human life.” The editors write that some thinkers examine this contingency “in terms of ‘situation’, emphasizing the ‘situatedness’ of human experience and action,” while other researchers focus on “‘place’, emphasizing the ‘power of place’ and advocating a ‘topological’ or ‘topological turn’ in the context of a larger ‘spatial turn’.”

The chapters of the volume illustrate the range of these possibilities; contributors include **Edward Casey** (“Place and Situation”); **Jeff Malpas** (“Place and Placedness”); **David Seamon** (“Merleau-Ponty, Lived Body and Place: Toward a Phenomenology of Human Situatedness”); **Shaun Gallagher** (“Situating Interaction in Personal and Extrapersonal Space: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives”);

**Thomas Hünefeldt** (“The Place of Mind”); **Annita Schlitte** (“Place and Positionality: Anthro(topo)logical Thinking with Helmuth Plessner”); **Tobias Holischka** (“Virtual Places and Real Places: A Distinction of Virtual Places from Possible and Fictional Worlds”); and **Dylan Trigg** (“Situated Anxiety: A Phenomenology of Agoraphobia”).

The sidebar below reproduces a portion of Malpas’s chapter and the lived relation between place and what he calls “placedness.”

### Place and Placedness

That there is a *prima facie* difference between place and placedness seems undeniable . . . . In simple terms, ‘placedness’ or ‘being placed’ names a characteristic . . . of that which is placed, whereas ‘place’ names that to which what is placed stands in relation.

*Placedness* would thus seem . . . to presuppose *place*. On that basis, there can be no placedness without place, and the two notions are inextricably bound together even though they are also distinct—the same reasoning may also be applied to the notions of situation and situatedness or being-situated.

Yet what appears to be a simple and obvious difference here conceals a larger set of complications. There is a general tendency for place and placedness not to be distinguished even in discussions in which the concepts play an important role—the most obvious indication of which is the widespread identification of place with some notion of *meaningful space*, that is, with space as it is given meaning by a subject . . . .

The tendency to treat place in this way reflects a broader lack of attentiveness to place as a genuinely *sui generis* concept . . . —a lack of attentiveness that . . . often amounts to an effective reduction of place to placedness or the replacement of place by placedness.

When this happens, the very notion of place undergoes an important shift, since placedness no longer involves standing in a genuine relation to place, but instead seems to imply that place somehow belongs to the character of

that which is placed—as the valuation of space arises on the basis of the human being in space. If this sounds odd or obscure . . . , then the reason is simply that it is so.

Moreover, even though this implied shift to placedness over place is commonplace, its oddity or obscurity typically goes unremarked because the shift itself is seldom acknowledged (Jeff Malpas, 2018, p. 28, p. 29).

**Susan Ingham, 2017. *Some Patterns of Living in the Pacific Northwest*, in K. Pontikis & Y. Rofè (eds.), *In Pursuit of a Living Architecture: Continuing Christopher Alexander’s Quest for a Humane and Sustainable Building Culture* (Champaign, IL: Common Ground, 2016), pp. 386–409.**

In this chapter from an edited collection on the work of architect Christopher Alexander, Seattle architect Susan Ingham generates a place and climate pattern language for residential architecture in North America’s Pacific Northwest: “creating and working with [Alexander’s] patterns can be a productive first step in solving many of a homeowner’s design problems. . . .” Patterns “can also help to define the overall essence and character of the house.”

Ingham groups her patterns in terms of four larger themes: (1) patterns of light (window walls; side lighting; interior windows and screens of translucent glass); (2) exterior patterns (rain, hills, mountains, and water; deep-roof overhangs and eaves; balancing grand and intimate views); (3) interior patterns (outside in and inside out, open spaces with many built-ins; indoor rooms connected to outdoor rooms; open kitchen, dining, living, and deck; built-ins for every room); (4) color patterns (place color; natural colors of materials).

**Sandy Isenstadt, 2018. *Electric Light: An Architectural History*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.**

This art historian “examines electric light as a form of architecture—as a new, uniquely modern kind of building material.” He demonstrates how “the introduction of electric lighting at the end of the nineteenth century created new architectural spaces and altered and sometimes eclipsed previously existing spaces.” The book is described as “the first sustained examination of the spatial effects of electric lighting. Isenstadt reconceives modernism in architecture to account for the new perceptual conditions and visual habits that followed widespread electrification.”

**Grant Jarrett, ed., 2016. *The House that Made Me: Writers Reflect on the Places and People that Defined Them*. Tempe, Arizona: Spark Press.**

In the 19 essays in this collection, writers reflect “on the homes, neighborhoods, and experiences that helped shape them—providing fresh insight into the concept of Home.” In his introduction, Jarrett writes: “[T]here are few things as potent, as visceral and multifaceted as the word [“home”] and what it represents. Nothing is more highly charged than first home, the rooms where our memories were born, the place where those first battles were fought and won or lost, where family was defined and redefined, where dreams were born and realized or reluctantly discarded. Rich with our earliest experience, it may have been, may still be, a source of great happiness and great pain, its rooms overflowing with laughter, joy, fear, sorrow. Most likely, the image of that first home evokes a hodgepodge of thoughts, sensations and emotions, but regardless, it seems to reach out to us, to draw us back.”

**Jay T. Johnson and Soren C. Larsen, eds., 2013. *A Deeper Sense of Place: Stories and Journeys of Collaboration in Indigenous Research*. Corvallis: Oregon State Univ. Press.**

The 13 chapters of this edited collection present “academic and personal approaches to research when working collaboratively with Indigenous communities

across the globe.” Contributors address “the ethical, political, intellectual, and practical meanings of collaboration with Indigenous peoples” and focus on “the ways in which collaborative research can help Indigenous and settler communities find common ground through a shared commitment to land, people, and place.”

**Avril Maddrell and James D. Sidaway, eds., 2016. *Deathscapes*. London: Routledge.**

The 15 chapters of this edited collection focus on “the relationship between space/place and death/bereavement in western societies. The chapters reflect a variety of scales ranging from individual and private domestic space to sites of support, accident, battle and remembrance in public space.”

**Michael Vincent McGinnis, 2016. *Science and Sensibility: Negotiating an Ecology of Place*. Oakland, CA: Univ. of California Press.**

Drawing on examples from California and New Zealand, this political scientist examines “how place-based ecological negotiation can influence conservation, restoration, and environmental policy.” The sidebar below is from the book’s preface, “Conversations with Sea and Stone.”

### Adaptive, resilient places

[In this book, I] emphasize the need for a deeper appreciation of our place in the world. The chapters are based on my personal journey and my experience with diverse coastal and maritime places and peoples across the Pacific Ocean.

I have learned over time that there is one ocean that connects diverse peoples across the Pacific Ocean. We need to cultivate ecologically grounded values that can contribute to a science and sensibility of place. To re-inhabit a place and community can represent a first step in beginning to respond to the ecological threats and impacts we face in society.

While science is a key part of forging a more adaptive and resilient society,

the cultivation of a renewed sense of place and community is essential to respond to the complex socio-ecological problems we face. This is my bioregional message. The book notes that modern science is one way of knowing, but there are other ways, other epistemologies, and other values that contribute to a practice of a place-based living. There are other forms of knowledge that are as important, including local knowledge and traditional ecological knowledge systems (pp. ix–x).

**Adnan Morshed, 2015. *Impossible Heights: Skyscrapers, Flight, and the Master Builder*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press.**

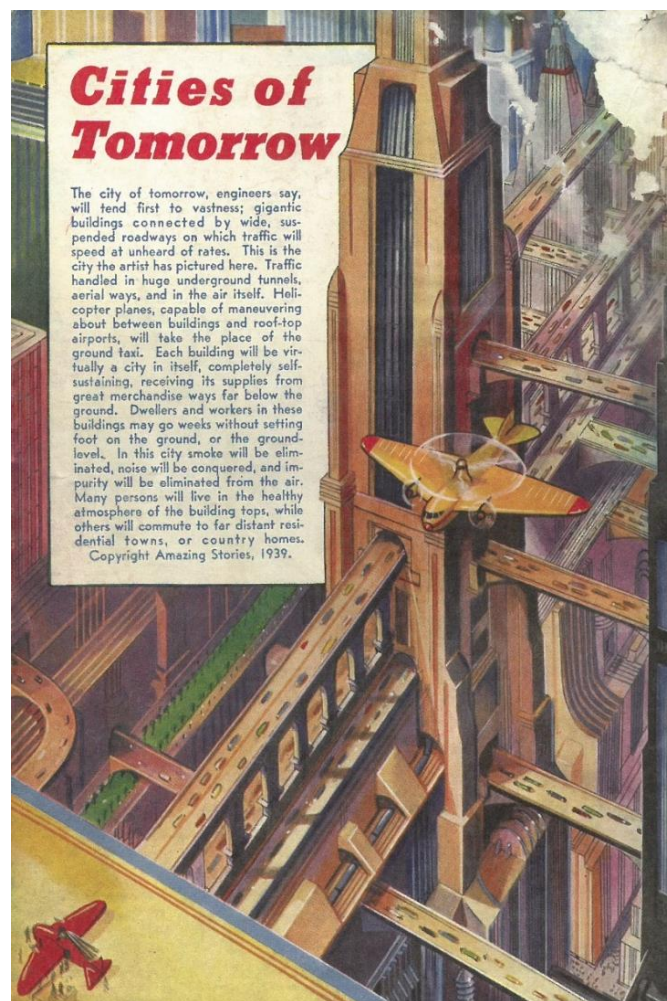
This architectural historian examines the aesthetics that emerged in the 1920s and 1930s with the advent of airplanes and skyscrapers: “The captivating image of an airplane flying over the rising metropolis led many Americans to believe a new civilization had dawned.” This “lofty vantagepoint from the sky ushered in a modernist impulse to cleanse crowded twentieth-century cities in anticipation of an ideal world of tomorrow. Inspired by great new heights, American architects became central to this endeavor and were regarded as heroic aviators.” Combining close readings of a broad range of archival sources, Morshed offers new interpretations of works such as Hugh Ferriss’s *Metropolis* drawings, Buckminster Fuller’s *Dymaxion* houses, and Norman Bel Geddes’s *Futurama* exhibit at the 1939 New York World’s Fair. Morshed argues that “these designers

helped produce a new form of visuality: the aesthetics of ascension.”

The image, below, from *Impossible Heights*, is Julian S. Krupa’s “Cities of Tomorrow,” on the back cover of a 1939 issue of *Amazing Stories*.

**Susan Opatow and Zachary Baron Shemtob, eds., 2018. *New York after 9/11*. NY: Fordham Univ. Press.**

Edited by a sociologist and criminologist, this collection of eleven chapters is said to offer “insightful, poignant, and critical observations about the way that New Yorkers and the City as a whole responded to and coped with September 11, 2001’s aftermath.” The chapters “clarify that recovery from 9/11 has been a long and braided process that unfolded in different ways in different spheres.” The chapters “reveal the importance of collaborative efforts, tenacity over time, and the value of community



voice, inclusion, and transparency.” Chapter titles include “Conflict and Change: New York City’s Rebirth after 9/11”; “Building and the 9/11 Memorial”; “Urban Security in New York City after 9/11: Risk and Realities”; “Managing Fire Emergencies in Tall Buildings: Design Innovations in the Wake of 9/11”; “Health Impacts of 9/11”; “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Following 9/11”; and “Memory, Site, and Object: September 11 Memorial Museum.”

**Friedlind Riedel, 2019. Atmosphere.** In Jan Slaby and Christian von Scheve, eds. *Affective Societies: Key Concepts*. London: Routledge, pp. 85–95.

This anthropologist overviews the research on atmosphere, which she defines as “a feeling, mood, or *Stimmung* that fundamentally exceeds an individual body and instead pertains primarily to the overall situation in which bodies are entrenched.” She explains that atmospheres are “smoothing forces that evoke coherence” and emphasizes that, as a concept, atmosphere “challenges a notion of feelings as the private mental states of a cognizant subject and instead construes feelings as collectively embodied, spatially extended, material, and culturally inflected.

In this sense ‘atmosphere’ can be “considered a mereological [relating to the study of wholes] concept.” In other words, the concept has bearing on “the ways in which a multiplicity of bodies is part of, and entrenched in, a situation that encompasses it.” In this way, the concept does not “simply invoke coherence but also simulates it, erases inconsistencies, and melts, unifies, and homogenizes by imposing an overarching significance onto elements that might otherwise be unrelated.”

Riedel considers atmosphere in terms of four broad themes: (1) religious transformation; (2) mass mobilization; (3) processes of political homogenization; and (4) the relationship of atmosphere to music and sound. She concludes that the value of atmosphere as a heuristic concept “is its mereological fabric that significantly exceeds the realm of (aesthetic) perception.”

**Richard Sennett, 2018. Building and Dwelling: Ethics for**

**the City. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.**

This well-known sociologist hopes for the actualization of what he calls the “open city”—urban environments that celebrate freedom, flexibility, and resilience, in contrast to the opposite—the “closed city,” associated with physical and human control and order difficult to modify or replace.

Throughout, Sennett emphasizes the difference between *ville* and *cit *—the former, the built form of the city; the latter, the city’s human affairs, actions, and, experiences. Sennett’s focus is the ways through which the physical manifestations of the *ville* sustain or undermine the lived experiences of the *cit *. He gives considerable attention to how urban planning and design decisions involving the *ville* can generate a *cit * that is freer and more open rather than restrictive and regimented.

Sennett identifies five design principles that might facilitate the open city: (1) *public realms* in which human interactions might intensify; (2) *porosity* of urban boundaries whereby contrasting urban realms are drawn together; (3) *punctuation* of the city by markers like signature buildings or elements of street furniture; (4) an *evolutionary approach* to urban form, whereby the built environment is never complete but repairable and repurposable; and (5) a *collage aesthetic* that rejects rigid planning to allow places to differentiate themselves over time. See sidebar, below.

### Rupture and accretion

Building the *ville* occurs in two frames of time. In the first, time’s arrow moves steadily forwards; buildings and spaces are added slowly to the environment. Things added to the built environment are often small: a single house made or renovated, a vest-pocket park. In the second, time’s arrow moves forward by big, bold declarations which rupture what existed in the environment before. It is the time of the megaproject... The first time is adaptive in character, accounting the context of what’s already been made. This is Jane Jacobs’ domain of ‘slow growth’. The second can seem a malign time, violating or erasing context, as did Corbusier’s Plan Voisin, and as do many

smart cities that vaunt breaking traditional urban forms. ‘Now’ becomes the adversary of ‘before’.

The domain of the slowly growing, the adapting, the accreting tugs at us sentimentally, but rupture is inevitable in the modern built environment if only because modern buildings expire more rapidly than many buildings from earlier periods. We now figure the lifespan of commercial high-rises at thirty-five to forty years, whereas the Georgian terraces which have lasted for hundreds of years could last further hundreds. The reasons do not lie in poor building construction, but rather in rigid specification, a consequence of core investing favoring investments in structures built absolutely fit for purpose. As uses change, habitations evolve, the buildings outlive their useful existence....

The contraries of accretion and rupture stimulate debate today in urban development throughout the world. Projects which rupture the existing urban fabric tend to be power boasts, particularly the symbolic public structures that politicians favor—Olympic stadiums, art museums, aquariums (which were fashionable big-ticket items a few years ago). An aquarium is not of much value to a school struggling to find money for books; the appeal of growth through accretion is thus strengthened because it can seem by contrast to be bottom-up development in cities ruled top-down....

[But] this debate about the dimensions of rupture and accretion is... too complicated to be reduced to top-down versus bottom-up.... As in dealing with climate change, where we want to practice both adaptation and mitigation, it makes better sense to think of accretion over time and rupture by design as ways of *ville*-making that can run in parallel. Indeed, they need to do so: the building of a new railroad station for Mexico City residents or the replacement of coal plants by solar-energy generators in Beijing aren’t projects that can ripen slowly in the fullness of time, but local adaptations to them may take a long time to work out (Richard Sennett, 2018, pp. 279–80).

# In Memoriam: George Psathas (1929–2018)

Sociologist **George Psathas** died November 15, 2018, in West Newton, Massachusetts. He was professor of sociology at Boston University from 1968 until his retirement in 1997. Psathas was born in New Haven, Connecticut, and received his BA from Yale University in 1950, an MA at the University of Michigan in 1951, and a PhD from Yale in 1956. From 1963 to 1968 he taught sociology at Washington University in St. Louis.

Psathas played a significant role in introducing phenomenology to American social scientists. In 1978, he founded *Human Studies*, one of the first social-science journals emphasizing (and accepting) phenomenological research. In 1980, he co-founded (with sociologist **Lawrence Weider**) the **Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences** (SPHS).

Holding its annual meetings concurrently with the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP), SPHS was one of the first conference venues for paper sessions on environmental and architectural phenomenology. Early on, Psathas invited *EAP* co-founders **Robert Mugerauer** and **David Seamon** to organize SPHS sessions on environmental and place topics; the first session was held at the 1981 meeting in Evanston, Illinois, and these special sessions continued for several years after.

Psathas actualized an instinctive recognition that phenomenological work could offer a valuable bridge to integrate the various social sciences and to present an understanding of human life that was more accurate, inclusive, and comprehensive than the reductive portraits offered by analytic, quantitative science. In memoriam, we reprint a portion of the introduction he wrote for his ground-breaking edited collection, *Phenomenological Sociology: Issues and Applications* (NY: Wiley, 1973), which included chapters by such key phenomenological figures as **Egon Bittner**, **Fred Dallmayr**, **John O’Neil**, **Herbert Spiegelberg**, **Kurt Wolff**, **Helmut Wagner**, and **Richard Zanner**.

## The world of everyday life

The human actor, as a socialized member of society, operates within a lifeworld that is pregiven and already organized. The language he learns, the culture he acquires, and the social structures within which he lives provide him with a stockpile of typifications, of recipes for interpreting and acting, and with a stock of knowledge that forms the basis for even his imaginative exploration of courses of action other than those he already knows.

The lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*) is not only pre-structured, but the meanings of the elements contained within it are also pregiven. The stock of knowledge provides the actor with rules for interpreting interactions, social relationships, organizations, and institutions. And when the unexpected happens or new situations occur and the taken-for-granted is thrown into question, only then is he forced to consider alternative schemes of interpretation.

Thus, within the standpoint of the natural attitude, the individual is not motivated to question the meaningful structures of his lifeworld. His interest is a practical one and his task is to *live in* rather than to make a *study of* the lifeworld. It remains for the social scientist to adopt the stance of a disinterested observer and to study the lifeworld of others.

Though he may draw on his own experiences, since he is also a human being who may have lived in similar situations, he does not study the lifeworld from his own perspective. He attempts to transcend the everyday intentionalities in which he is the center of his own existence and adopt another point of reference. Depending on the problem he has chosen for study, as this may be defined within the scientific stock of knowledge, the social scientist selects that which is relevant.

His concern is not so much with the particular individuals who are subject

of his study, but with the types they represent. His effort is to see through the particulars to that which is essential to the type, those elements without which the type would not be what it is.

In this sense, what he does resembles what people do in an ordinary, mundane fashion when perceiving the objects of the world. Objects are concretely empirical as they appear to us. We see a person, living, appearing before us. This corporeal presence of a meaningful object whose various aspects, though not directly seen, are nevertheless known to us. The pregiven type, known to us as “human body,” does not refer to any one particular body but to the purely ideal, meaning creation of our human minds.

In this realm of the ideal, objectivity can occur in that any one of us can share the identical meaning creation. We can, in the abstract, know the concept of the human body as we share the same language and accept the meanings it provides for us. We need not explicate the fullness of meanings and we are hardly aware of all that we know as we proceed. The meaning structures with which we operate are, for us, real, though we may be only dimly aware that they have a different reality from empirical objects (Psathas 1973, pp. 9–10).

## The problem of intersubjectivity

This lifeworld is experienced as an intersubjective world, known and experienced by other people who understand it and who also experience it as an intersubjective world.

Since the lifeworld is given to people in the natural attitude as an intersubjective world, one of the tasks of the social scientist is to describe the experience of intersubjectivity. At a more philosophical level, he may ask

how intersubjectivity is possible at all—but this quest must be recognized as a different question, the answer to which philosophers themselves have not yet agreed upon. There emerges then the clear necessity to distinguish between the study of the lifeworld as it is experienced by ordinary human beings living in it and questions about how the lifeworld is possible, how one can know another's mind, whether society is objectively real, and so forth. This is not to say that these questions cannot or should not be approached by social scientists. Rather, they must be recognized as a different order of question. The solution of these problems is not necessary before proceeding with studies of the lifeworld. Thus, for social scientists, the study of people must take them as they are—people who suspend doubt, live in the natural attitude, and live with the certainty that the social and natural worlds exist. The serious and careful study of how people live with and renew their assumptions requires close and faithful description. It is to that undertaking that we urge our fellow social scientists to address themselves. The study of how social order is produced by humans in their everyday activities is a study whose value may be as considerable as the more general and theoretical study of how social order is possible at all (Psathas 1973, p. 16).

### **The phenomenological approach as a paradigm**

The phenomenological approach does not restrict the observer to a narrow set of methods or perspectives. There is no formula or recipe for procedures that is to be applied ready-made to the problem being studied. The “steps” described by Spiegelberg in his discussion of the phenomenological method are not sequential stages

[H. Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement*, Martinus Nijhoff, 1982, p. 678]. One cannot pick up a book of rules as to how to do a phenomenological analysis and jump in. The adoption of a new paradigm for research involves the researcher in a major formulation of his [or her] thinking.

In adopting a phenomenological perspective, the social scientist must evolve a way of looking that is different from a positivist-science approach to data. In fact, he [or she] must learn to regard as data some objects, events, and activities he [or she] previously did not “see” at all. In this respect, a new paradigm enables him [or her] to see “facts that were there all the time.”

At this stage of development of sociology, an initial reaction is to try to fit the phenomenological into the paradigm of normal science, to reformulate questions or findings, to show that the data are the same, and to reinterpret or rephrase the resulting accounts to show that the translation renders the “new” results consistent with what is already known or has been done all along.

These efforts represent a necessary step, perhaps, in the struggle to understand the significance of a new paradigm, or, for that matter, to understand whether it is a new paradigm at all. Once a paradigm is grasped, understood, and used, then the results of research are presented within such new formulations or conceptualizations as are deemed necessary, and no argumentative or comparative posture that argues that this approach is “better” or “more valid” or “truer to life” than some other is mentioned. The work stands on its own and the reader is expected to understand the paradigm it embodies.

It will be evident, both from the essays in this book and from other works, that this day has not yet arrived in phenomenological sociology.

There are still justificatory arguments, programmatic statements and exhortations to the reader, and explanations of why it is important that this approach is used.

In contrast, the articles in current issues (1971–1972) of the *American Journal of Sociology* or the *American Sociological Review* spend little if any time arguing the merits of the approaches used. There is a quality of “this is the way sociology is done” about these works, a kind of certainty about method and approach and a lack of self-consciousness or concern about the validity of the paradigm for the study of the problem at hand. The paradigm used is so taken-for-granted that it is hardly likely that the authors of the articles could present an analytic description of it.

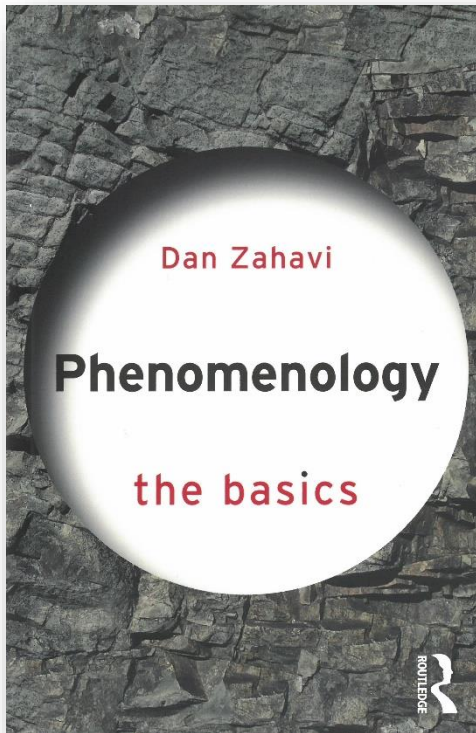
What Kuhn refers to as a “paradigm shift” does not occur in an instant as does the *gestalt* switch (e.g., the drawing that appears either as a vase or as two faces). “The transfer of allegiance from paradigm to paradigm is a conversion experience that cannot be forced” [T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1962]. Yet the shift from one paradigm to another is possible, as evidenced by the fact that new paradigms are created by those already familiar with the existing ones of normal science.

Whether it is fruitful to attempt conversions can be argued. Our view is that the presentation of a variety of problems, each being studied from a phenomenological perspective, can stand as evidence of the possible contributions of a new paradigm. Those who are engaged in research on the same topics from different paradigm perspectives can thereby make more informed decisions about the value of a phenomenological approach to the study of the social world (Psathas 1973, pp. 17–18).



## Book Note

Dan Zahavi, 2019. *Phenomenology: The Basics*. London: Routledge.



Since 2000, there has appeared a spate of books claiming to introduce readers to phenomenology. Philosopher **Dermot Moran's** *Introduction to Phenomenology* (2000); psychotherapist **Linda Finlay's** *Phenomenology for Therapists* (2011); and educator **Max van Manen's** *Phenomenology of Practice* (2014) remain the three most accessible and most useful introductions.

Just published is the most recent entry to this list—Danish philosopher **Dan Zahavi's** *Phenomenology: The Basics*, which focuses on “the overarching philosophical concerns and common themes that have united and continue to unite [phenomenology's] proponents.”

Emphasizing mostly the phenomenological thinking of **Edmund Husserl**, **Martin Heidegger**, and **Maurice Merleau-Ponty** (“three thinkers whose decisive influence on the development of phenomenology is undeniable”), Zahavi breaks his discussion into three parts:

- First, a review of phenomenology's “foundational issues,” overviewed via the headings of “the phenomena”; “intentionality”; “methodological considerations”; “science and lifeworld”; “surface and depth phenomenology”; and “Merleau-Ponty's preface to *Phenomenology of Perception*.”
- Second, a discussion of two specific phenomenological topics—“spatiality and embodiment” and “intersubjectivity and sociality”;
- Third, an overview of “applied phenomenology,” including “phenomenological sociology”; and “phenomenological psychology, qualitative research, and cognitive science.”

As an entry in Routledge's new series, “The Basics,” the volume is just over 150 pages and in pocket-book size. In this sense, the text is more like a preliminary overview than an in-depth introduction. At the same time, however, this brevity is useful in that the book's accessible outline readily locates several of phenomenology's key topical and methodological concerns presented in a way that most newcomers should be able to understand.

As a philosopher, Zahavi gives most attention (and citations) to work by philosophers. In the book's third part, his discussion of the use of phenomenology in the human sciences is a start for demonstrating its conceptual and practical value for professions and for academic fields other than philosophy (though he provides no indication of the important inroads made by environmental and architectural phenomenology, including the pivotal phenomenological studies on place and lived emplacement by philosophers **Edward Casey** and **Jeff Malpas**).

In the sidebars, right and next page, we highlight selections from Zahavi's text that focus on methodological, epistemological, and ontological concerns.

### Straddling ontology & epistemology

By insisting on the fact that mind and world must be explored simultaneously, phenomenology offers a perspective that straddles or undermines a traditional distinction between epistemology and ontology.

Traditionally, one has distinguished the question of how we come to understand and have knowledge of the world from questions pertaining to the nature of reality. A tempting and easy move is to insist that, whereas an answer to the former question might in various ways appeal to and involve subjective and experiential processes, the answer to the latter question has quite deliberately been to subtract any subjective contributions we make in order to account for reality from “a view from nowhere.”

By focusing on the phenomena, however, phenomenology is at once analyzing our way of understanding and experiencing the world, and at the same time, the objects and their modes of appearance. This is why Heidegger in *Being and Time* can write that ontology is only possible as phenomenology, and that the analysis of our being-in-the-world is the key to every ontological exploration.

More generally speaking, phenomenologists would dispute that the relation between world and subjectivity is merely accidental, as if they were like two pieces of Lego, which can either hang together or be separated. The lesson of intentionality is that the mind is essentially open, and that reality is essentially manifestable.

For something to count as real, it must in principle be something we can encounter, though the mode of encounter can vary: Perceptual acquaintance, practical engagement, and scientific investigation are merely some of the possible forms.

To reject this idea, and to claim that the moon, a neuron, a deck of cards,

or a communal ritual have an unfathomable and hidden true being, that what they really are is something completely divorced from any context of use, network of meaning, or theoretical framework, and that whatever experiential and theoretical perspective we might adopt on them is consequently bound to miss its target, is not only a deeply obfuscating claim, but also one that is epistemologically naïve. On what basis and from what perspective could such a claim ever be justified?

We cannot look sideways at our experiences in order to see to what extent they match with reality. This is so, not because such a view is extremely hard to reach, but because the very idea of such a view is nonsensical. Any understanding of reality is by definition perspectival. Effacing our perspective does not bring us any closer to the world. It merely prevents us from understanding anything about the world at all (Dan Zahavi, pp. 27–28).

The focus of phenomenology is on the intersection between mind and world, neither of which can be understood in separation from each other. We are what we are as a function of our world-involvement, and the world understood as the fundamental context of meaning is also only what it is because of our involvement with it.

To ask what one is without the other is like asking what a background is in itself, independently of the foreground (Dan Zahavi, p. 30).

### Investigating ignored obviousness

Our relationship to the world is so fundamental, so obvious and natural, that we normally do not reflect upon it. It is this domain of ignored obviousness that phenomenology seeks to investigate. The task of phenomenology is not to obtain new empirical knowledge about different areas in the world, but rather to comprehend the basic relation to the world that is presupposed by any such empirical investigation.

When phenomenology emphasizes the methodological necessity of a type of reflective reserve—what Husserl has called the *epoché* and reductions—this is not because phenomenology intends to desert the world in favor of pure consciousness, but because we can only make those intentional threads that attach us to the world visible by slacking them slightly.

The world is, as Merleau-Ponty writes, wonderful. It is a gift and a riddle. But in order to realize this, it is necessary to suspend our ordinary blind and thoughtless taking the world for granted. Normally, I live in a natural and engaged naïve world-relation. But as a philosopher, I cannot make do with such a naïve world-immersion. I must distance myself from it, if ever so slightly, in order to be able to account for it. This is why Merleau-Ponty argues that an analysis of our being-in-the-world presupposes the phenomenological reduction.

The phenomenological investigation proceeds from the factual to the essential, but that is not where the analysis ends. The focus on the essential is not the goal, but a means to understand, conceptualize, and articulate the depth of our factual existence.

The focus on essential structures is due to a wish to capture the richness of the factual, and not because of a desire to abstract from and ignore facticity (Dan Zahavi, pp. 67–68).

### Wonder over the world

Merleau-Ponty characterizes phenomenology as a perpetual critical (self-)reflection. It should not take anything for granted, least of all itself. It is, to put it differently, a constant meditation.

Merleau-Ponty's point here is that phenomenology is always en route. This also comes to the fore in Merleau-Ponty's famous assertion that "the most important lesson of the reduction is the impossibility of a complete reduction." The reduction must be seen as a particular reflective move, and Merleau-Ponty's point is that we as finite creatures are incapable of effectuating an absolute reflection that once and for all would allow us to cut our ties to our world-immersed life in order to survey it from a view from nowhere.

Even the most radical reflection depends on and is linked to an unreflected life that, as Merleau-Ponty puts it, remains its initial, constant, and final situation. To say that the reduction cannot be completed is not to say that it cannot be carried out. But this procedure is something that has to be performed repeatedly, rather than completed once and for all.

To that extent, Merleau-Ponty's remarks about the unfinished character of phenomenology and about the incomplete reduction are two ways of making the same point. As Merleau-Ponty points out in closing [in the "preface" to *Phenomenology of Perception*], however, the fact that phenomenology remains unfinished, the fact that it is always under way, is not a defect or flaw that should be mended, but rather one of its essential features.

As a wonder over the world, phenomenology is not a solid and inflexible system, but rather in constant movement. (Dan Zahavi, pp. 68–69).

### **A pragmatic attitude**

Any method, procedure, or approach that is supposed to merit the label *phenomenology* must be familiar with phenomenological theory. This is a necessary requirement.

In a non-philosophical context, however, a relevant and creative use of central phenomenological concepts such as lifeworld, intentionality, empathy, pre-reflective experience, horizon, historicity, lived body, and so forth will be more valuable and productive than a strict adherence to and insistence on the performance of the epoché and reduction, since the latter procedures have an explicit philosophical focus and aim.

Ultimately, those interested in applied phenomenology should adopt a pragmatic attitude and be less concerned with whether or not the procedure accords with Husserl's or Merleau-Ponty's own ideas about how to apply phenomenology. After all, the decisive question is not whether the research or the practice qualifies as orthodox phenomenology, but whether it is of high quality. To qualify as good phenomenological research, the phenomenological tools being employed must show their pertinence, must make a valuable differ-

ence, must allow for, say, new insights or better therapeutic interventions.

We should assess the value of the procedure on the basis of the results it delivers (Dan Zahavi, pp. 138–39).

### **A tradition quite alive**

For a while, phenomenology was out of fashion, replaced and superseded by other theory formations such as critical theory, structuralism, and deconstruction. There is no question, however, that phenomenology has had something of a revival during the last two decades. There are many reasons for this, but one surely is that the facile dismissal of the subject of experience in favor of a focus on sign systems, language games, discourses, and so forth, has been found wanting.

Contrary to a widespread misunderstanding, the central claim of phenomenology has never been that an investigation of subjectivity is sufficient if we want to understand the natural, historical, social, and cultural realm.

The claim was rather that such an investigation is necessary and indispensable. If we want to understand the world we are living in, we need to factor the role played by embodied, perceiving, thinking, and feeling agents,

and here phenomenology has something to offer.

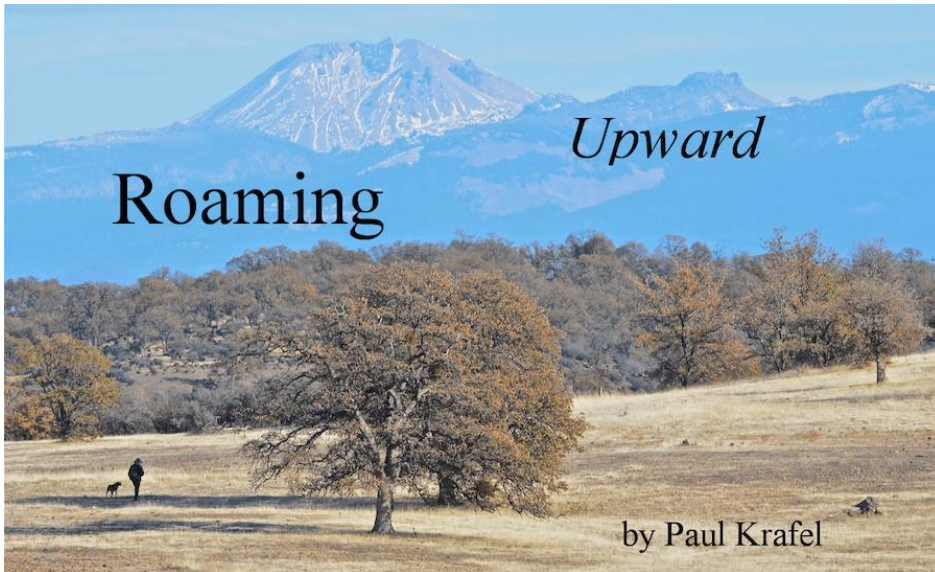
Far from being simply a tradition of the past, phenomenology is quite alive and in a position to make valuable contributions to contemporary thought. [Much of the work] is currently being done in two directions: inward (and backward) and outward (and forward).

On the one hand, we find a continuing engagement and conversation with the classical authors. The philosophical resources and insights to be found in Husserl's Heidegger's, and Merleau-Ponty's work are evidently not yet exhausted. On the other hand, an increasing amount of dialogue is taking place between phenomenology and other philosophical traditions and empirical disciplines.

In my view, phenomenology should continue to pursue this two-pronged strategy. It is hard to predict how many self-avowed phenomenologists there will be 100 years from now. But I am quite confident that the basic insights found in phenomenology will continue to appeal to and attract and inspire gifted thinkers (Dan Zahavi, pp. 141–42).

## Book Note

Paul Krafel, 2019. *Roaming Upward* [digital book available in open-source format at <https://roamingupward.net/>].



Naturalist Paul Krafel's new book, *Roaming Upward*, is now available on line in open-access format. As in his earlier *Seeing Nature* (Chelsea Green, 1998), Krafel aims to foster an awareness of rates of flow and to suggest ways whereby entropy-generating flows might be shifted to activate generative, entropy-reducing possibilities.

All of Krafel's work, including *Roaming Upward*, can fairly be called a phenomenology of the two laws of thermodynamics, particularly the second law, which states that all actions left to their own devices tend toward greater disorder and fewer possibilities. Making use of vivid examples drawn largely from the natural world, Krafel considers how vicious spirals of increasing disorder might become virtuous spirals of reconstruction and regeneration.

In the following sidebars is a portion of Krafel's account of "Gaia dams"—one example of how natural forces can work to slow the rate at which life-enhancing materials flow out of natural systems.

The book is available at: <https://roamingupward.net/>.

### "One wet piece at a time"

One delightful example I've come to call Gaia dams. They can be seen easiest after a rain. Dead leaves and stems float in the runoff, getting wet. Wet surfaces stick together. As they raft along, they drift against something (a rock, a plant stem, anything holding its place in the flow) and become lodged.

Other floating things drift by and adhesion pulls their surfaces against these lodged surfaces, and the area of lodged leaves grows larger. A small dam forms. Each new leaf sticking to the dam forces the water to flow a bit more off to the side to go around it. The dam lengthens across the slope until finally the runoff starts to ooze over the dam.

But now that brings the wet drifting leaves in contact with the top of the dam and they start sticking to the top, raising the level of the dam. The moment a leaf sticks to the top, that becomes a high point and the water cannot flow that way. The current shifts to the next lowest point on the dam,

which carries soggy leaves to that point, building it up.

Through this slow process of clogging leaves that shift the current from low spot to low spot, the height of the dam rises in a remarkably level way. And once the entire dam has achieved this height, the runoff then flows around one of the edges of the dam again, which carries soggy leaves there, and it clogs up again, extending the width of the dam still farther across the slope.

Since the water cannot go around now, it starts to go over the top, starting another round of raising. Like the shuttle of a loom working its way back and forth, weaving loose fibers into homespun cloth, the current shifts from low spot to low spot all along the length of the dam, building it up and to the side, one wet piece at a time.

The dam's size tends to be proportional to the surface area of the floating debris. Grass clippings and pine needles have relatively small surfaces, so their dams are only a centimeter or so high. Deciduous tree leaves, with their large surface areas, can form dams five or six centimeters high.



### “The work grows on itself”

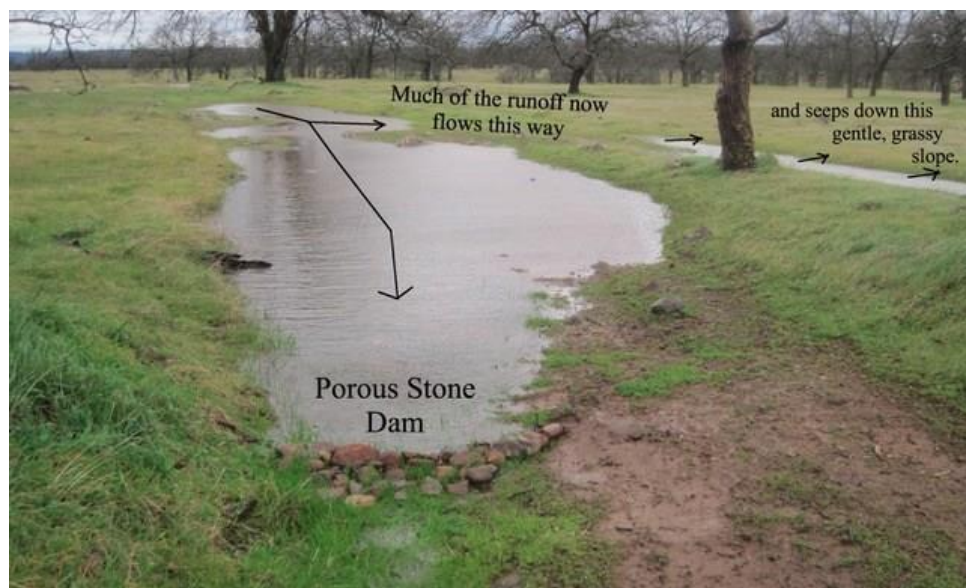
These Gaia dams are resilient. If I make a break in one of the dams, the backed-up water starts to rush through the gap. This flow carries floating leaves to the breach. As these leaves drift through, the wet surfaces on the edge of the breach pull some of the leaves against them. The breach clots up just like blood in a cut on your skin.

These little self-forming dams form everywhere, on forest slopes and in street gutters (though street sweepers sweep them away). Gaia dams slow down the rate at which life-enhancing materials flow out of the system. Later, these dams become mulched seedbeds for the trapped seeds germinating within them.

These Gaia dams accumulate power. The first generation creates tiny dams across the thin channels flowing across the area. The ponds behind these dams trap silt and other debris flowing through. This deposition raises and levels the area behind the dam, forcing the next runoff to flow a bit broader and therefore thinner.

This thinness allows more dams to form. More of the surface becomes covered with these dams and the silt that settles behind them. More seeds can sprout over the area, creating more plant surface area that will eventually become more floating things for future dams.

Through this small but cumulative process, life can cover bare surfaces with an initial layer of thin soil. The work grows on itself.



### Making Porous Stone Dams

[see lower photograph, above right]

I built a small “dam” of three stones in the flow of gully water, which led to a pool forming behind the dam. Once the pool’s outflow was less than inflow, water backed up as more water also flowed through and around dam. As long as the outflow was less than the inflow, the water in the pool kept rising and soon started

to run across the road [upper right in photograph].

In examining my stone dam more closely, I noted that the damned water was flowing between and around the three stones with considerable force. I found several smaller, fist-sized stones and placed them where water was rushing through the original stones most forcefully. This additional blockage made the pool’s water level rise even more and increased the flow of water across the road.

The more stones I added to the dam, the more the flow of water across the road. Using this method, I did not need heavy runoff to raise the level of the pool; with the dam’s reducing outflow, only moderate inflow was needed to re-route some runoff across the road with the result that the gully’s erosive damage was reduced as water was distributed more widely.

# Seeing and Understanding Holistically

## Goethean Science and the Wholeness of Nature—Part III

Henri Bortoft

*Bortoft (1938–2012) was a philosopher, physicist, and science educator who wrote Taking Appearance Seriously (2012) and the influential Wholeness of Nature (1996), which includes a much more thorough discussion of Goethe's phenomenological method. The essay presented here was originally the fourth part of a paper for the conference, "Goethean Science in Holistic Perspective: Scientific, Ethical, and Educational Implications," held at Columbia University's Teacher College, New York City, May 20–22, 1999; the first parts of this paper were published in the summer/fall 2018 and winter/spring 2019 issues of EAP; the last part will be published in the winter/spring 2020 issue. Note that, in the paper's original written version, Bortoft does not provide complete references. Here, we have added citations as available, but some works remain unreferenced. The paper is published with the permission of Jacqueline Bortoft. The editor thanks Stephen Wood for proofing and referencing assistance. © 2019 Jacqueline Bortoft.*

Goethe's way of seeing dynamic wholeness is encapsulated in his remark to Schiller that there must be a way of seeing nature that "presented her as working and alive, *striving out of the whole into the parts*" (my emphasis). We notice here a reversal in perception: not from the parts to the whole, but from the whole into the parts. The parts are seen within the whole, instead of seeing the whole arise out of the parts. This way of seeing nature, "striving out of the whole into the parts," is illustrated by Goethe's own work on the metamorphosis of flowering plants and also in current Goethean research—e.g., Craig Holdrege, Mark Riegner, and Wolfgang Schad's interest in the wholeness of the animal organism and the organization of mammals as an organic whole [1].

There are two common misunderstandings of Goethe's way of seeing the metamorphosis of flowering plants. First, there is the misunderstanding that what he meant by metamorphosis is a historical or procreational change—i.e., that one organ changes directly into a different organ as if, for example, a petal *changes into* a stamen. This misunderstanding has been particularly encouraged by erroneously thinking about Goethe in Darwinian terms.

The other misunderstanding is to suppose that Goethe thinks of the different organs up the stem—leaf, sepal, petal, stamen—as being formed on the same pattern according to a common plan. This so-called "ground plan" is imagined to be what the different organs have in common—their lowest common denominator. It is supposed that this is what Goethe

means by the *Urorgan*, a term often translated either as "primal organ" or "archetypal organ" (each of which is misleading in its own way, the first leading in the direction of Darwinism; the second, in the direction of Platonism). Similarly, when Goethe talks about the *Urpflanze*, it is supposed that he means what all the many different plants have in common—the group plan of all plants. Here, again, the terms "primal plant" and "archetypal plant" are misleading.

These misinterpretations can be dispelled by looking at what Goethe says (though he does not always help himself here) and, on this basis, learning to *see* the plant "striving out of the whole into the parts." It will help to first consider what others have said about Goethe before considering what Goethe says himself. At the start, however, we should note that it is unrealistic to consider Goethe in isolation from the context of his time, a period when the search for "archetypal forms" was a concern of many thinkers. In Germany, this interest was known as "transcendental morphology"; in France, "philosophical anatomy." This approach extended to all organisms—for example, the attempt to find an archetypal form for all vertebrates (pursued especially by Richard Owen in England).

Comments made about Goethe, therefore, are typical of what is said of the morphological approach in general. In fact, Goethe (who coined the term "morphology") is almost invariably taken as representative of this school of biological thought, even though his way of thinking is dynamical throughout and is different from the more static thinking of others with

whom he is often associated in the search for archetypal forms in the organic world.

Bearing this historical context in mind, the following are typical examples of the kind of thing said about Goethe, together with similar statements about the project of transcendental anatomy in general and the contribution of Richard Owen in particular. These examples are taken from books that happen to be on my shelves [2]:

*"Goethe searched for the ideal archetype of the vegetable world, the general plan common to all plants."*

*"Goethe perceived the unity of plan or structure common to whole groups of organic beings."*

*"Goethe believed that nature, despite its diversity, was a manifestation of a single plan or 'Idea'. Consequently, it was his object to reveal the underlying unity of nature."*

*"Seemingly influenced by Plato's theory of Universals, Goethe was transfixed by uniformities and commonalities in nature."*

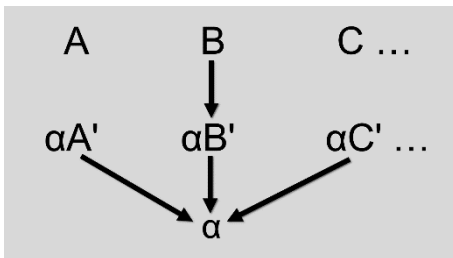
*"The distinguishing characteristic of transcendental anatomy was the presupposition of an Ideal Plan or Type that lay behind the great multiplicity of visible structures in the animal and plant kingdoms."*

*"For Owen, ... nature's plan could be demonstrated ... by seeking the underlying unity beneath the diversity of living forms. He sought the 'archetype' or ground plan on which all forms of life, or at least the*

vertebrates, are modelled. The archetype was an idealized vision of the simplest form of living creature, from which the anatomists' mind had been stripped the specialized organs required by real living beings."

We can recognize what happens here by following the *movement of thinking* that produces these statements. We realize that this movement *begins with the finished products*, whether organs or organisms. This manner of thinking begins from a set of entities taken as given, and from there it can only go further "downstream," abstracting from the entities what is "common." Thus, by comparing any one organ or organism with another, this manner of thinking looks for similarities and rejects differences, until one can identify one factor as present in every organ or organism of the set. This factor is then taken as what the specific individuals all have in common. The result, therefore, is unity in the multiplicity.

Thus, *beginning* with a set of given organs or organisms A, B, C ... (that organically are "finished products"), we reconstitute them in the form of  $\alpha A'$ ,  $\alpha B'$ ,  $\alpha C'$  ..., where  $\alpha$  is what is common and where A', B', C' ... comprise all about them that is different. This reconstitution can be represented as follows [3]:



We come in this way to "unity and multiplicity" by the elimination of difference. The result is a unity that is abstract and reductive because it abridges multiplicity to unity and diversity to identity by finding the respect in which the different "entities" (organs or organisms) don't differ at all but are the same. This is the static unity of self-sameness, generated by a manner of movement—"unity in multiplicity"—that is the unity of the dead end. I repeat:

**"Unity in Multiplicity is the static unity of self-sameness."**

With this movement of thinking, the "entities" can be anything whatsoever. In the early "Socratic" dialogues of Plato, for example, they are virtues. The following quotations are some other examples (at least in the form given to them by modern English translations). From these phrasings, one notes that the movement of thinking is to look for "unity in multiplicity"—a unity in which all differences are cancelled out, leaving only what is everywhere the same [4]:

*"What is that common quality, which is the same in all these cases, and which is called courage?" (Laches)*

*"Isn't it true that in every action piety is self-identical? ... What I urged you to do was not to tell me about one or two of these many pious actions but to describe the actual feature that makes all pious actions pious. For you were in agreement, surely, that it is virtue of a single characteristic... that all pious things are pious." (Euthyphro)*

*"We have discovered a number of virtues when we were looking for one only. This single virtue, which permeates each of them, we cannot find.... What is the character in respect of which they don't differ at all, but are all the same?" (Meno)*

The idea of unity illustrated by these quotations is the unity of what is "common." But the common property that constitutes this unity is not separate from it but there in the multiplicity. The "unity in multiplicity" is *part* of the multiplicity of the given, being in fact a selection from the contents of the given and is, therefore, not in any way different or separate from the many individual entities (organs or organisms). This is what is meant by saying that "unity in multiplicity" is an abstract unity.

Yet if we look at expressions such as "the underlying unity beneath the diversity" or "an Ideal Plan or Type that lies beneath the multiplicity," we realize that the very form of this phrasing introduces a *separation* between the unity and the multiplicity, as if the unity had been hypostatized into an abstract object itself. It is as if the idea of unity as what is common to many had "solidified" into a mental im-

pression of the common property as an abstract entity and, as such, is separate from the multiplicity given to experience.

This manner of understanding produces a "doubling" of the world—an unnecessary duplication that is the source of metaphysics. The implication is always that the unity "behind" or "underlying" the multiplicity is in some way superior to, or more fundamental than, the multiplicity itself. In this way, a two-world theory develops that incorporates an ontological dualism: The unity is more real than the multiplicity even though it is the latter that is the more immediately visible.

The most influential example is the philosophical tradition of Platonism, which cannot by any means necessarily be identified with Plato himself in any straightforward way. In Platonism, we encounter the primary reality of Forms or Ideas over the reality of visible objects that are secondary. The relation of the unitary platonic archetype to the multiplicity of sensory objects—e.g., Beauty to the things that are beautiful—is referred to as "being the one over many." Here, the unity is made transcendent and, as Aristotle pointed out, the result is an unnecessary duplication of the world of sense objects, since, in its crude aspect, the reality of Forms or Ideas is clearly derived from the very sense world whose true origin the Forms or Ideas are then back-projected as being.

What we recognize here is the hypostatization of the "unity in multiplicity" to "a unity underlying multiplicity," a situation of trying to "reach the milk by way of the cheese," as a consequence of beginning from things in their finished state (the given) and then going farther "downstream" in abstraction, instead of reversing the movement of thinking so as to catch things in their coming-into-being and thereby ending instead of starting with "the given" [5].

The unity in the manifold phenomenon appears in the form of a "law of nature" in science, where it also usually takes a mathematical form. Though such laws *do not* in fact have the form of "unity in multiplicity," they are nevertheless most often presented and understood as if they did. In itself, mathematical thinking is intrinsically dynamical, and its mode of unity is very different from the static unity of what things have in common.

From the way, however, that mathematical thinking is seen *afterward*—from an awareness of the “finished product,” which sees only the *results* of mathematical thinking and not the dynamics of the thinking itself—it seems as if the mathematical laws of physics refer to what phenomena have in common, so that the unity in the phenomena that they characterize has the form of “unity in multiplicity.”

Certainly, this is undeniably true of the way in which science is taught today. Take, for example, Galileo’s discovery that, for uniformly accelerated motion, the total distance traversed from the start of the motion is directly proportional to the square of time that has elapsed. It is simply supposed that, by experiment, this law was found to be the common factor in many instances.

The history of science shows, however, that this law was not discovered in this way at all. In fact, the philosophy of science shows that it *couldn’t* have been discovered in this way. Certainly, it *can* be presented afterward (beginning with the “finished product”) *as if* it had been, and therefore *as if* the unity in the phenomenon that this mathematical law represents has the form of “unity in multiplicity.”

From this external point of view, it does seem to be the characteristic of mathematical laws of physics that they exclude the ways in which phenomena differ in favor of what they have in common. In relation to Galileo’s discovery just mentioned, this law is the same for *all* bodies moving with uniform acceleration (neglecting air resistance), no matter how they differ in weight, size, physical nature, or chemical constitution; where they are on the earth (or anywhere else); whether or not they are moving; and so on.

It is with Newton that this idea of the universality of science really caught hold of the imagination, and the idea of a unified science that applies to all natural phenomena begins to have widespread influence, not only in science but in the entire Western culture [6]. Newton’s first law of motion stipulates that “Every body...”—in other words, it is true regardless of *all* differences whatsoever. In fact, the very term “body” in physics seems to denote a lowest-common-denominator “thing” that has been stripped of all differences.

But it was really Newton’s law of gravity that captured the imagination and became the very paradigm for the movement

of thinking that finds “unity in multiplicity” or “identity in diversity,” whereby the common factor within different phenomena comes to be seen as what is “essential,” whereas the differences come to be seen as merely “superficial.” How utterly unexpected it was to discover that the proverbial apple falling from the tree, the moon orbiting the earth, and the planets and comets circling the Sun (all of which are evidently so different), nevertheless have something in common with regard to which they don’t differ at all but are the same. And then to “discover” that this pattern applies to all bodies in the Universe!

We are so accustomed to this line of knowledge that we not only fail to be surprised but fail to notice the movement of thinking that it assumes. The point can be made by seeing this manner of understanding through the eyes of someone from another culture in which it has not become “second nature” to think in this way. One example is what Nobel-Laureate physicist T.D. Lee said when asked about his educational experiences in China before emigrating to America:

*Without hesitation, Lee replied that it was the concept of universality of physical laws that had struck him most deeply—the idea that physical laws applied to specific phenomena here on earth, in one’s living room as well as on Mars, was new and compelling.... [7].*

**I**n the historical development of science, the laws of nature have not only been understood as being the “unity in multiplicity” but, more fundamentally, as being the unity *underlying* or *behind* the multiplicity. This perspective comes directly from the influence of Neoplatonism on the development of modern science, with its emphasis on the mathematical, together with the influence of the Christian tradition [8].

What this means is that the mathematical laws of nature are conceived as separate from, and acting *externally upon*, matter in the manner of the two-world metaphysics of Platonism. In this picture, it is the mathematical laws that are ontologically more fundamental. In other words, they act on matter—i.e., they are not intrinsic to matter but *impose* order on what otherwise is chaos.

Thus, in the fashion of metaphysical dualism, these mathematical laws transcend

the world they act upon and were identified as being thoughts in the Mind of God, who was therefore conceived as a divine mathematician with his priest, the physicist, illuminating the mathematical Plan of Creation. Although this identification with God has now dropped out of science—notwithstanding the tendency of some mathematical physicists from Einstein to Hawking to resurrect it—the dualism that it entails has not dropped away.

In some ways, this dualism is even stronger in contemporary physics than ever before—for example, the fundamental equations of a unified field theory are thought by some physicists to be independent from, and ontologically prior to, the material universe itself. This claim often seems strange to laypeople who suppose that physicists discovered mathematical laws from an investigation of the *intrinsic* properties of matter itself—i.e., these laws are not beyond matter but essentially part of it. This puzzlement is reasonable, even though, if the laws of nature had not been conceived as being separate from the matter they act upon, and if the intrinsic nature of matter had had to be understood first, then more than likely modern Western science would not have developed at all.

Again, a comparison with the Chinese situation makes this point clear. In traditional Chinese culture, the belief was that order developed spontaneously in the world, out of the intrinsic character of the things themselves. Thus, the Chinese idea of law was that it was latent within things and not imposed from without. Hence, since everything had its *own* law, there was no idea of *universal* law in the Western sense. Consequently, the kind of scientific thinking that developed in China was very different from modern Western science [9].

This kind of thinking was subsequently extended from the physical to the organic sciences. The idea was to find the morphological laws of organisms, which would be for biology what the mathematical laws were for physics. The result would be biology as a properly based science as physics already was.

As suggested by the quotations I presented earlier, the kind of unity looked for in morphology was the “unity in multiplicity” formed when the movement of thinking begins with the finished products. As



in the case of physics, however, this assumption did not stop at simply discovering what different organs or organisms had in common. This “common plan” was very often made transcendental—i.e., as a unity *underlying* or *behind* the multiplicity. This archetype was conceived as being *separate* from the organs or organisms that it organized, like the mathematical laws of physics. This archetypal understanding could play the role in biology equivalent to that played by the laws of physics.

**W**e have already seen that Goethe is often associated with this manner of understanding. We will now see, however, that the movement of his thinking is entirely different—in fact, it moves in the opposite direction. To provide this understanding, we will follow the same procedure as before by looking at some of Goethe’s statements. Once again, it is a matter of following the movement of thinking grounding these claims [10]:

*“Hypothesis: All is leaf. This simplicity makes possible the greatest diversity.”*

*“It has occurred to me that in the organ of the plant that we ordinarily designate as leaf the true Proteus is hidden, who can conceal and reveal himself in all forms. Forward and backward the plant is only leaf.”*

*Nature “produces one part of another and creates the most varied forms by the modification of one single organ.”*

*“The process by which one and the same organ presents itself to us in manifold forms has been called the metamorphosis of plants.”*

*“It is a growing awareness of the Form with which, again and again, nature plays and, in playing, brings forth manifold life.”*

*“The thought becomes more and more living that it may be possible out of one form to develop all plant forms.”*

In these descriptions, we see nature “working and alive, striving out of the whole into the parts” and not just what the parts have in common externally. Instead of beginning from the “given” (the finished organs or organisms) and going farther “downstream” to abstract what is common,

Goethe’s thinking moves “upstream” and “flows” down with the coming-into-being of the phenomenon. Consequently, he ends with “the given” that, in contrast, is the arbitrary point of departure for modes of thinking assuming “multiplicity in unity.”

This facilitation of coming-into-being is the dynamic thinking of the participant mode of consciousness instead of the static thinking of onlooker consciousness. What we see is the dynamical unity of the coming-into-being instead of the static unity of the finished products. We could say that this result is the dynamic unity of the living source instead of the static unity of the dead end.

This way of seeing turns the one and the many inside out. Instead of many different ones that are the same, we now see one that is becoming itself in many different ways. What is important to understand is that each of these different manifestations *is* the one itself and not another one—it is other but not another.

What we have here is *self-difference* instead of self-sameness, whereby each is the very same one but differently instead of each the different ones being the same. If we follow this movement of thinking, we begin to *see* in the mode of consciousness corresponding to this concrete idea of organic unity instead of the unity of abstraction. This shift is the important step to make because, otherwise, we cannot *see* the dynamical unity of self-difference. We do not realize how fundamentally different this situation is from the static unity of self-sameness [11].

**F**ollowing the growth of a plant in imagination is one accessible way to discover this dynamical movement of thinking [12]. The procedure is the same as in the work on color: active seeing followed by exact sensorial imagination [13]. When we practice this method of looking and seeing, we find that we begin to experience the plant “striving out of the whole into the parts.” The idea of the dynamical unity of self-difference forms as a movement in our mind as if it were the plant itself doing this movement.

We now have difference *within* unity rather than a unity that excludes difference. Furthermore, this mode of “seeing” is concrete rather than abstract. Instead of a

“unity in multiplicity,” we have “multiplicity in unity, which is the unity of the living source:

**“Multiplicity in Unity” is the dynamical unity of self-difference.**

We must be careful here not to think of “multiplicity in unity” as if it implied that unity is divided—in which case, it would not be unity. This error happens if we think of “multiplicity in unity” in an *extensive* sense (as we would think of “unity in multiplicity”). Rather, if the unity is not to be divided, “multiplicity in unity” must be *intensive*, a situation that can be understood via simple examples such as dividing a hologram or propagating a plant by means of cuttings [14].

For example, we can contrast holograms and photographs. If we cut a photograph in two, we have two halves with half its image on each piece. When we cut a hologram in two, however, we have, astonishingly, two holograms with the whole image on both parts (though those images are somewhat less clear than the original image). We have divided the hologram materially but, optically, it remains one. Clearly, there are two holograms materially but, since each is the original whole, there is, in some sense, one hologram only.

We easily miss what is happening in this hologram example because of our ingrained habit of thinking in terms of the logic of solid bodies. The arithmetic of wholeness is very different from the arithmetic of bodies. This difference points to how we must think intensively rather than extensively: it’s not one and another one (two) but one and its own other (not two but one). In the intensive dimension of wholeness, something can be one and many at the same time—both same and other. This situation means that ontology is “free from the limitation of single-valued existence” [15].

Perhaps the best we can *say* is that each is the very same one and not another one, but this is not the best we can do because we can *see* it in the phenomenological sense. Comparing the hologram with a photograph helps to make this point in that, to achieve the same result photographically, we would have to make a copy of the original photograph and then there *would* be two because the copy is another one and not the other of the one.

This process of hologram division illustrates the mode of unity that I call “multiplicity in unity.” The value of such an example is that it can form a template for thinking in a new way—in this case, helping us to think intensively instead of extensively. In such cases, however, we must be careful not to confuse the container with the content. One way to avoid this difficulty is to use several different examples.

For example, vegetative reproduction by taking plant cuttings is another illustration that can help us to see the intensive “multiplicity in unity.” Here, again, we tend to miss what is happening because our customary thinking is attuned to the external world of solid bodies. If we divide a fuchsia plant into pieces and grow them all, we have many new fuchsias, each separate from the others spatially. Organically, however, they belong together because each is the same plant. There is “intensively one” plant organically, but we see “extensively many” plants that can be counted physically.

Here, again, we have the indivisibility of the whole, which can be divided but remains whole. No matter how many plants we can count, in the intensive dimension of wholeness there is One plant that is many but not many ones. What we discover here is that there is an intensive dimension of One instead of the extensive dimension of many ones.

For convenience, we shall adopt the convention of distinguishing the intensive One from the extensive one by capital and small letters. Thus “multiplicity in unity” is an intensive dimension within the One. Neither one nor many but at the same time both: This is the intensive dimension of One with the others of itself—“multiplicity in unity” instead of the extensive dimension of one and another one.

Evidently, this intensive aspect cannot be mapped onto the bodily world; thus, we cannot form any sense-based mental picture of it. But we can *see* it in the phenomenological sense, though it takes practice to be able to do so, partly because we must set aside the habit of forming mental pictures based on the bodily world we encounter through the senses [16].

Admittedly, the holographic and plant illustrations are somewhat static, but they are only intended to

help us think intensively rather than extensively. If we examine Goethe’s statements quoted earlier, we see that they express a more dynamical quality. Here we see “multiplicity in unity” directly as the *dynamical* unity of self-difference.

At first reading, however, we might miss the way that it is always the one organ or organism manifesting different forms of itself. In other words, it is always the same organ or organism ontologically because existence is not single-valued in the intensive dimension of One. Some of these statements might be read in the extensive manner, in which case the differences would not be seen intensively as the One’s differences but extensively as the difference of one organ or organism from another—i.e., existence is now single-valued so that there are many organs or organisms with a common factor among them.

What Goethe means, however, by “metamorphosis” is this dynamical unity of self-difference—the intensive movement that produces the intensive dimension of One that is “multiplicity in unity.” This is how Goethe’s description of the inner activity of imagination should be understood:

*When I closed my eyes and lowered my head, I could imagine a flower in the centre of my visual sense. Its original form never stayed for a moment; it unfolded and from within it new flowers continuously developed with coloured petals and green leaves [17].*

What is important here is that the experience Goethe describes is intrinsically dynamical. It is not one plant followed by another and another with a result that is an extensive sequence of different plants. Rather, Goethe describes One plant being itself differently [18]. What we must do here is “to give up thinking in terms of beings that do and think instead of doings that be” [19]. This formative doing—the being of the plant—is the self-producing “forming itself according to itself” for which Goethe adopted the term “entelechy.”

Furthermore, since Goethe did not accept a purely representational theory of knowledge (i.e., a Cartesian/Kantian epistemology), we should try to avoid reading what he says in the light of a subject-object dualism. Thus the “movement that takes place in imagination”—i.e., the effusions of plants—is not merely subjective but is in fact the intrinsically dynamical One

plant being itself imaginatively instead of materially.

It is a consequence of the disciplined practice of imagination that the phenomenon (in this case, the coming-into-being of the One plant) can form itself imaginatively so that what is being experienced is literally the *self-manifesting of the phenomenon itself* and not just a mental representation of it. This seems strange to us moderns—especially when we conveniently forget about the intractable difficulties with a representational theory of knowledge.

But hermeneutic philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer reminds us that “this involvement of knowledge in being is the presupposition of all classical and medieval thought,” which is understood as “knowledge as an element of being itself and not primarily as an attitude of the subject” [20]. It is within the context of this hermeneutic tradition that Goethe’s following remarks are to be understood:

*Through the contemplating of an ever-creating nature, we should make ourselves worthy of conscious participation in her production.*

*There is a delicate empiricism that makes itself utterly identical with the object, thereby becoming true theory. But this enhancement of our mental powers belongs to a highly evolved age.*

If we return to Goethe’s work on morphology, we realize what he means when he suggests that the organs up a plant’s stem can be perceived in the mode of One organ’s metamorphosing into different modes of itself, whereupon the visible sequence of organs can then be *seen* as a whole movement of which these organs are simply “snapshots.” There is a reversal of perception in this way of seeing: The movement is not made out of the sequence of organs, but the organs are “made out of” the movement—for example, physicist David Bohm’s holomovement, which he described as “undivided wholeness in flowing movement” [21].

What is perhaps most important to emphasize here is the way this manner of seeing illustrates the true phenomenological character of Goethe’s way of science. We *see* the discrete particulars *and* their intrinsic connection with twofold vision [22]. In

this case, the necessary connection is dynamical: It is the whole movement, of which the individual organs now appear as arrested stages. There *is* a single form, but it is not what the particular organs have in common and it is not what is “behind” the appearances. Rather, it is *the unity that is the whole movement* whereby the single form is not static but dynamical. A common form could not generate the movement, whereas here it is the movement that generates particular forms. As Brady writes,

*Thus the movement is not itself a product of the forms from which it is detected, but rather the unity of those forms, from which unity, any form belonging to the series can be generated [23].*

Furthermore, we can now see why *any* form belonging to the series (whether of leaves only or all organs up the stem) can be taken as representing all others in the series. Each part is a manifestation of the whole (“striving out of the whole into the parts”) so that each member of the series *is* the One organ metamorphosing into different modes of itself. Thus, *any* organ of the series can function as a concrete symbol for all others, and the entire series incorporates a dynamical unity of self-difference that generates an intensive dimension of One.

This is what Goethe meant when he said that “All is leaf.” Because of the habit of thinking in the mode of “unity in multiplicity,” this statement is usually interpreted as implying somehow a common plan, with the term “leaf” referring to a kind of generalized image formed by abstraction. If really engaged with Goethe’s meaning, however, we realize that this interpretation is like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole.

The reason for this dissonance is now clear: Goethe thinks of the organs, not as a set of finished products to be compared but, rather, as a “coming-into-being” series produced by the One organ metamorphosing into different modes of itself. The result is that any one mode of this organ can function as a *concrete symbol* representing the entire series thus generated. Alternately, we may say that this diversely metamorphosed organ has no name and moves through the series in both directions (e.g., a stamen is a contracted leaf; or a leaf, an expanded stamen). Whichever way, what

is important is the dynamical wholeness of the series of organs and not what members of the series have in common.

**T**he difference between the concrete dynamical wholeness of the series and the abstract common factor of a set was recognized very early on by philosopher Ernst Cassirer. He saw that, although universal concepts were traditionally (i.e., in the empirical tradition) supposed to be formed by the abstraction of a common factor, this widely held view was intrinsically contradictory because it presupposed the very concepts the origins of which it sought to explain.

Cassirer recognized that, more fundamentally, concepts in mathematics and mathematical science took the form of a series rather than a common factor. Once the general principle is known, then far from eliminating differences, it is possible to generate all the different possibilities. In other words, the particular cases in their concrete totality can be evolved from the concept so that the concept can be said to include diversity within itself. In short, the concept is a concrete universal instead of the abstract universal of the empirical tradition [24].

Although Cassirer does not mention Goethe directly, it is nevertheless clear that what he says about the form of universal concepts is very much in accord with the way that Goethe understood the dynamical wholeness of the organism. As Gerry Webster and Brian Goodwin explain, “Cassirer’s important concept of ‘serial form’ seems to have been anticipated, if only intuitively, informally, and obscuring, by Goethe in his ‘Theory of Metamorphosis’” [25]. Webster and Goodwin draw on philosopher Ron Brady’s work to show how Goethe’s transformation series of organs is of a similar kind to Cassirer’s concept of serial form [26].

Though they discuss this link between Goethe and Cassirer, Webster and Goodwin also indicate how the two thinkers differ in that Cassirer ultimately assumed a representational theory of understanding that separates being and knowledge into different domains, with the latter restricted to the domain of cognitive representation. Consequently, Webster and Goodwin see Goethe’s phenomenology of organic form as emphasizing only “the epistemic order,

the forms of thought in terms of which being is represented or described—the structure of a set of concepts or propositions—and not to the forms of being per se, the ontological order” [27].

To some extent, the tendency to depend on a representational theory of knowledge is itself a consequence of failing to incorporate a dynamical mode of consciousness in scientific thinking. The reductive result is that thinking remains in the onlooker mode of consciousness and consequently too closely tied to things in their finished state. As a result, the question of knowledge becomes that of how we can know things that have already become with the result that the subject-object dualism of representational theory seems quite “natural.”

In contrast, a dynamical mode of consciousness invokes a participation in “thinking the coming-into-being of things” and encountering generatively what otherwise we would only know as a completed product. In Goethe’s manner of seeing, the coming-into-being of the phenomenon forms itself in thinking so that the dynamical mode of understanding is no longer divorced from the phenomenon. Knowledge is no longer apart from being because knowledge is the phenomenon being itself through thinking. Understanding becomes a part of being itself.

## Notes

1. For example, Holdrege 1998; Riegner 1993, 1998, 2008; Schad 2018.

2. No citations are provided for these quotations.

3. Bortoft explains that, in this diagram, he adapts a notation used by Ernst Cassirer in *Substance and Form* (Cassirer 1980).

4. No citations are provided for these quotations.

5. There can be no transcendence without immanence, or immanence without transcendence because each is the condition of possibility for the other. There is duality here but no dualism—no dichotomy as there is in the two-world theory, where each world is mutually external to the other. The difficulty arises from the counterfeit transcendence, which has the quality of externality and is therefore conceived as being *separate* from and *outside* the sense world, and hence as another “world” (see Miller 2005, esp. pp. 120–21).

Significantly, Plato was not a Platonist—he did not subscribe to the two-world theory that is central to the Western metaphysical tradition. In view of this, we should perhaps refer to the Neoplatonic tradition, especially as it influenced the development of modern science from the Renaissance onward, as “pseudo-Platonism” (See Bortoft 2012, pp. 158–59, pp. 183–86).

6. This idea of a unified science is the source of the Enlightenment idea of *universality* in human nature and the belief in universal reason that can discover

universal principles in morality, politics, and religion, as well as in science.

7. Prigogine and Stengers 1984, p. 64. The implication here is not that Chinese culture is somehow deficient. Rather, comparative studies illustrate that Chinese culture emphasizes aspects of phenomena different from those emphasized in modern Western culture, most notably giving priority to the uniquely particular rather than the underlying unity. This difference means that the Chinese culture developed a mode of perception that we Westerners tend to lack, just as our Western culture has developed some modes of understanding not traditionally found in Chinese culture.

8. And, subsequently, the emergence of the Nation State, with its transition from common law to statute law. For further discussion, see Bortoft 1996, Part III.

9. See Needleman, 1976.

10. No citations are provided for these quotations. In his last entry of this list, Bortoft quotes Rudolf Steiner (1963), who wrote that Goethe “seeks to bring the diversity back into the unity from which it originally went forth.”

11. In parentheses, Bortoft writes that “You know that you’ve seen it when you feel that your seeing has been turned inside out.”

12. In parentheses, Bortoft writes that “I have found a Busy Lizzie plant very helpful.”

13. Bortoft discusses active seeing and sensorial imagination in Part II of this series (see *EAP*, winter/spring 2019).

14. In parentheses, Bortoft writes that “As simple as these examples are, it helps to think *doing* them in imagination instead of only thinking of the result.”

15. Bortoft attributes this quotation to philosopher J.G. Bennett but does not provide a citation. On Bortoft’s relationship with Bennett, see the first part of this series (*EAP*, summer/fall 2018).

16. The intensive dimension of One is no stranger than many of the “difficulties” we face in quantum physics—think, for example, of the interference experiment with a single photon. The fact that we cannot map the intensive dimension of the One into a sensory representation does *not* mean that it is an abstraction. On the contrary, “multiplicity in unity” is a concrete unity, even though it cannot be recognized sensorily or caught in the logic of solid bodies. It is “unity in multiplicity” that is abstract.

For further discussion of the hologram, see Bortoft 1996, pp. 4–13.

17. No citation is provided for this quotation.

18. In parentheses, Bortoft writes that “A somewhat more static (because non-living) “model” is illustrated by the construction of a multiple hologram, which lacks the intrinsically dynamical character of living being but does nevertheless demonstrate the notion of ‘multiplicity in unity’ in a way that imitates artificially the dynamical wholeness of living being—see Bortoft 1996, Part 2, note 58.

19. Bennett 1977, p. 64.

20. No citation is given for this quotation. For further discussion of Gadamer, see Bortoft 2012, pp. 121–26.

21. Bortoft discusses Bohm’s work in Part I of this series (*EAP*, summer/fall 2018); also see Bortoft 1996, pp. 283–89; Brady 1998.

22. Bortoft 1996, pp. 303–20.

23. No citation is given for this quotation; either Brady 1987 or 1998?

24. This remarkably valuable insight is discussed in some detail in Cassirer’s early *Substance and*

*Function* (Cassirer 1980). Although he does not explicitly consider the idea of a different mode of unity (so that he does not consider the generative serial concept [as distinct from the abstract generic concept] in terms of the of the metamorphosis of One into different modes of itself (i.e., producing an intensive dimension of One), Still, it is clear (even when not made explicit) that the movement of Cassirer’s thinking is away from entities in their finished state toward their coming-into-being. His thinking becomes dynamical. If one reads what he writes carefully, it becomes clear from the language he uses that sometimes he moves toward one mode in his thinking and, at other times, moves toward the other, sometimes getting caught more in the product (e.g., “the unification of multiplicity”) and, at other times, becoming free from this static sense and moving toward the processual (e.g., “we have to create this multiplicity”).

25. Webster and Goodwin 1996, p. 110.

26. Brady 1998.

27. Webster and Goodwin 1996, p. 101.

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## Bortoft Lectures on-line

Writer **Simon Robinson** has uploaded on YouTube several lectures that Henri Bortoft presented on wholeness at Schumacher College in the 2000s. These lectures are an excellent introduction to Bortoft’s thinking, including his understanding of Goethean science. The links are below.

There is also available a tape recording of Bortoft’s presentation at the 2011 **J. G. Bennett’s Dramatic Universe** conference; this link is listed below after the Schumacher links. Note that, in the early 1960s, Bortoft was a researcher under the direction of Bennett.

## Bortoft’s Schumacher lectures

### Lecture 1:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=8&v=iGE1E2CcTo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=8&v=iGE1E2CcTo)

### Lecture 2, Part I:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=1Tzx5EOWHe0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=1Tzx5EOWHe0)

### Lecture 2, Part II:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=351&v=UmdlOMIV3KE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=351&v=UmdlOMIV3KE)

### Lecture 3:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=nsH6-n7BUtw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=nsH6-n7BUtw)

### Lecture 4, Part I: [https://transition-consciousness.word-](https://transition-consciousness.wordpress.com/2018/12/30/the-henri-bortoft-lectures-day-four-part-one-2/)

[press.com/2018/12/30/the-henri-bortoft-lectures-day-four-part-one-2/](https://transition-consciousness.wordpress.com/2018/12/30/the-henri-bortoft-lectures-day-four-part-one-2/)

### Lecture 4, Part II:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCwGtSeW14>

### Lecture 4, Part III:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=2&v=thMjGQzhENO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=thMjGQzhENO)

### Lecture 5, Part I:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILVxvP\\_S9zI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILVxvP_S9zI)

### Lecture 5, Part II:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLy14NKt0TQ>

## Bortoft’s J. G. Bennett lecture

<https://soundcloud.com/seandotcom-1/du-008-henri-bortoft>

# Familiar Places, Everyday Lives

## Places as Gatherings

Julia Bennett

*Bennett is a lecturer in Sociology at the University of Chester in the United Kingdom. This essay began as a talk for the 2016 “Night of Philosophy” organised by postgraduate students of the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment at Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands. The stories of real-world places presented here are taken from Bennett’s doctoral research into experiences of belonging among families who have lived in Wigan, England, for multiple generations. Up to three generations of family members gave biographical interviews and completed a photo diary for the project. Bennett’s recent research has focused on places and communities in Cheshire, England. [j.bennett@chester.ac.uk](mailto:j.bennett@chester.ac.uk). Text and photographs © 2019 Julia Bennett.*

A place is a point of interrelations in space and time, as philosopher Martin Heidegger illustrates in *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, using the example of a bridge (Heidegger 1971). This bridge is built between two previously unconnected riverbanks. Once the bridge is there, it acts as a passage and leads people from one side to the other.

The bridge, however, also *gathers* people to this location: People come because there are other people and opportunities for trade—providing food, wares, and provisions for travelers. Over time, a town may emerge on one or both of these riverbanks. A place is created.

Heidegger’s *Dasein* (being there, in place) is often assumed to imply fixity and stasis as opposed to becoming, which involves progress. I would argue, however, that this inertial emphasis is at odds with the interactive creation of places through building, cultivating, and gathering. The building of the bridge does not create a bounded place consisting only of the pillars and archway of the bridge itself but opens up the banks of the river joining the places on each side and gathering to itself its own specific locale. Cultivation (another form of building) is an opening up of the world to its potential. Place as an event can never be static; place as interrelations cannot be bounded or fixed. In gathering, places are productive of everyday life.

Anthropologist Tim Ingold (2008) describes how life *flows*: movement and action are at the center of everyday life. Places are (merely) pauses in the flows where

lives become entangled, as at the bridge. Place and people are thus inseparable in terms of their mutual history and biography.

One of the problems of researching place, partly because of this integration into the whole of life, is that it can be hard to see. Because places are not specific points on the globe or necessarily defined by objects, built or natural, they can be invisible. The place of an annual carnival will only manifest itself during the period of the event and will be another place the rest of the year.

While the objects in a place can be observed, just as the people can be, the viewpoint of the observer, especially if an outsider, may well miss what is there for locals—for example, the street corner where men gather to talk and smoke. Like people, places can have multiple identities simultaneously. People whose lives are thus entangled incorporate aspects of the place, the history of the place, into their everyday

lives—their *dasein*, “way of being,” or “belonging.”

Research into daily lives in Wigan, a large town in northwest England, shows how mundane, everyday sites gather and become eventful. Participants kept photo diaries for a week detailing the places they visited. During post-diary discussions, these participants talked about the places depicted in the photos. Three examples serve to illustrate, first, that the places most important in our lives may be the most ordinary and overlooked; second, that places have biographies that connect us to our past and our future; and, third, that all places are necessarily locally-specific.

### The mundane place

During our post-diary discussion, Janet’s photos helped her to think about connections in her life that would usually be considered too mundane for discussion. In her diary, Janet, age 52, included this Spar petrol station (photo, below) as one of the



places to which she is most attached. This attachment is through a friend, who she has known for over 30 years. When she undertakes the ordinary task of buying petrol for her car, Janet also visits this friend who works in the garage:

*That's the garage, that's there because I go a lot and one of the assistants I've known for, how long have I known [her]? I've probably known her 30 years! ... then her children and my children and you know. I've been going to that garage since I passed my driving test.*

It is through “un-thought-about” connections to places like this petrol station that a deep-seated belonging to place can be explored. Here, worlds of past and future are invoked due to the implicit continuation of the relationship: “I go a lot.” Janet and her friend are fully immersed in the place through their ongoing relationship that is part of the rhythm of their everyday lives. This garage has a function paralleling Heidegger’s bridge in that it implicitly connects people and place through providing fuel for transport and enabling a road network. The garage *gathers*.

### Storytelling places

Places also gather memories, an important part of a person’s identity. A place “remembers” through retaining traces of previous buildings, but people also remember through places. Memories are fluid images open to reinterpretation, creating a dialogue between past and present—a narrative where people, place, and culture are all part of the story. In “placing” people (“Who are you?”) we ask them to tell us a story of their lives—the past and perhaps the future.

Aged 65, Val has lived in or close to Leigh (a part of the local government area of Wigan) all her life. At her post-diary interview, she said this about the photo of Bradshawgate in Leigh (photo, above):

*Leigh looks funny when you take its photograph. You'd think, My God, if you'd gone for a day out you'd think let's go somewhere else, but you don't see it really. This big red building [center left] used to be the Co-op and both my parents worked for the Co-op, not this one but you know the whole Co-op movement and that's how they met [1]. Yes, it isn't beautiful, but it's the people—the people are very nice, they're very*



*friendly, it's got a sense of community, we're very lucky.*

As intimated by this response, Leigh generally slips into the background of Val’s consciousness, but her looking at this photo brings Leigh to her notice, this unusual perspective making this place look “funny,” or odd.

The physical aspect of place is crucial here because “the materiality of objects embodies the past experiences and relationships that [people] have been part of and facilitates some kind of ineffable contact with those experiences and relationships” (Jones 2010, p. 189). Through remembering the building as the Co-op, Val keeps both the memory of her parents alive and the memories connected with the building itself. Places are inalienable for those who have inhabited them previously, including our past selves.

In her interview, Val was able to tell me the history of most of the buildings in this and other photos—for example, the locations of former cinemas or the shop where she bought a pram for her children. There are personal connections to these places and, at the same time, she is telling me the history of Leigh as a place through her own biography. This history is related through personal stories linked to the wider world. Here everyday life as “flow” (Ingold 2008) moves between past and present. It is perhaps only through realizing places as objects, created here through the camera lens, that we can “see” how places impact on our daily lives.

### The local and the global

Perhaps, ironically, it is the advance of the global that has indeed brought the local back into focus. The global and the local are positioned as opposing concepts: The global is disembodied, powerful, and progressive; the local is physical, weak, and static. In fact, “the global” exists only in rhetoric, not in reality.

There is no place that is global or, rather, all places are connected globally. Nothing can be abstracted from the physicality of a local place: A global business may have manufacturing plants in different countries, but each employs local people and contributes to, and is affected by, a local way of life, a local culture.

Val related how she looked after her grandchildren while their parents worked and regularly took them to McDonald’s as a treat. During the week of her diary entries, she and her youngest granddaughter went there (photo, next page):

*Val: McDonalds... that's the one we go to.*

*Me: It could be anywhere, I know a McDonald's that looks exactly like that.*

*Val: That's right, this is the 13b, you know, plan 13b if you've got so many square yards. Well, we used to pick the boys up from nursery, that's right so we'd have [our granddaughter] and ... that was the nearest place, really, so we'd come back and go there, so we got to know the people in there, they liked going there for their lunch... so at one time we were going every*



week. Now we go occasionally, because the children just love McDonalds and they do a nice cup of coffee these days ...

*Me:* So you actually got to know the staff in there did you, they don't have such a quick turnover?

*Val:* Yes. In fact, we took [the youngest granddaughter] in the other week... the girl who used to wipe the tables down... she used to come and say "hello, little chickadees" to the children and blow me she came and said, "Oh you've got another little chickadee...."

Through multiple visits, Val has created a "global" space as part of her life-story and that of her grandchildren. Because the same woman still works in this particular local place, we see how it gathers local

people in the same way as the garage mentioned by Janet. Although McDonald's is built to standard patterns (here the "13b"), inside it becomes a part of this particular local place.

Augé (1995) refers to places as "thick" or "thin." His descriptions imply that there are fewer sociologically interesting relations in a "thin" or "non-place" than in a "thick" or "anthropological" place. This contrast is misleading, however, because, as my three real-world examples illustrate, all places are the locus of multiple interactions happening only at that location and in turn producing new effects. Places are not "self-contained," and no place is bounded. When traced from beginning to end, social connections flow through many different places, each of which is a local place for that particular interaction, gathering to it the local landscape.

## Conclusion

Beginning from Heidegger's premise that places *gather* (1971), I have attempted to show how local places draw together stories and memories that help to constitute "places" in the wider sense of a setting for daily life. Constituted through mundane tasks, places are where daily life takes place. Each place becomes what it is through interactions with other people and with the landscape and with other places, over time. Place and people are inseparable in terms of biography and mutual history.

A place is not static and unchanging but a part of life, constantly evolving and becoming.

As part of being human, people create places that are located and local but also a part of wider social relations around the world and through time.

## Note

1. "Co-op" is the common form for the Co-operative movement that gives members a share of the profits.

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# Invitation to Interiority 2

## Exploring Two Landscapes

John Cameron

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In my previous essay, I described a three-day trip that my sister Trish and I took into Wollemi canyon country west of Sydney. This excursion led me to explore the ways in which the experience of entering a canyon was akin to going inside one’s self. I investigated the body’s interior spaces and the subjective sense of inner spatiality before proceeding to maps of interiority provided by Eastern spirituality and Western psychology.

The matter of how human interiority is related to the form and character of the landscape has been considered by several important thinkers and writers. In this essay, I consider some of their work, beginning with English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins.

### Inscape and poetic vision

Hopkins’ poetry provides a superb example of the expression of an internalized landscape. In his prose writings, Hopkins provides insights into his poetic vision and adds to the vocabulary of interiority. His poems are distinctive for their utterly original syntax and rhythm. Struck by the beauty of the world, he strove to express how it moved him, passionately and spiritually. In “the Windhover,” his ecstasy in beholding the morning flight of a falcon trembles on the page:

*I caught this morning morning’s minion,  
king-  
dom of daylight’s dauphin, dapple-  
dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding  
Of the rolling level underneath him  
steady air, and striding  
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a  
wimpling wing  
In his ecstasy! Then off, off forth on swing,  
As a skate’s heel sweeps smooth on a  
bow-bend: the hurl and gliding  
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in  
hiding*

*Stirred for a bird,—the achieve of, the mastery of the thing! [1]*

To Hopkins, the delicate and surprising uniqueness of each natural form revealed an underlying, unifying principle. In his journals, he coined the words *inscape* and *instress* to describe the relationship between inner and outer worlds thus disclosed. In the view of the editor of the Penguin edition of Hopkins’ work, W.H. Gardner:

*As a name for that “individually-distinctive” form (made up of various sense-data) which constitutes the rich and revealing “one-ness” of the natural object, he coined the term inscape; and for that energy of being by which all things are upheld, for that natural (but ultimately supernatural) stress which determines an inscape and keeps it in being—for that he coined the name instress [2].*

Importantly, instress is not simply an internal cohesive force but can also refer to the force within a natural object that acts on the senses and actualizes the inscape within the mind of the human perceiver. It is thus a sort of direct illumination from nature.

Notes about the inscape appear in Hopkins’ journal in 1868 when he was 24 and continue until his journal ends seven years later. He describes the fluting of a branch of Switzerland’s Grindelwald glacier as “swerved and inscaped strictly to the motion of the mass” [3]. Later, he writes: “Note that a slender race of fine flue cloud inscaped in continuous eyebrow curves hitched on the Weisshorn peak as it passed” [4]. Back in England in spring-time, he observed:

*This is the time to study inscape in the spraying of trees, for the swelling of buds carry them to a pitch which the eye could*

*not else gather... in these sprays at all events there is a new world of inscape [5].*

While out walking in winter grassland, he describes how he sees “the inscape though freshly, as if my eye were still growing, though with a companion the eye and the ear are for the most part shut and instress cannot come” [6]. Occasionally, he refers to the inscaping of a human-made structure. While in a ruined castle, he notes: “standing before the gateway I had an instress which only the true old work gives from the strong and noble inscape of the pointed arch” [7].

Even this selection does not cover the subtle and elusive ways in which Hopkins employs the term inscape. For example, in his journal entry of March 12, 1870, he writes: “If you look at the rest of the sunset you must cover the sun, but today I inscaped them together and made the sun the true eye and ace of the whole... it is indeed by stalling it that it falls into scape with the sky” [8]. Here, the perceiver is taking an active role, and Hopkins uses inscape as a verb (“I inscaped them together”) rather than being acted upon by phenomena in nature.

In Gardner’s view, inscape was the heart and vital point of Hopkins’ poetry: “For Hopkins, poetic creation occurred when the poet’s own nature (his own inscape) has been instressed by some complementary inscape discovered in external Nature. The resulting poem is therefore a *new inscape*” [9].

This is an arresting idea and pertinent to the study of interiority. For Hopkins, innerness in a natural form is not something that is directly apprehended but appears in the mind of the perceiver through the power inherent in the complementarity of inscapes.

This process raises as many questions as it answers. Presumably, each of us has his



or her own nature and a particular inscape—certain qualities that predispose us to respond to certain inscapes in “external Nature” rather than others. How is a person’s inscape developed through life, and what role does previous contact with nature play in the forming of that inscape?

It is noteworthy that the initiating force—the agency—can reside in either the perceiver or the natural form. Hopkins writes both of how he inscaped certain forms together, and how other inscapes in-stressed themselves in his mind. What is this force that enables the inscapes of natural forms to impress themselves on the human psyche? Some clue may be found in the fact that, while training for the Jesuit order, Hopkins encountered the writings of the Dutch theologian Duns Scotus, who held that the real value of a physical thing lay in its specific form that revealed its “Thisness” (*haecceitas*)—its individualized perfection that made it *this* and not *that*. Hopkins felt that Scotus’ philosophy corroborated his theory of inscape and in-stress.

There is also great sympathy between Hopkins’ inscape and Goethe’s idea of the *gesture* of a natural phenomenon, though there is no evidence that Hopkins knew of Goethe’s way of science. Both are indwelling within the phenomenon and, though inscapes and gestures are revealed through natural forms, they are not directly perceptible.

For Goethe it was a science, systematically applied by disciplined use of sensory data and trained intuition. For Hopkins, it seemed more a matter of opening himself to the natural world and to moments of private illumination when inscaping revealed itself. Hopkins places more emphasis on *being acted upon*, being in-stressed by the inscape of a bluebell, an oak, cloud, or glacier. In contrast, Goethe is *actively engaged* with his subject of interest, observing and repeatedly sketching, looking for that essence, the *gesture*.

These contrasting ways of seeing are a difference of degree rather than kind. Hopkins is active in the sense of being actively receptive, praying and closely observing the natural forms that surround him. Goethe is also receptive—the *gesture* can reveal itself in the psyche of the researcher, through poetic image as well as careful repetitive drawing.

In my experience, the more one opens oneself to a natural phenomenon, the harder it is to tell whether one is initiating action or being acted upon, and indeed both are happening simultaneously. Living in Tasmania, I’ve long been aware that as I bring about physical changes on the land by planting native trees and grasses, and removing some introduced plants, I am being changed physically in my musculature and posture. The inner aspects of this process include the feeling that how I am in the world, my inscape, is changing in response to the land and its soundscape. For its part, the land seems less disturbed than when I first arrived, and has become, in the words of an Aboriginal friend who visited not so long ago, “quieter now.” Particularly in recognizing the “this-ness” of shoreline rocks and mountains, I’ve had glimpses of Hopkins-like illuminations

### A Literary view

Some place writers have also ventured into this theme of interiority, starting with the author who pioneered 19<sup>th</sup>-century Western environmental thought, Henry David Thoreau. In his essay *Walking* (best known for the aphorism “in wildness is the preservation of the world”), he proposed that the quality of a person’s thoughts and attitudes is directly influenced by the terrain in which they walk:

*For I believe that climate does thus react on man—as there is something in the mountain air that feeds the spirit and inspires. Will not man grow to greater perfection intellectually and physically under these influences? Or is it unimportant how many foggy days there are in his life? I trust that we shall be more imaginative, that our thoughts will be clearer, fresher and more ethereal, as our sky—our understanding more comprehensive and broader, like our plains—our intellect generally on a grander scale, like our thunder and lightning, our rivers and mountains and forests—and our hearts shall even correspond in breadth and depth and grandeur to our inland seas [10].*

For Thoreau, the key dynamic is between wild nature and tame civilization. The wildness of nature gives rise to wild literature, which is free, swift, and beautiful compared with the dullness of civilized

scholarship. If attended to, there is sympathy between the outer and inner world—a “subtle magnetism” in nature that directs our steps when setting out on a walk and similarly directs our minds.

In turn, contemporary American writer Barry Lopez writes of “two landscapes—one outside the self, the other within” [11]. Lopez argues that the external, physical landscape is best understood as a series of purposeful, ordered relationships between objective phenomena such as rock sequences and humidity levels or more inef-fable observations such as the quality of winter light. In relation to the interior, psychological landscape, he writes:

*The second landscape I think of is an interior one, a kind of projection within a person of a part of the exterior landscape.... The speculations, intuitions and formal ideas we refer to as “mind” are a set of relationships within the interior landscape with purpose and order; some of these are obvious, many impenetrably subtle. The shape and character of these relationships in a person’s thinking, I believe, are deeply influenced by where on this earth one goes, what one touches, the patterns one observes in nature—the intricate history of one’s life in the land... These thoughts are arranged, further, according to the thread of one’s moral, intellectual and spiritual development. The interior landscape responds to the character and subtlety of an exterior landscape; the shape of the individual mind is affected by land as it is by genes [12].*

Lopez’s words are a careful elaboration of Thoreau’s rhetorical flourish. Subtle and complex, they need careful consideration. Lopez describes how one set of intricate relationships—the outer ecology of landscape— influences another equally intricate set of relationships—the inner ecology of mindscape.

From his perspective, it is entirely understandable that I would have the idea about the interconnected interiority of person and world after the canyon experience. It is evidence of the deep influence of the exterior landscape on my thinking.

Moreover, Lopez suggests that there is not a simple, one-to-one connection between the qualities of the land where one is and the manner of thoughts one has. This is not a causal relationship. The structure and qualities of the canyons did not cause

me to have the idea about interiority. Another person, with a different life in the land and different predilections, might have had quite a divergent experience.

A further implication is that this relationship is not fixed, either by some sort of geographical determinism or by one's childhood experiences, important as they may be. As adults, our place history continues to mature, the threads of our moral and spiritual development weave a more complex pattern, and our intentions toward the places we inhabit may change. In these ways, the connections between the two landscapes continue to evolve throughout our lives. In my years of working with hundreds of mature-aged, postgraduate students, I noticed that the older the students were, the more important place relationships became for them.

Lopez's outer and inner landscapes help illuminate some of the questions posed by Hopkins' work as well as identify points of contrast. The predispositions of one's own inscape implied in Hopkins' writing are not so much an inborn characteristic of our psyche, Lopez would say, but are strongly influenced by the qualities of the land that has held our attention. To which I would add: "particularly in childhood."

Children are generally more impressionable and their minds are more malleable than adults'. Girls and boys are not only learning about the world; they are learning *how to think* about the world. After the age of seven or eight, children can form deep attachments to particular places as refuges or sites of exploration, play, secrecy, and sanctuary.

Childhood sense of place can exert a lasting influence on our responses to places as an adult [13]. The power that inheres in the resonance between an inscaped form in nature and one's own inscape comes from our life in the land as refracted through the patterns of our personal development.

Hopkins' inscape is more multi-layered than Lopez's two landscapes. It was developed progressively over seven years of journal entries and poetry writing rather than being the subject of one essay. Hopkins' account is more nuanced in the question of originating force, whereas Lopez is primarily concerned with the way the land influences the mind.

Lopez does not, however, propose a simple causal relationship, and the effect the land has on one's inner landscape is

strongly mediated by one's character and personal history. I suspect the differences are partly attributable to the nature of the medium in which the two authors express themselves. Hopkins the poet draws on arresting juxtapositions of images and new rhythms and syntax to convey the moment of illumination, while Lopez the essayist uses a careful accretion of ideas laid down in a well-ordered sequence like sedimentary strata.

One should also emphasize that Lopez's inner landscape refers entirely to a person's thinking. This inner landscape does not encompass embodied interiority—the physical sense of the interior of the body that is central to my inquiry. Nevertheless, his understanding of one's mental world as a response to her place history is an important part of the picture. Hopkins' inscape involves the psyche—the way our own inscape is structured and our receptivity to inscape in the natural world. It is more to do with a felt response to the world, often after perceiving several complementary natural forms.

### The two landscapes

An exploration of the relationship between the two landscapes, if one were to take Lopez's words seriously, would involve a detailed exposition of my "life in the land," drawing out the threads of my intellectual and spiritual development, a type of "mind and place autobiography."

This is a far larger undertaking than is possible in this essay, but the immediate memories and associations that the phrase calls up—as a ten-year-old climbing as high as I dared in the pine tree opposite our house to listen for the voice of God in the wind, being mocked by schoolmates for seeking mystical experiences on mountaintops—suggest that such an autobiographical effort would be worth the effort, despite the abundant opportunities for self-serving or self-deluded narratives.

One other event from my past has bearing on this matter, particularly as it relates to the work of poet and writer Rainer Maria Rilke, who also pondered the outside/inside relationship [14]:

*The inner—what is it?  
If not intensified sky,  
hurled through with birds and deep  
with the winds of homecoming*

I, too, have seen the sky intensified and hurled through with birds. One day in wild weather, I heard the wild mewing and crying that announces a gathering of kelp gulls. In the strong updraft at the break in slope, 40 or more ascended, wheeling about in widening circles, one above the other as if traversing the interior of a vast, invisible cone. I stood near the vortex of wailing voices and gazed upward. The sun blazed through a gap in the storm clouds, illuminating the birds.

The wings of kelp gulls are black on the dorsal side and white on the ventral side so that, for half the circle, they were almost indistinguishable against the dark sky until, with a burst of light, the sun caught their alabaster undersides in brilliant contrast with the thundercloud. Standing at the apex, I felt this avian vortex to extend deep into my interior. It was one of the strongest experiences of sky-like interiority I have had. The sky was turning in on itself. Its avian inhabitants animated the whole space, including mine [15].

These writers' accounts illuminate the experiences of my three days in the Wollemi. My encounters reflect a complex and on-going co-evolution of ideas and place experiences. An "intricate history" predisposed me to respond so strongly to the canyonlands, and this response continues to resound within me.

### Place/self interiority

Could it be that, by their very nature, all places relate to an interiority inextricably linked to a person's sense of identity? Arguing from first principles, Jeff Malpas—one of the world's preeminent place philosophers—concludes that this is the case.

Malpas' starting point is a careful examination of what he calls a *philosophical topography of place and experience* [16]. He examines the structure of place, not in the literal sense of landforms, rock strata, vegetation or buildings, but from the perspective that *all places are nested*—that they incorporate smaller places within them and open out into larger places of which they are part. In addition, places are narratively structured: Within them, the possibility of human beings taking action in the world and having a sense of identity develops. Place, Malpas argues, is the ground of human being and action.

In later work, Malpas elucidates one aspect of this overall structure—the interiority of place and self. Writing about the memory of particular place experiences, he observes:

*The turning back to place and self, especially as given in recollection, typically has the character of a turn inward—and the inwardness or interiority that appears here can be said to belong to both place and the self. Place is that which contains, and in containing so it allows space in which what is given within the place can appear—but that appearing, whatever else it might be, is an appearing within [17].*

Thus, the interiority of place and self arises together. This understanding is not straightforward, however, because the interior of a place is usually hidden from us,

*obscured by our own tendency to look outward to what appears before us rather than to ourselves or to that in which both we and what appears are held together [18].*

The tendency is to regard the appearances of a place as “out there” and our sense of ourselves as “in here,” rather than allowing our experience of a place to take us to an understanding that both place and self are “held together” inwardly.

This understanding can help overcome one of the primary pathologies of place attachment, which is to fix one’s identity to the characteristics of a particular place, “a narrowing of mind and action” [19]. As a result, places can become fixed in the public imagination (as in the phrase “This is the *real* Lake District”), or identities can be too tightly bound to place to the exclusion of others (as in the contention that “We are the *true* Serbians,” implying that others are not and do not belong there).

Interiority, in the sense that Malpas uses the word, is the antidote. In the case of narrow place identity, he points to the broadening effect of an inner orientation:

*Since the inward turning that belongs to the interiority of place never resolves itself into any final completion—the interiority of place constantly opens before us, but into an openness characterized by opacity as much as transparency—so there is always more to say about any and every place [20].*

In the case of narrow self-identification with place, our identity is never to be found in the features of one place but, rather, “in the opening that is our own placedness” [21]. Our sense of self is similarly never complete but always in question and always as opaque as it is transparent.

Malpas suggests that the journey into place is characterized by a dual movement:

*We exteriorize ourselves in the interiority of place at the same time as the interior of the place is interiorized in us. To be within a place is to find oneself affected by that place, to be oriented to its currents and directions; it is to gain a feeling for the patterns and rhythms of the place, of its own movements, of the density of the spaces within it, of the possibilities that it enables and the demands that it imposes [22].*

This dual movement is difficult to grasp because its aspects refer to the interior of the place, not to its external characteristics *per se*. The key point here is that it is typically in remembering the experience of place that the turn inward occurs—the implication being that, in the moment of being immersed in a place, it is difficult to make this turn because we tend to look only outward to appearances.

To be clear, Malpas makes a general philosophical statement about the interiority of all places and all people; with one exception, he does not refer to geographical or embodied interiors. This exception is in a footnote in which he argues that attempts to interpret place experiences in purely psychoanalytical terms are misleading because psychoanalytic ideas are themselves based on topologies of the body—“in the experience of the body’s own interiorities and exteriorities, their intersection and affectivities” [23].

Malpas maintains that the idea of interiority implies boundedness. What is beyond the bounds is exterior, and hence interiority carries with it a sense of exteriority. Again, there is a dual movement:

*On the one hand, place draws us inward into its own singularity and interiority, on the other it projects us outward to other places with which it is necessarily entangled... Every place is thus a place of shelter and of setting out, a place of enclosure and also openness [24].*

Malpas illustrates the entanglement of interiority and exteriority by pointing out that, in any place, there is interplay between earth (interior) and sky (exterior). Earth is bounded by sky and vice versa, and at every scale the two interpenetrate. Canyons are an interesting case in point because the experience of sky is extremely attenuated. At the bottom of a slot canyon, the sky is only visible, if seen at all, as a strip of light far removed above.

True, the canyon walls are separated by space that is contiguous with sky, but the far more important boundary is the stream marking the “floor” of the canyon. Their flowing water does not connect land and sky at the horizon, nor does it connect the experiencer experientially to other places downstream, even though cognitively he may understand that there are river flats and estuaries farther on. The result is that the interplay between interiority and exteriority is subdued, replaced by the active interpenetration of water and rock within a deep interior.

## **Culture and place**

Individual conceptions of place and interiority are mediated by one’s culture. As philosopher Val Plumwood wrote:

*If in a place-centered culture, social customs, etiquette, and institutions in every way nurture and recognize relationships to place, modernist culture and institutions conversely and systematically neglect, frustrate, and deny these relationships [25].*

There is, however, one aspect of modernist culture in which deep place relationships are countenanced—the creative arts. I’ve already pointed out how poets, essayists, and philosophers have drawn upon a sense of place in their work. The point is not so much that modernist culture systematically *denies* meaningful place relationships. Rather, it systematically *segregates* place relationships into the domain of creative expression. It is extremely difficult to bring place responsiveness into practical discussions over energy use and production, land use, and other responses to climate change, which in our society are the domain of economic and political thinking.

One example is cultural notions relating to the world’s interiority, which have changed radically in the last millennium.

David Abram provides a broad overview of how significantly the old order has been overturned [26]. The ancients had an “ancestral sense of the surrounding earthly cosmos as the voluminous inside” of a body, tent, or temple.

The Copernican and subsequent scientific revolutions overturned this worldview to replace it with the world as a pure outside. In the Newtonian universe, objectivity was “out there,” and subjectivity belonged only in the human realm. It is precisely this consignment of inner-ness solely to the human psyche and the denial of *anima mundi* that James Hillman, Peter Bishop and other depth psychologists contend with.

Abram argues for the possibility of both paradigms being valid in an intimately interconnected manner. There is a way, he contends, to tell the stories from contemporary science of the evolution of life on earth and the strange nature of the cosmos in a spirit that is compatible with indigenous creation stories and with corporeal experience. Thus we “complete the Copernican revolution,” bringing its insights down to earth, inside a living world rather than existing in a rarefied conceptualized “outside” [27].

I find it difficult, however, to conceive of how this further paradigm shift into an ecological worldview could take place in the culture as a whole, as opposed to within the occasional sympathetic individual. All the forces of a modern culture based on an objectivist view of reality are arrayed against such a shift.

In pointed contrast to the West, indigenous societies exemplify place-centered cultures. Much has been written of the traditional Aboriginal cosmology—the perspective that “country” is sentient and responsive to human actions, whether it is sorrow at abandonment or neglect, or responding with abundance to the performance of increase ceremonies. As ethnographer Deborah Bird Rose wrote,

*Animals, trees, rains, sun, moon—all are conscious. They watch us humans and think about us. No one person, animal, tree or hill knows everything, and the purposes of much that exists may remain obscure to others [28].*

Bill Neidje, a Kakadu elder from the Northern Territory, expressed his view of country directly when he wrote:

*I feel it with my body,  
with my blood.  
Feeling all these trees,  
All this country.  
When this wind blows you can feel it.  
Same for country...  
You can feel it.  
You can look,  
But feeling...  
That make you.*

*Feeling make you,  
Out there in open space.  
He coming through your body.  
Look while he blow and feel with your body...  
Because tree just about your brother or father...  
And tree is watching you [29].*

The closest Aboriginal equivalent of Western ideas of inner-ness is the *Dreaming*, which is an all-inclusive term covering the spirit ancestors; the origin of all species and landforms; the Law that governs ceremonies, songs and stories; and the eternal present in which all exists. This term refers both to the movement of spirit beings across the land giving birth to species and landforms as they moved, and to the Dreamtime when it occurred, which is beyond conventional notions of past, present, and future.

All traditional Aboriginal people have a totem for which they have custodial responsibility, including participation in ceremonies to recapitulate the ancestral journeys across the land. Look inside anything, “person, animal, tree or hill,” and there is the Dreaming. Clearly, there is an enormous difference between the pathway into the Dreaming for a traditional Aboriginal person through myth, totem, ceremony, and custodial responsibility, which is personal, cultural, and spiritual at the same time; and the journey into interiority for Westerners [30].

### **Insideness and outsideness**

Geographer Edward Relph provides another way to think about interiority and place. In his 1976 classic *Place and Placelessness*, he introduced the fundamental dialectic between the experience of “insideness” and “outsideness” with regard to place [31]:

*The essence of place lies not so much in these [geographies, landscapes, cities and*

*houses] as in the experience of an “inside” that is distinct from an “outside”... To be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are, the stronger is this identity with place [32].*

Relph described a spectrum of place experience ranging from *existential insideness*, in which one feels unself-consciously that this is the place where one belongs; to *empathetic insideness*, in which one consciously and empathetically opens oneself to a place; to *behavioral insideness*, for example, exploring a new place and figuring out how it all fits together; to *incidental outsideness*, in which place is the mere background to human activity; to *objective outsideness*, in which place is a series of objects to be manipulated by the planner or the scientist; to *existential outsideness*, in which one feels alienated and out of place [33].

Could existential insideness eventuate through prolonged empathetic identification with a place rather than finding oneself an insider through birthplace or culture? On the Wollemi trip, as we arrived back among the familiar sheer honey-colored walls edging the plateau, Trish said “Ah, now I remember. I always forget this feeling, of being here. Until I return.” I spontaneously answered with a rush of feeling, “This place is saying to us, ‘You have never left’.” I felt that, in some profound and mysterious way, the canyon country was always alive within us both, but it took a physical return to remind ourselves. If so, surely the phrase “always alive within” refers to something *existential*—not the unselfconscious existential insideness that Relph describes, but nonetheless a manner of experience fundamental to one’s existence.

One could also understand these feelings in terms of Lopez’s perspective that our patterns of thinking have been profoundly influenced by years of periodic immersion in canyon landscapes. In this sense, the immediate recognition both my sister and I felt was not simply seeing the golden sandstone bluffs again but also a renewed glimpse into the deepest workings of our own minds.

At first glance, the sense that the canyon is always alive within us appears to be an example of Malpas’ view that the interior of a place becomes interiorized within us.

On closer examination, however, this situation is more complex. The impetus for Malpas' interiorization is the recollection of place experiences, whereas it took the physical encounter with the canyon itself to re-activate what had been dormant in our minds. We remembered the canyons' qualities and the events therein but had lost contact with that deeply felt connectivity. The power of recollection of place is still present, but it is incomplete without the embodied re-immersion in the canyons.

Does it make sense to consider this continuum of insideness and outsideness with regard to how one inhabits one's own body? If I look at my own case as a young man in the Rocky Mountains, I experienced a combination of incidental and existential outsideness with regard to my own inner being, feeling out of touch with my body and self.

I have since moved erratically along a spectrum toward insideness. I have engaged in behavioral insideness by consciously exploring inner dimensions through such methods as *chi gong* and yoga aimed at sensing the body energies from within and moving outward from those centers. Meditation and breath work have helped to direct my attention and breathing to different bodily parts.

These efforts have led to moments of empathetic identification, though this deepening of awareness is very much a work in progress. My body is no longer foreign territory to me, and at best I can cultivate an atmosphere of care. I work to create a center of compassion toward others and myself that motivates my actions toward others and the more-than-human world.

Relph's spectrum of place experiences is useful in describing the way that, during any day or any week, one can encounter a wide range of inner and outer situations. On one hand, I might feel existentially out of place within myself because I am ashamed of a selfish act. On the other hand, I might be out bushwalking or listening to an orchestral concert with the result that I feel unselfconsciously at home, suffused with well-being, and existentially inside.

Much of the time, the bodily senses are our primary means for coming to know a place; some degree of body awareness is

almost always necessary for a place experience of empathetic insideness. Opening oneself up to a place necessitates having a grasp of one's own interiority, physical and otherwise.

In Goethean science, grasping the essence of a flowering plant, for example, requires what Goethe called *bildung*, the schooling of the intuitive and bodily senses so that one comes to discern the "gesture" of the plant as it manifests itself within the body, mind, and feelings of the observer. I've found this way of seeing to be a slow, reciprocal process: The more I make an inner effort to open my whole being receptively to a plant, the more fully I can respond to its revealed qualities [34].

Recent neuro-scientific investigations have cast light from another direction on the connection between the physical features of a place and the internal functioning of the mind. Writer Kim Mahood draws on Nobel Prize-winning brain research to show that certain cells ("place cells") in the hippocampus, where navigation, memory, and emotion seem to be coordinated, form cognitive maps of the environment. Neighboring cells in the entorhinal cortex create spatial maps, fixing co-ordinates in a grid pattern:

*That the neural receptors which allow us to know where we are occur in the same nub of the brain that governs our emotions and the laying-in of our memories suggests that these capacities are wired into the same circuit... If our ability to find our way and to know where we are is tied inextricably to feeling and remembering, it goes some way to explaining why certain places cast a spell of enchantment on us [35].*

## Notes

1. The first verse of "The Windhover: To Christ our Lord," in *Poems and Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, W.H. Gardner, ed. London: Penguin, 1953, p. 30.
2. *Ibid.*, p. xx.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
9. *Ibid.*, p. xxiv.
10. H. Thoreau, *Walking*, Rockville, MD: Arc Manor Press, 2007, p. 19. Originally delivered as a lecture in 1851 and first published in 1862 after his death.

11. B. Lopez, 1988, *Crossing Open Ground*, London: Macmillan, 1988, p. 64.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
13. One of my master's students, Paul Morgan, researched these ideas in his thesis, *Childhood Sense of Place*, Richmond, NSW: Univ. of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury, 2002.
14. The poem is quoted from *Ahead of All Parting: The Selected Poetry and Prose of Rainer Maria Rilke*, S. Mitchell, ed. NY: Modern Library, 1995, p. 191.
15. I describe this episode more fully in Chapter Twelve of *Blackstone Chronicles: Place-making on a Tasmanian Island*, Bruny Island, Tasmania: Black Stones Press, 2016.
16. J. Malpas, J., 1999, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press.
17. J. Malpas, J., Place and Singularity, in J. Malpas, ed., *The Intelligence of Place: Topographies and Poetics*, London: Bloomsbury, 2017, p. 77.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
20. *Ibid.*, p.82.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
23. *Ibid.*, note 20, p. 90.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
25. V. Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*, London: Routledge, 2002, p. 232.
26. D. Abram, *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology*, New York: Pantheon Books, 2002, p. 153 ff.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 306.
28. D. Bird Rose, *Nourishing Terrains*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 1996. This work is an eloquent collation of the diversity of Aboriginal views. The quotation is from Chapter Three.
29. B. Neidje, S. Davis, and A. Fox, *Australia's Kakadu Man*, Darwin: Resource Managers Press, 1986, p. 51.
30. I have written of traditional Aboriginal beliefs and practices because they are more straightforward exemplars of place-centered cultures. For contemporary urban Aboriginal people, the situation is more complex and takes the discussion into intercultural questions well beyond the scope of this essay.
31. E. Relph, *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion, 1976/2008.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
33. There is another mode, worthy of more discussion in another context but not really fitting into this spectrum—what Relph labels *vicarious insideness*, a situation where one feels affinity with a place through the imagination, as with a novel or film.
34. Goethe developed a form of scientific inquiry into elements of the natural world that combined prolonged observation with trained intuition—see D. Seamon and A. Zajonc, eds., *Goethe's Way of Science: A Phenomenology of Nature*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press. Goethe's method has been variously described as a "delicate empiricism" and a "proto-phenomenology." I have undertaken long-term Goethean scientific studies of the rock formations and grasses (*Xanthorrhoea australis*) on Blackstone (see *Blackstone Chronicles*, op. cit., Chapters Two and Five).
35. K. Manhood, *Position Doubtful: Mapping Landscapes and Memories*. London: Scribe, 2016, p. 298.

# Settled Areas

## Pitching an Archive of Region

Sue Michael

*Michael is an Australian artist and photographer whose work we have featured in earlier EAPs (fall 2014; winter/spring 2017). Michael wrote the text below for an exhibit of her work, "Settled Areas," hosted by the West Gallery Thebarton, in Thebarton, South Australia, a suburb of Adelaide. The exhibit ran through February and March, 2019, and also included work by the South Australian photographer Mark Thomson. The gallery's exhibition notice describes Michael's work as "notations from a scanned horizon, glimpses or taxonomical sortings, using the heart as a sensory organ. Larger works consider the complexities of place often overlooked by the passing motorist." More of her work can be viewed at [www.behance.net/soomichael](http://www.behance.net/soomichael). [smichael@west-net.com.au](mailto:smichael@west-net.com.au). Text and images © 2019 Sue Michael.*

It was a crisp autumn's night when I photographed a strange light in the sky above South Australia's remote town of Marree. It was only upon my return home to my home city Adelaide that I discovered the light's soft aqua glow, though at the time I remember a kind of cosmological feeling that "directed" me to look up

I have just completed 20 years of formal Visual Art studies, and this exhibition gives me new freedoms where no grade is assigned and no personal justifications must be debated by academic evaluators. Instead, in these works, I present the open-ended investigations of regional South Australia where I have used the heart as a sensory organ. Joy was my compass.

Nineteenth-century German geographer and explorer Alexander Von Humboldt (1769–1859), documented new locations with a thorough, systemized approach and a ceaseless enthusiasm. He noted all that he could from his rainforest boat, including the sounds, smells, mood and "feel" of his experiences. He collected plants, animals, rocks, perhaps informed by his friend Goethe's ideas relating to environmental and place wholeness and interconnections.

In a similar way, I sketch, note, and research all manner of small details on my various travels north and west of Adelaide. I have filled 38 journals in the past five years, and I can assuredly say every page has helped in my understanding of South Australian placemaking. My diverse observations, sometimes of seemingly unimportant or unrelated daily activities, have cemented a personal rationale as to why things are as they are.

Since childhood, I have been keenly aware of shifts in regional settlement and

social conditions in this part of South Australia. Though I am part of six ancestral generations who lived in South Australia, it is my children who are the first to be wholly urban dwellers.

In doing my paintings and photographs, there was an option to focus on the ideologies that swirl through regional matters, but instead, I have sought out lived experience, informed by first-hand accounts. There was a feeling that my long-gone ancestors watch over me. Their perceived presence held a sort of grounding and balance for my inquisitive adventures in that I felt required to reflect on how *they* might feel about my work.

The notion that the dead have needs also secured the theory for me that place is enduring and ongoing, with ever-moving edges not to be secured. Consequently, it seemed more appropriate to present a wide field rather than to uphold a definitive and possibly subjective pronouncement or claim.

Life-as-it-is holds mysterious qualities that require further attention. In my experience, landscape can hold a strong grasp on one's triangulated thoughts, imaginings, and emotions. Even if a vista is nearly devoid of visual contrasts, there can be comforting emotions to draw upon, even if decades have passed. Some landscapes, especially those not "tourist" in orientation, called me back in time, as though heart strings remained connected to certain places.

I am now a somewhat unsettled city dweller, requiring refreshment from South Australia's regions and reliant on my heart's emotion and instinctive glances

to collate my work. As McCraty and colleagues (McCraty et al. 2004) explain:

*Although our finding that the heart is involved in intuitive perception may be surprising from one perspective, it is worth noting that in virtually all human cultures, ancient and modern, the heart has long been regarded as a conduit to a source of information and wisdom beyond normal awareness.*

Many of the over-fifty sketches, paintings and monoprints I have made for "Settled Areas" may have a certain roughness not often in demand in the commercial worlds. Beside this aesthetic imperfection, many of my works have an instinctive freshness or sense of immediacy, supported by a foundation of deep research into the complexities of place.

The larger paintings are created with the help of photocollage as a "useful fiction" and philosophical device. This flexibility allows an essential understanding to coalesce on the one picture plane. My works are of the region, though the specific manifestation can never be found.

These representations stand as they are—an archive of a time that will surely pass.

### Reference

McCraty, R., Atkinson, M., and Bradley, R.T., 2004. Electrophysiological Evidence of Intuition: Part 1, The Surprising Role of the Heart, *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 10(1): 133–143.



Sue Michael, *Barking Brown Dog Chases Car Every Morning 11am, Marree*. 2018, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 156 cm



Sue Michael, *Eudunda Streetscape*, 2018, acrylic on canvas, 21 x 152 cm



Sue Michael, *Pinky Kitchen*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 46 x 92 cm



Sue Michael, *Pt. Germein Outbuildings*, 2018, acrylic on canvas, 46 x 92 cm





Sue Michael, *Yongala Dressage Ring*, 2018, acrylic on canvas, 24 x 92 cm



Sue Michael, *Eudunda Ornamental Garden*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 120 cm



Sue Michael, *Site for Nightly Evening Bonfires, Marree*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 120 cm



Sue Michael, *Beach Shack, Lucky Bay*, 2018, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 150 cm



Sue Michael, *General Store, Robertstown*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 46 x 91 cm



Sue Michael, *Marree Night Sky*, 2018, digital photograph



Sue Michael, *Sunday Drive*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 61 x 152 cm



Sue Michael, *Coffin Bay*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 61 x 152 cm

## Questions relating to environmental and architectural phenomenology (from *EAP*, 2014, 25<sup>th</sup>-anniversary issue)

### 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 life-world?
- ❖ 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 life-world might help to reduce the accelerating disordering of natural and human worlds?

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

- ❖ Why has the topic of place become an important phenomenological topic?
- ❖ Can a phenomenological understanding of place contribute to better place making?
- ❖ Can phenomenology contribute to a generative understanding of place and place making?
- ❖ What roles do bodily regularity and habitual inertia play in the constitution of place and place experience?
- ❖ What are the lived relationships between place, sustainability, and a responsive environmental ethic?
- ❖ How are phenomenological accounts to respond to post-structural interpretations of space and place as rhizomic and a “meshwork of paths” (Ingold)?
- ❖ Can phenomenological accounts incorporate a “progressive sense of place” argued for by critical theorists like Doreen Massey?
- ❖ Can phenomenological explications of space and place account for human differences—gender, sexuality, less-abledness, social class, cultural background, and so forth?
- ❖ Can phenomenology contribute to the politics and ideology of place?
- ❖ Can a phenomenological understanding of lived embodiment and habitual inertia be drawn upon to facilitate robust places and to generate mutual support and 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 21<sup>st</sup>-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?

# Whither Phenomenology?

## Thirty Years of *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology*

David Seamon

This issue completes thirty years of *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology*. As editor, I find it hard to believe that, so long ago, philosopher Robert Mugerauer, interior-design educator Margaret Boschetti, and I met for breakfast at the 1989 Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) conference to make plans for an interdisciplinary newsletter that would cover phenomenological and associated qualitative work relating to environmental and architectural concerns.

To mark *EAP*'s quarter century of publication in fall, 2014, I assembled a list of questions pertinent to phenomenology broadly and to environmental and architectural phenomenology specifically; this list is reproduced on the proceeding page (p. 36). In turn, I asked some sixty individuals associated with the field to respond to questions in this list or to otherwise contribute a short essay relating to some aspect of environmental and architectural phenomenology. The result was nineteen commentaries representing a wide range of disciplines and professions including anthropology, architecture, art, ecology, geography, philosophy, psychology, and environmental education. These essays provide a useful overview of the state of environmental and architectural phenomenology in the early 2000s.

Since spring 2019, I have pondered how *EAP*'s thirtieth year of publication might be benchmarked. Thirty years seem somehow less significant than twenty-five years, and I decided that the most appropriate undertaking for this eighty-sixth issue is an "editorial" discussing the current state of phenomenology broadly. Rather than focus on environmental and architectural themes specifically (though I touch on these themes throughout), I decided to highlight three current conceptual and methodological concerns relating to phenomenology as a philosophy, method, and conceptual vision. These three concerns are as follows:

1. **Placing phenomenology:** What is phenomenology as a philosophy, research method, and way of understanding? One would suppose this question had long since been answered but, in fact, the matter remains controversial as indicated by recent debates among philosopher Dan Zahavi, educator Max van Manen, nursing researcher John Paley, and psychologists Amedeo Giorgi, James Morley, and Jonathan A. Smith.
2. **Evaluating phenomenology:** A central concern of phenomenology is describing and interpreting phenomena accurately and comprehensively. What is trustworthiness in phenomenological work? How can descriptive and interpretive validity be gaged phenomenologically? In what interpretive ways can researchers encounter, see, and learn about their topic of study? How comprehensively and deeply can we "know" the phenomenon? Here, I bring forward possibilities offered by philosopher Brice R. Wachterhauser.
3. **Displacing phenomenology:** Has phenomenology run its course academically? Is phenomenology too caught up in a universalist essentialism that ignores human and group differences? Can there be a phenomenology that is critical and able to incorporate power, diversity, and difference? Does phenomenology somehow need to be recast or even replaced entirely via a so-called "post-phenomenology" or "critical phenomenology" that claims to integrate the best of phenomenological and post-structural points of view? In responding to these questions, I give particular attention to a recent thematic issue of the architectural journal *Log*, entitled "disorienting phenomenology."

### 1. Placing phenomenology

In the last three years, there has appeared a spate of exchanges on the nature of phenomenology written by eminent phenomenological thinkers Amedeo Giorgi, James

Morley, Jonathan A. Smith, Max van Manen, and Dan Zahavi.

From what I can tell, this set of exchanges began because of a controversial book, *Phenomenology as Qualitative Research*, written by non-phenomenologist and nursing-science researcher John Paley (2017). In this work, Paley was highly critical of phenomenological research as used by health scientists, particularly in the field of nursing. His most damning criticism was that phenomenological researchers offer no precise method for explaining how they arrive at the interpretive meaning they claim to identify in experiential descriptions (e.g., respondent narratives arising from open-ended interviews). He ended his book by advising nursing researchers to think twice about adopting a phenomenological approach in their research.

In developing his criticism, Paley drew largely on the discussions of phenomenological research as laid out by Giorgi, Smith, and van Manen. Unsettled by what they considered to be an unfair and erroneous understanding of their work, Giorgi (2017) and van Manen (2017c) both wrote spirited critiques of Paley's book; Paley responded with fire-rousing rejoinders (Paley, 2018a, 2018b).

Around the same time that Paley's book appeared, the editors of *Qualitative Health Research* published a special 2017 journal issue on phenomenological research, headlined with two opening articles by van Manen (2017a, 2017b): "But Is It Phenomenology?" and "Phenomenology in its Original Sense." In the first article, van Manen argued that one of the most popular current methods associated with phenomenological research—Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)—was not correctly phenomenological in method or results.

This discussion led to a 2018 rejoinder, "Yes, It Is Phenomenological," by Jonathan A. Smith (2018), the principal founder of IPA. In turn, Smith's commentary was responded to by van Manen (2018), who

held to his original criticisms of IPA and developed them further (“Present IPA for What It Is—Interpretative Psychological Analysis”). Smith (2010) and Giorgi (2010, 2011) had already partaken in a back-and-forth debate as to whether IPA was genuinely phenomenological (Giorgi declared that it was not).

Perhaps because of Smith and van Manen’s considerable disagreement in the *QHR* exchange, the journal editors published a 2019 response to both commentaries by the distinguished phenomenological philosopher Dan Zahavi, who entitled his entry, “Getting It Quite Wrong,” arguing that *both* van Manen and Smith misunderstood phenomenology. In addition, Zahavi (2019a) published a critical commentary on Giorgi’s phenomenological method; and with philosopher Kristian Martiny, a critical commentary on phenomenological research in nursing studies (Zahavi and Martiny 2019). This second entry provoked a spirited rebuttal from psychologist James Morley (2019), an associate of Giorgi. In reference to Zahavi as a philosopher, Morley (2019, in press) made the provocative point that “It has been remarkable the extent to which so many phenomenological philosophers have been so unaware of the divergent ways in which phenomenology has been applied to qualitative research.”

I bring forward this series of commentaries and critiques because they demonstrate the wide range of ways in which phenomenology is interpreted and understood today. Philosopher Herbert Spiegelberg (1982, p. xxviii) emphasized that there are as many phenomenologies as there are phenomenologists, and the competing claims laid out in these several, often-contradictory, entries illustrate some of the most glaring disagreements, of which here I highlight three:

### 1.1 Disagreements about substantive focus:

Does phenomenology entail interpretive exegesis of seminal phenomenological texts by Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Lacan, and so forth? Or is phenomenology a continuing process of discovering phenomena via openness, wonder, and firsthand encounter, whether via one’s own experience or experiences as described by others?

### 1.2. Disagreements about insight:

Are phenomenological claims discovered

or constructed? Are phenomenological realizations always already present in experience or are they creatively generated by the researcher and therefore a result of human intervention and invention?

### 1.3. Disagreements about how the phenomenon is to be used phenomenologically:

Does phenomenology emphasize experiential descriptions or does it use those experiential descriptions as a means for broader conceptual interpretations and generalizations?

### 1.1. Disagreements about substantive focus

These disagreements are particularly pronounced in the back-and-forth commentaries between van Manen and Zahavi, who identify considerably different starting and ending points for phenomenological research. For van Manen, phenomenology focuses on rich, thorough descriptions of lived experience that unfold via an engaged openness to the phenomenon: “the study of how things appear, show, or give themselves in lived experience or in consciousness” (van Manen 2017a, p. 775). He writes that phenomenology “is driven by a sense of wonder and enigma regarding the meaningfulness of human existence, phenomena, and events” (van Manen 2019, p. 914).

Van Manen (2019, p. 910) criticizes Zahavi’s work because it involves little actual phenomenological discovery but emphasizes instead a “philosophical exegesis” of the major phenomenological thinkers, particularly Husserl. These cerebral explications, says van Manen (2019, p. 913), are mostly produced by philosophers, who “argue *about* issues of phenomenology rather than *do* a phenomenology of lifeworld phenomena or events. For many outsiders, the technical philosophical terminology [of these thinkers] ... can be rather impenetrable.”

Such sophisticated conceptual analysis and interpretation may be useful for philosophical clarifications of phenomenology, but:

*That is only half the story—the mission of modern phenomenology transcends foundational and exegetical philosophical theorizing. To do phenomenological research is a more comprehensive and thoughtful project than proposed by Dan Zahavi (van Manen 2019, p. 910).*

In turn, Zahavi (2019b, p. 901) criticizes van Manen’s phenomenological approach because it has “little to do with phenomenology understood as a specific method or tradition in philosophy.” When the major phenomenological thinkers

*engaged in phenomenological philosophizing, they most definitely were not simply seeking to offer fine-grained descriptions of the qualitative character of different experiences.... Amassing experiential descriptions is a poor substitute for the systematic and argumentative work that we find in the phenomenological philosophers.*

*Offering descriptions of “what this experience is like” would not allow us to elucidate the kind of questions that the phenomenological philosophers have often been occupied with, say, the relation between perceptual intentionality and scientific rationality [or] the link between subjectivity and objectivity....*

*It is no coincidence that many of the phenomenologists dismissed a purely descriptive endeavor devoid of systematic ambitions as mere ‘picture-book phenomenology’” (Zahavi 2019b, p. 901) [1].*

In responding to van Manen and Zahavi’s concerns, I would argue that, yes, we need the conceptual exegeses of the major phenomenological works, but we also need accurate, comprehensive explications of specific lifeworlds, natural attitudes, and lived experiences. As Zahavi demands, we must continue to *write about* phenomenology, but we also must *do* phenomenology and perhaps recognize lifeworld phenomena of which earlier phenomenological philosophers were unaware.

For example, recent phenomenological research relating to environmental concerns has identified phenomena like place, atmosphere, environmental encounter, lived emplacement, and environmental embodiment—all phenomena mostly ignored by first-generation phenomenological philosophers but offering useful new angles on that earlier phenomenological work. In this sense, both Zahavi (2019, p. 9) and van Manen (2019, p. 924) agree that, “if phenomenology is to avoid the dead end of stale abstractions, it has to reconnect to the richness of everyday life” (Zahavi 2019, p. 9).

Ultimately, phenomenology as a way of conceptual and applied study is defined, understood, and conducted in a wide range of ways. One means for identifying these differences is to examine definitions of phenomenology offered by phenomenologists as illustrated in the twenty-three descriptions of phenomenology that I have assembled at the end of this essay. Readers might study these descriptions and locate thematic commonalities and differences. One aim would be to generate one's own definition of phenomenology.

One of the most accessible scholars writing the kind of careful intellectual exegesis appreciated by Zahavi is philosopher Dermot Moran; for example, his introduction to phenomenology (Moran 2000) and his articles on the habitual dimension of life-world as understood by Husserl (Moran 2011, 2014) are particularly lucid in demonstrating how the seminal philosophical texts in phenomenology remain an important source for understanding human being and human life.

I also recommend psychotherapist Linda Finlay's 2011 *Phenomenology for Therapists*, which remains one of the most fair-minded efforts to place the wide range of phenomenologists and phenomenological approaches and demonstrate how they relate to the same conceptual and methodological tradition. Finlay illustrates this range of phenomenological possibilities as it can incorporate both thinking and feeling, both cerebral effort and intuitive discovery:

*Phenomenological descriptions often blur the boundaries between science and art.... Some phenomenological researchers are more concerned to be rigorous and systematic, taking a science-like approach to offering fine-grained normative descriptions. Others take imaginative flight using poetic flourishes, images, and metaphors.*

*Rather than see phenomenology as either science or art, it might best be considered along a continuum with pure rigorous, scientific description on one end and fluidly poetic interpretation on the other, with most practice falling somewhere in between (Finlay 2011, pp. 18–19).*

## 1.2. Disagreements about insight

The disagreements here relate to whether phenomenological realizations appear via empathetic, serendipitous openness or are

arbitrarily generated via imposed intellectual effort. How, in other words, is meaning distilled from experience or text? This concern is central to nursing researcher John Paley's claim that the so-called "discoveries" of phenomenological inquiry incorporate "self-deception" because phenomenologists can offer no set of procedures or guidelines to explain how these moments of discovery happen or how they can be claimed to be accurate or reliable:

*If the researcher does not specify criteria for what counts as a "deeper meaning"; if she fails to explain how she identifies the "deeper meaning"; if she does not say why the "deeper meaning" is important and what we're supposed to do with it; if she does not ... spell out the relation between the "deeper meaning" of the text and a sociological theory ... then why should the reader looking for solid evidence take any notice of her? (Paley 2017, p. 26).*

For sure, this criticism is difficult to counter because, as Spiegelberg (1982, p. 672) famously wrote,

*phenomenology begins in silence. Only he [or she] who has experienced genuine perplexity and frustration in the face of the phenomena when trying to find the proper description for them knows what phenomenological seeing really means.*

In phenomenological research, there is the assumption that sincere interest in the phenomenon will, sooner or later, offer the space for that phenomenon to reveal itself in the ways it is. One thinks of Heidegger's enigmatic description of phenomenology: "To let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself" (Heidegger 1962, p. 58). How, in other words, might we engage the phenomenon so that it freely has the space and time to be what it is rather than what we might suppose, imagine, claim, or dictate it to be? (Seamon, 2018, p. 10).

As a social constructionist who assumes that meaning is actively imposed rather than integral to the phenomenon, Paley cannot accept the "aha!" moments of seeing that phenomenologists claim possible. Because of his ontological, epistemological, and professional starting points, Paley's criticism is not surprising, since he has never done phenomenological research

himself and appears to be unfamiliar with these sudden moments of insight that phenomenological effort can facilitate.

There is no easy counter for Paley's criticism other than to say that, once one becomes proficient in doing phenomenology, these moments of insight *do happen*, much of the time spontaneously with little or no intellectual intervention. Van Manen depicts these unexpected moments in which the phenomenologist better "sees" the phenomenon as "meaning insights." He writes:

*[M]eaning insights depend on a "latency" that eventuates an experience of clarity. This clarity of ... meaningfulness may be sudden but is more associated with a sense of opening oneself and a constant searching for understanding the meaning of something. Indeed, this opening and searching may be associated with the phenomenological epoché (opening up) and the reduction (closing down and focusing on something) ....*

*Meaning insights tend to occur when we wonder about the sense of the significance of the originary meaning of an experiential phenomenon. Originary does not mean new or original. Originary means inceptual: originary insights reveal the primal meaning and significance of a phenomenon ....*

*Insightfulness should not be confused with creativity. From a phenomenological perspective, the occurrence of a "flash of insight" is more intriguing than understanding it as a creative act. In a creative act, the subject is the creator, the agent of the creation. But inceptual insights do not necessarily depend on my creative agency, rather an inceptual thought may happen to me as a gift, a grace—an event that I could neither plan nor foresee ....*

*The problem for phenomenological researchers is that a meaningful insight often cannot be secured by a planned systematic method. There are no technicalities, procedures, schemes, packages, or programs that will somehow produce or capture an insightful thought or creative insight (van Manen 2017b, pp. 822–823).*

Though I understand Paley's dubiousness regarding these meaning insights, I agree with van Manen that they occur exactly in the way he describes: unexpected, surprising, and often happening only after



long effort of “being with” the phenomenon and hoping that something will be seen.

One of my strongest personal recollections of such a moment is when I was writing the dissertation that would eventually become *A Geography of the Lifeworld* (Seamon 1979). I had collected some 1,500 firsthand observations on “everyday environmental experience” from focus groups that met weekly for several months. One afternoon, in a discouraged mood, I yet again read through these observations, despondent because I could find no thematic structure to house the observations conceptually.

Suddenly, I realized that almost all the observations had to do with one of three broad themes: *everyday movement* (grounded in the habituality of the lived body and environmental embodiment); *everyday rest* (including “places for things” and “at-homeness”) and *everyday encounter* (ranging from world obliviousness to noticing, watching, and heightened contact with some aspect of the world). I can honestly say that this moment was revelatory, happening in an instant; the three-fold structure “sprang” from the observations rather than from some arbitrary, pre-defined structure.

Here, we face one of the most controversial aspects of phenomenological work: That to see and understand the phenomenon, one must genuinely believe that there are things to be seen. If phenomenologists are to really “discover,” they must be deeply interested in their phenomena and wholeheartedly trust that there are things to be understood, provided one proceeds with patience, earnestness, persistence, and hope.

### **1.3. Disagreements about locating and defining the phenomenon**

These disagreements relate to whether phenomenology involves only the explication of a particular experience, or whether that explication is to be placed in some larger systematic structure whereby human life and experience are understood more broadly.

Ignoring Paley’s criticisms, Giorgi, Smith, and van Manen all agree that phenomenology requires revelatory moments of seeing and understanding. The point of contention, however, is whether these rev-

elations remain within the sphere of experience or become a starting point for wider interpretation and theory. This disagreement is central to Giorgi, Smith, and van Manen’s discussions, though each provides different answers.

All three researchers accept that phenomenology’s starting point is everyday lived experience, but each has a different understanding of how that experience is to be discovered and used phenomenologically. Among these three researchers, Giorgi takes the most conventional phenomenological position, aiming to remain close to original phenomenological sources, particularly Husserl’s requirement for a “phenomenological reduction” (i.e., making certain one focuses on the phenomenon without supposition or prejudice). The phenomenological aim is to locate accurate descriptions of essential structures of human experience grounded in and remaining faithful to specific experiential accounts; interpretive embellishment is to be watched for and avoided. As Giorgi (2009, p. 127) explains,

*A descriptive [phenomenological] analysis ... does not go beyond the given.... The descriptive researcher obviously sees the same ambiguities that an interpretive analysis would see but is not motivated to clarify them by bringing in non-given or speculative factors. An interpretive analysis... usually strives for an interpretation that is theoretically elegant or ... relatively complete. A descriptive result is more inchoate; it dares not go beyond what is present. Gaps in the results are filled by obtaining more [descriptive evidence], not by theoretical speculation.*

In practice, Giorgi gathers experiential accounts via interviews or written protocols that are then transcribed and analyzed in a multi-step process that, besides the researcher’s setting aside all past understandings of the phenomenon (the phenomenological reduction), includes studying the descriptions thoroughly so that one pictures the descriptive series as a whole; then carefully examining the descriptions again, breaking them into meaning units to make the descriptions more manageable and understandable phenomenologically. Next, any broader lived meanings indicated by the experiential accounts are iden-

tified and elaborated. Finally, the researcher integrates the analysis to describe the phenomenon most broadly, making sure this descriptive structure accurately incorporates and reflects the original experiential accounts. Morley (2019) emphasizes that:

*Giorgi’s method cannot be understood apart from his wider, more radical theoretical project of inaugurating an autonomous psychology on a purely phenomenological basis—a whole disciplinary paradigm that is a unified theoretical approach, methodology, and specifically psychological content.*

In contrast to Giorgi’s emphasis on description and broader disciplinary aims, van Manen is more freewheeling and interpretive. He poses phenomenological inquiry in terms of a questioning: For example, what is it like to be bored? What is it like to have a conversation? What is it like to experience a meaningful look? The aim is to draw on real-world accounts of human experience to understand “what the concrete experience consists in” (van Manen 2017b, pp. 815–819). He explains:

*[T]he phenomenological feature of “lived experience” aims to be a corrective: It guards against the common inclination to understand our experiences prematurely in a cliché, conceptual, predetermined, biographical, theoretical, polemical, or taken-for-granted manner. In other words, the adjective “lived” only becomes methodologically significant once we understand the import of the role it plays in phenomenological inquiry to investigate the primal or inceptual meaning aspects of experience as we “live” through them (van Manen 2017b, p. 212).*

Jonathan Smith’s phenomenological approach is yet again different and largely focused on practical, real-world situations and problems, especially those relating to health and illness (Smith 2011). The aim is idiographic accounts of respondents’ experiences and understandings and how the respondents themselves make sense of those experience and understandings. For example, what is life like after having a heart attack? What is the experience of individuals who must use a ventricular assist device (VAD) for a failing heart? How is dialysis

treatment or chronic fatigue syndrome experienced?

Typically, the IPA researcher starts by eliciting each individual's experience separately and then locating patterns across the individual cases. Smith speaks of a *double hermeneutic*—in other words, the complex situation in which the researcher attempts to understand the ways that respondents understand their experience. He explains that, for the researcher,

*part of the complication derives from the fact that access to [the experience studied] comes from a participant who is him/herself also engaged in making sense of what is happening to them. For this reason, I have described the process of IPA as a double hermeneutic, whereby the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of what is happening to them (Smith 2011, p. 10).*

From my perspective, the most critical part of phenomenological method relates to the particular phenomenon in which one is interested. In other words, the nature of the phenomenon plays the central role in establishing how it will be approached methodologically and toward what degree of description or interpretation the researcher must aim. Smith and van Manen offer phenomenological approaches that are more open-ended methodologically, whereas Giorgi offers a descriptive process that is more directed and systematic. Yet again, the recent phenomenological work on place and emplacement is much broader and more eclectic in methods of explication and in substantive conclusions (e.g., Casey 2009; Malpas 2018; Seamon 2018).

Conceptually and procedurally, there is a wide range of ways phenomenologically to identify, describe, and interpret any phenomenon. The central aim is finding ways whereby that phenomenon is most likely able to present itself as fully as possible in the ways it actually is. On one hand, the phenomena of phenomenological research may be quotidian and singular—for example, studying the habitual, daily walking routines among older people visiting a neighborhood park (van Eck and Pijpers 2016). On the other hand, the phenomena examined may be much broader, more generalizable, and therefore more applicable to phenomenological theory—for example, probing the lived and conceptual rela-

tionship among Husserl's notions of life-world, homeworld, and alienworld (Donohoe 2014; Seamon 2013; Steinbock 1995).

## 2. Evaluating phenomenology

For any manner of qualitative research, there is always Paley's question of descriptive and interpretive trustworthiness. How reliable are the evidentiary sources of a researcher's broader claims and do those claims evenhandedly and thoroughly arise from those sources and represent them accurately? One way to circumvent some of the criticisms of phenomenology highlighted above is to evaluate phenomenological studies in terms of the *finished research product* rather than emphasizing method and underlying presumptions as to what phenomenology is or is not.

For such an evaluation, however, there is needed some set of reasonable criteria whereby one can adjudicate a study's relative validity, comprehensiveness, and merit (Madison 1988; Polkinghorne 1983; Smith 2011). Philosopher Brice R. Wachterhauser (1986, p. 234) argues that the need is "a set of practical guidelines that guide the pursuit of truth in the human sciences."

In developing such a possibility more concretely, Wachterhauser identifies four evaluative criteria, which I bring forward here because they are readily applicable to research in environmental and architectural phenomenology. These four evaluative criteria are: (1) *comprehensiveness*; (2) *semantic depth*; (3) *inclusivity*; and (4) *architectonic structure*. They can be summarized as follows (Seamon 2017, pp. 351-352):

1. **Comprehensiveness**, whereby the interpretive account is complete in that it addresses essential aspects of the text or situation; without comprehensiveness, "any realm of experience will be one-sided, and as such its truth will be threatened by distortion" (Wachterhauser 1986, p. 234).
2. **Semantic depth**, whereby the interpretation evokes a thickness of interpretive understanding that incorporates past, present, and future experiences; the interpretation "should be able to 'prove itself' over time by extending the reader's present experience as it arises" (Wachterhauser 1986, p. 235).

3. **Inclusivity**, whereby the interpretive text offers an encompassing frame of reference that incorporates and shelters less inclusive interpretive texts; the interpretation offers a thoroughness "that demonstrates its superior truth over other texts in that it can give a more comprehensive interpretation of some phenomenon that is suggestive of both the strengths and weaknesses of other accounts" (Wachterhauser 1986, p. 235).

4. **Architectonic structure**, whereby the interpretation provides a fitting place for all the interpretive parts; the interpretation works architectonically and teleologically "in that it orders and structures our experience into an intelligible pattern" (Wachterhauser 1986, p. 235).

These four criteria are useful because they link the relative quality of a phenomenological study with research results rather than with conceptual claims or methodological procedures. Does the study provide a descriptive or conceptual structure whereby the particular phenomenon is presented thoroughly? Does the study offer an interpretation that resonates with many readers' situations and makes sense in relation to similar situations, whether past, present, or future? Does the study pay heed to other research related to the research topic, and does the study provide an interpretive structure in which to place and clarify that other research? Does the study successfully integrate its descriptive and interpretive parts into a larger conceptual structure that makes sense experientially and intellectually? Wachterhauser (1986, p. 234) emphasizes that these criteria are *not*:

*rules in the sense of either necessary or sufficient conditions.... Instead these [criteria] may be thought of as heuristic ideals that guide us in many situations of inquiry but do not bind us universally.*

In short, these four criteria attend to research results rather than process and at least partly circumvent the three disagreements highlighted earlier in relation to phenomenological aims and methods. Wachterhauser's criteria offer one means to "set aside" the many different phenomenological approaches and styles, instead

giving primary evaluative attention to thoroughness, soundness, rigor, and believability [2].

### 3. Displacing phenomenology

Though phenomenological research remains an important part of the social and human sciences, there have been significant efforts since the 1980s for revision, rejuvenation, or elimination (see Cresswell 2013, chaps. 9-12). This critique of phenomenological work developed in a wide range of ways, sparked largely by post-modernist thinking that included post-structural, feminist, critical, assemblage, social-constructionist, and non-representational points of view (Seamon 2015).

A major claim directing much of this work is the impossibility of identifying “deep, generative structures beneath the variety of the surface of life” (Cresswell 2013, p. 207). Post-structural thinking moves away from order, unity, synthesis, generalization, and truth; rather, it emphasizes indeterminacy, diversity, local narratives, particularity, and contingent possibilities (Seamon 2015, p. 45). In many ways, post-structural perspectives contradict the basic phenomenological principle assuming that human life involves a certain amount of unrecognized pattern and structure that can be progressively discovered and ordered via phenomenological efforts.

If, however, much post-structural thinking calls phenomenology into question, there has also developed in the last several years a perspective most often called *critical phenomenology* or *post-phenomenology*, a set of sometimes-contradictory perspectives whereby a good amount of phenomenological thinking is maintained but extended in critical, post-structural ways (e.g., Ash and Simpson 2016; De Preester 2019; Gibas 2019; Kinkaid 2019; Simonson 2012; Talebian and Uraz 2018). As geographer Jennifer Lea (2009, p. 374) explains,

*[N]one of these post-phenomenological accounts “leave behind” the phenomenological ... but rather refigure what experience might be, where it might be located, how it comes about, and how we, as social scientists, might account for it. These post-phenomenological modes of working revisit the resources offered by phenomenology, critically returning to concepts such as “dwelling,” but working them through*

*[in innovative ways] .... [A]ll these post-phenomenological writings investigate exactly what it means to transform, rather than abandon, phenomenologies, and in doing, continue to push the boundaries of what it means to be in the world.*

One recent effort to consider what post-phenomenology and critical phenomenology offer architectural and design concerns is a special 2018 issue of the architectural journal, *Log*, edited by architectural theorist Bryan E. Norwood and entitled “disorienting phenomenology.” Norwood uses the word “disorienting” because he claims that conventional phenomenological work presupposes an essentialist, universalist, place-bound subject unthinkingly imagined as male, white, straight, abled, Western, and privileged.

In contrast, critical phenomenologists work to suspend their “stable clichés about the world and, importantly, about the subject” (Norwood 2018, p. 18). The aim is “to think about humanness without narrowing it to a holistic entity, to a transcendental identity that mirrors the root identity of colonizing, Enlightenment man” (Norwood 2018, p. 19). The result might be “a way of facing uneasiness, difference, queerness, and otherness” (Norwood 2018, p. 19).

In short, the critical-phenomenological aim is “to replace the *normal* with the *strange* and to challenge us to learn to live with disorientation” (Allen and Hosseinnia 2018, p. 4). Most of the *Log* articles attempt such “suspensions of normativity” as they might have architectural significance. Adrienne Brown (2018, p. 28), for example, examines “architecture’s role in shaping the materialization of race.” Lisa Guenther (2018, p. 42) uses the example of gated communities as they become environmental agents for producing places “partitioned and selectively shared among those who belong inside the security perimeter of the fence or wall, and from which those who do not belong are properly excluded on account of their perceived impropriety.” Jos Boys considers how phenomenologies of bodily disablement might shift taken-for-granted norms and attitudes:

*[O]bjects and spaces are not out there as sensory representations of our deepest psyches. Rather they... contribute to enabling or disabling times and spaces*

*through everyday conduct. Where normative social and material practices are dominated by able-bodied rules and routines, and by able-bodied theories and discourses—and where this very act of unacknowledged privilege and domination stems from an implicit and “commonsense” framing of bodies as separately abled or disabled, independent and active, or dependent and passive—then disability as a concept and disabled people as a constituency disappear (Boys 2018, p. 65).*

In seeking to extend the range of human experience and to accommodate individuals and groups whose spheres of experience are different from the experiences of “universal man,” this work in critical and post-phenomenology offers valuable directions for phenomenological research. What concerns me about the “critical” and “post-” labels is that almost everything these thinkers aim to accomplish can be readily accommodated by conventional phenomenological principles, concepts, and methods.

Since the 1990s, for example, there has been significant work demonstrating that phenomenology can deal with individual and cultural differences (e.g., Chung-chi 2004; Finlay 2011; Seamon 2015). I agree that phenomenology is concerned, first of all, with essential, universal dimensions of human experience—for example, the nature of environmental embodiment or lived emplacement. But phenomenology also recognizes that there are other dimensions of experience: first, the fact that each of us is unique, and various aspects of that uniqueness—e.g., our age, gender, sexuality, physical size, degree of abledness—contribute to what human life is about. Second, we typically associate ourselves with a particular social, cultural, and economic context—how we see ourselves racially, ethnically, politically, socio-economically, religiously, and so forth. My point is that phenomenology as conventionally understood can handle these extraordinarily various aspects of human being. In short, there can be a phenomenology of human differences as well as commonalities (Seamon 2018, p.178).

I have little argument with the *Log* contributors’ call for a more comprehensive phenomenology that confronts “the unfamiliar, the surprising, the *unhomely*”

(Legrand 2018, p. 23). I emphasize, however, that conventional phenomenological approaches and methods may deal with such matters best, simply because phenomenologists have already established a language, stance, method and set of unique concepts (e.g., intentionality, natural attitude, lifeworld, and homeworld) that readily offer a place of openness *to* and *for* these themes.

What is perhaps most problematic phenomenologically about this special issue of *Log* is its calling into question certain inviolate aspects of human life and experience that are present regardless of sexual, social, cultural, or historical context. The most debatable concern is whether human beings can dispense with the importance of place, lived emplacement, and at-homeness. Norwood (2018, p. 22) suggests that the need is

*to disquiet and disorient oneself, a way of dis-placing myself rather than projecting ways in which I can be more at home in a world that is mine. I am not trying to claim that an ethics of making humans at home is wrong.... Rather, I am suggesting that if this holistic norm is posited in advance of the practice of phenomenology, then a subjectivity that does not experience that home will be positioned as damaged, as disabled, as inadequate, as the still colonized Other. The way I am as a straight, white, middle-class man has been and remains privileged in the way the orientation and placing of the world is distributed. But it is not the measure of having a body schema or a body; it is only one configuration of a contingent set of practices and habits. The practice of phenomenology should provincialize my embodiment rather than universalize it. Architecture doesn't need phenomenology; it needs phenomenologies.*

As I emphasized above, phenomenological research has always been able to consider human life and experience in both its universal aspects (we are all human beings) and its particular aspects (probing individual, social, cultural, economic, and historical differences). As far as individuals and groups who, for whatever reason, do not have or have lost their place and home (refugees, asylum seekers, homeless persons, people forcefully separated from their home place, the world's wealthy who shift places regularly, and so forth), the question becomes whether emplacement,

place, and at-homeness are integral constituents of a “good life” and, if so, how policy, advocacy, design, and planning might help forge a renewed rootedness and at-homeness. Never would a phenomenological perspective claim, as Norwood intimates, that the lives and experiences of these individuals are somehow “damaged” or “inadequate.”

More broadly, the articles in this special issue of *Log* point to the considerable intellectual and practical damage that post-structural, critical, and social-constructionist perspectives have wrought in their emphasis on mobility, rootlessness, assemblages, rhizomes, and global flows at the expense of places, rootedness, at-homeness, environmental stability, and localities (Malpas 2018; Seamon 2018; Tomaney 2012, 2015) [3].

Regardless of globalization and digital technologies, lived emplacement and places remain an inescapable stabilizing constituent of human life via which people are automatically provided one mode of spatial order and environmental identity. Unless human life becomes entirely virtual and independent of material environments, lived emplacement will remain an essential lifeworld quality. Place-related constituents like rootedness, at-homeness, and environmental identity are profoundly more experientially and existentially than the “fetishizing” of “loss or recovery” (Norwood 2018, p. 12, note 4).

In short, the importance of lived emplacement in human life remains, even as many places of the world are transformed into placelessness and many of the world's peoples are without place. As philosopher Jeff Malpas (2018, pp. 202-203) explains,

*Given that the fundamental structure of place and the relation to it cannot be treated as anything other than a necessary structure, the basic structure of place and the relation to place must indeed remain much the same now as it has been in the past. That this is so is reinforced by consideration of the fact that the apparent loss of place... is something that itself occurs... in and through the experience of places.... If we distinguish between, on the one hand, place as a general and encompassing structure—the complex bounded and interwoven structure of spatiality and temporality—and, on the other hand, place as it refers to individual places, each of which has*

*its own character..., then it is easy to see how place must persist, even in the face of the apparent loss of place.*

*Places can be objects of experience—as I experience this place or that place—but place is also that within and out of which experience arises. Any experience of the world, along with the appearing of things within the world, will thus always be from within the embrace of place. What is described as the loss of place is therefore more properly described as an experience of place in which place is seemingly effaced in its very presentation. I find myself here, and yet in being here, I find nothing that marks off this place as distinctive—that marks it off as just the place that it is....*

*Here is the experience of being in a place that nevertheless also appears in such a way that it obscures its very character as a place, and so one can say that the experience is almost like being nowhere at all [4].*

## Engaging place & architecture

Perhaps the most discouraging aspect of thirty years of *EAP* editorship is recognizing that most phenomenologists continue to ignore the inescapable importance of materiality, space, and place in human life. For sure, there are exceptions—I immediately think of the work of anthropologist Chris Tilley (2010, Tilley and Cameron-Dam 2017), geographer Edward Relph (2015, 2018), psychologist Eva-Maria Simms (2008), and philosophers Edward Casey (2009), Janet Donohoe (2014), Jeff Malpas (2018), Robert Mugerauer (2008), and Ingrid Leman Stefanovic (2000).

Mostly, however, social and human scientists have largely bypassed the inviolate lived fact that human being is always human-being-in-place. In relation to the next thirty years of phenomenological work, I hope that researchers direct attention to human beings' lived immersion, entwinement, and embeddedness in worlds that are always spatial, placial, environmental, and architectural. Who we are is partly a matter of where we are, and that “whereness” requires vigorous phenomenological explanation.

From the very beginning, we have sought in *EAP* to showcase the wide range of ways in which phenomenology is practiced and to indicate that this work has con-

siderable pragmatic significance. I continue to believe that much of the best phenomenology does not call itself “phenomenological”—for example, architect Christopher Alexander’s work on wholeness (Alexander 2002-05), naturalist Paul Krafel’s efforts to counter environmental entropy (Krafel 1998), or the work of ecologists Craig Holdrege (1998) and Mark Riegner (2008), who draw on the interpretive method of Goethe to develop a phenomenology of the natural world. Throughout *EAP*’s thirty years, we have sought to cover explicit and implicit phenomenological work that facilitates a better understanding of human life and suggests how that understanding might have practical value for architecture, planning, policy development, and other means of place making.

I end with a vignette of current New York City street life recently published in the *New York Times*’s regular Monday feature, “Metropolitan Diary.” Even in our hypermodern times, environments and places still thrive and provide one “taken-for-granted” realm making daily life engaging, memorable—even remarkable.

## My Harlem Window

Dear Diary:

*The city finds its way through my Harlem window.*

*The commuter train wails from the tracks above Lexington Avenue. Planes going west and south crisscross every half-minute without incident. Sirens blare down Fifth Avenue.*

*There is a gruff man who goes west in the morning, east in the afternoon. He is known around the neighborhood by his singular dress: a head-to-toe paint-splattered canvas, a walking Pollock.*

*There is the woman who waddles down the sidewalk, her thick hair bouncing in step and obscuring her face entirely except for the peepholes around her eyes.*

*There is the actress who was on “Law & Order: Special Victims Unit.” There is a specked Grate Dane whose head is the same size as the newborn it is sniffing in its stroller.*

*By three o’clock, there are children on low-riding bikes and young women howling with laughter as they rap in unison down the street. There is a couple fighting in the park. There is a painter whose house*

*is boarded up after nearly burning down last year. He is unlocking his bike.*

*There used to be a man whose faded suit hung over him loosely and bunched at his ankles as he crossed diagonally through the park at 5:45 p.m. each day for years. He wore a hat and looked down as he walked alone, mostly indistinguishable from any other man, from time itself.*

*And then he vanished, and I often wonder to where.*

—contributed by Selin Thomas, “Metropolitan Diary,” *New York Times*, Monday, June 17, 2019, p. A20.

## Notes

1. Since Zahavi published his first commentary on van Manen’s work (Zahavi 2019b), he has extended his criticism in a forthcoming article, “The Practice of Phenomenology: The Case of Max van Manen,” to be published in a 2020 issue of *Nursing Philosophy*; a pre-publication draft of this article is posted at: [https://www.academia.edu/39789932/The\\_practice\\_of\\_phenomenology\\_The\\_case\\_of\\_Max\\_van\\_Manen](https://www.academia.edu/39789932/The_practice_of_phenomenology_The_case_of_Max_van_Manen).

In his recent book-length introduction to phenomenology, Zahavi (2019, pp. 122–129) is somewhat more supportive of the work of Giorgi, Smith, and van Manen. Zahavi (2019, p. 123) explains that “there is an ongoing controversy about how narrowly or broadly one should define what counts as phenomenological. Should phenomenological qualitative research remain purely descriptive and seek to disclose essential structures, or should it rather focus on the particularity of individual persons and employ interpretation? Should it embrace and adopt part of Husserl’s philosophical methodology, or should it rather let its research be guided by various phenomenological concepts and distinctions?” See this *EAP* issue’s “book note” on Zahavi’s volume, pp. 8–10.

2. For a discussion of how these four criteria might be used to evaluate particular phenomenological research, see Seamon 2017, in which I consider the relative merits of philosopher Karsten Harries’s *natural symbols* (Harries 1997); architect theorist Thomas Thiis-Evensen’s *architectural archetypes* (Thiis-Evensen 1989); and comparative-religions scholar Lindsay Jones’s *hermeneutics of sacred architecture* (Jones 2000).

3. From a phenomenological perspective, a major concern about the current postmodernist emphasis on mobility is that the lived wholeness of the movement-rest relationship is reduced to the former only. Curiously, much original phenomenological work on place emphasized the latter as the focus was on home and dwelling and too readily lost sight of movement, journey, and relationships among places. Today, the current dominance of globalization and digital technologies has contributed to a revised academic emphasis on mobility, networks, assemblages, rhizomes, and other post-structural concepts emphasizing continuous, dynamic change. Ultimately, the key phenomenological recognition is that movement and rest are both integral to lived emplacement; the difficult conceptual and practical question is how the two are to be held together rather than severed. See Di Masso et al., 2019; Jager 1975; Seamon 2018, pp. 52–65, 2020; Tomaney 2012, 2015.

4. In criticizing the universalizing emphasis of “conservative” phenomenological thinking, Norwood (2018, pp. 11–15) contrasts the placial perspectives of architectural theorist Christian Norberg-Schulz (1971) and post-colonial writer and philosopher Édouard Glissant (1997), whose understanding of place relates to the slavery experience and speaks to “another type of human existence [that] takes shape and makes a different kind of place” (Norwood 2018, p. 12). Norwood argues that Norberg-Schulz’s understanding of place assumes a normative rootedness and dwelling that “has largely remained an assumed feature of architectural phenomenology” but must be called into question and “disoriented” (Norwood 2018, p. 12). Norwood claims is that “the persistent limitations of architectural phenomenology result from unchecked presumptions on how humans should orient themselves.” These unexamined assumptions are said to focus on “a place, a home, circumscribed and bounded off” (Norwood 2018, p. 11). He continues:

*This place—Heidegger’s temple or hut perhaps—represents, for Norberg-Schulz, and the conservative tradition of the architectural interpretation of phenomenology, an imagined primitivity. It is a lost paradise authentically organized around a center. It also signifies a projected future wholeness, a place in which we, as individuals and collectives, are at home and to which a proper phenomenological attitude might attune us (Norwood 2018, p. 11).*

Norwood (2018, p. 18) argues that the need is “suspension of [these] stable clichés about the world,” but this assertion presupposes that these “clichés” are contingent rather than necessary. In *Place and Experience*, Malpas (2018, p. 197, note 22) argues that discounting rootedness, at-homeness, and place is hazardous existentially and historically because this point of view “refuse[s] what is a basic structure of human being and of the world as such.” Malpas accepts that home and place identity can readily be associated with “an obsessively introverted perspective, or with forms of xenophobic resistance to the unfamiliar and the foreign” (Malpas 2018, p. 197). He emphasizes, however, that it would be a serious mistake “to take such ‘pathologies of place’ as the norm and, on that basis reject place as inherently problematic or dangerous. To do so would be likely, in fact, to reinforce those same pathologies or else create new ones,” since lived emplacement is integral always and already to human life.

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## Twenty-three definitions of phenomenology (full citations follow definitions)

1. Phenomenology is the study of human experience and of the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience (Sokolowski 2000, p. 2).
2. Phenomenology is the study of phenomena as experienced by human beings. The primary emphasis is on the phenomenon itself exactly as it reveals itself to the experiencing person in all its concreteness and particularity (Giorgi 1971, 9).
3. Phenomenology takes its starting point in a return to the “things” or “matters” themselves, that is, the world as we experience it. In other words, for phenomenologists, experience must be treated as the starting point and ultimate court of appeal for all philosophical evidence (Brown and Toadvine 2003, p. xi).
4. Phenomenology is the study of experience, particularly as it is lived and as it is structured through consciousness. “Experience” in this context refers not so much to accumulated evidence or knowledge as to something we “undergo.” It is something that happens *to* us and not something accumulated and mastered *by* us. Phenomenology asks that we be open to experience in this sense (Friesen, Henricksson, and Saevi 2012, p. 1).
5. The aim of phenomenology is to *describe the lived world of everyday experience*.... Phenomenological research into individual experiences gives insight into, and understanding of, the human condition. Sometimes it “languages” things we already know tacitly but have not articulated in depth. At other times, quite surprising insights reveal themselves.... (Finlay 2011, p. 26).
6. Phenomenology is best understood as a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophizing, which emphasizes the attempt to get to the truth of the matters, to describe *phenomena*, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer. As such, phenomenology’s first step is to seek to avoid all misconstructions and impositions placed on experience in advance, whether these are drawn from religious or cultural traditions, from everyday common sense, or, indeed, from science itself. Explanations are not to be imposed before the phenomena have been understood from within (Moran 2000, p. 4).
7. As a method, [phenomenology] serves to remind us of the significance of the full range of meaning of human experience, including taken-for-granted assumptions, values, and perceptions often forgotten about in analytic frameworks. In attending to pre-thematic ways of being-in-the-world, phenomenology helps to comprehend human behavior in its fullness (Stefanovic 2015, p. 40).
8. Phenomenological method is driven by a pathos: being swept up in a spell of wonder about phenomena as they appear, show, present, or give themselves to us. In the encounter with the things and events of the world, phenomenology directs its gaze toward the regions where meanings and understandings originate, well up and percolate through the porous membranes of past sedimentations—then infuse, permeate, infect, touch, stir us, and exercise a formative and affective effect on our being (van Manen 2014, p. 26).
9. Phenomenology is an attempt to understand from the inside—and not to dismiss or criticize from the outside—the whole spectrum of experience which we generally call “reality” (Vesely 1988, p. 59).
10. Phenomenology never purely coincides with lived experience in itself, but by probing its ultimate horizons and seeking to grasp the englobing sense of what appears within them, renders lived experience anew. The subject matter is the *intelligibility* of lived experience, which phenomenology realizes essentially; and it is in rendering this “intelligibility” that the faithfulness of phenomenology to lived experience lies (Burch 1989, p. 195).
11. Phenomenology seems to take the ground away from under our feet, while at the same time giving us the sense of being where we have always been—only now recognizing it as if for the first time. It’s hard to catch hold of it because it’s like trying to catch something as it’s happening and which is over before we can do so. It can perhaps best be described most simply as “stepping back” into where we are already. This means shifting the focus of attention *within experience* into the experiencing of it. So if we consider seeing, for example, this means that we have to “step back” from *what* is seen into the *seeing* of what is seen (Bortoft 2012, p. 17).
12. Phenomenology recovers the order of truth as residing *in* things. It is not hidden, it does not lie under or behind or beneath things, and hence does not require Depth Theory to winkle it out. It is what is manifest (what shows) in things and *how*. If this is very obvious (as it *must* be) it yet requires a particular way of seeing and understanding in order to grasp it, for it can simply be no-seen at all (Scannell 1996, p. 169).
13. Phenomenology: The disciplined struggle “to let be,” to let being appear or break through (Buckley 1971, p. 199).
14. Phenomenology: The gathering together of what already belongs together even while apart (Mugerauer 1988, p. 216).

15. Phenomenology: To let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself (Heidegger 1962, p. 58).
16. [Phenomenology] adopts no standpoint and provides no single direction of approach. [It] informs us simply that something we experience is to be disclosed, and this in turn means that it must somehow be hidden from us, though it may be superficially familiar. Phenomenology thus reveals itself as a gentle, responsive way of thinking. It tends to become what it studies. It is the method of imposing no method (Relph 1983, p. 201).
17. Phenomenology invites us to stay with “the experience itself,” to concentrate on its character and structure rather than whatever it is that might underlie or be causally responsible for it... [Phenomenology] facilitates a return to experience, to awaken in us a sense of its importance by demonstrating the founding role of experience in our conception of the world, however sophisticated that conception has become through the advancement of the natural sciences. In striving to awaken us to our own experience, to the phenomena through which our conception of the world is constituted, phenomenology seeks to awaken us to ourselves, to make us alive to our existence as subjects who bear a kind of ultimate responsibility for that conception (Cerbone 2006, p. 3).
18. [Phenomenology entails] letting things become manifest as what they are, without forcing our own categories on them... [T]he very essence of true understanding is that of being led by the power of the thing to manifest itself... Phenomenology is a means of being led by the phenomenon through a way of access genuinely belonging to it... Such a method... is not grounded in human consciousness and human categories but in the manifestness of the thing encountered, the reality that comes to meet us (Palmer 1969, p. 128).
19. Phenomenology is the study of essences; and according to it, all problems amount to finding definitions of essences: the essence of perceptions, or the essence of consciousness, for example. But phenomenology is also a philosophy that puts essences back into existence, and does not expect to arrive at an understanding of [human beings] and the world from any starting point other than that of their “facticity” (Merleau-Ponty 1962, p. vii).
20. Many aspects of Husserl’s original formulation of phenomenology endure as central themes, including his catch cry “back to the things themselves” (*Zu den Sachen selbst*), which expressed the idea of the avoidance of metaphysical speculation, the attempt to gain a presuppositionless starting point, the use of description rather than causal explanation, and the attempt to gain insight into the *essences* of all kinds of phenomena (Moran 2001, p. 353).
21. Phenomenology: The excavation of human experience, first, in terms of particular persons and groups in particular places, situations, and historical moments; and, second, as this excavation engenders a self-conscious effort to make intellectual and emotional sense of what that experience reveals in terms of broader lived structures and more ethical ways of being, willing, and acting (Seamon 2008, p. 15).
22. Our relation to the world is so fundamental, so obvious and natural, that we normally do not reflect upon it. It is this domain of ignored obviousness that phenomenology seeks to investigate. The task of phenomenology is not to obtain new empirical knowledge about different areas in the world, but rather to comprehend the basic relation to the world that is supposed by any such empirical investigation... The world is, as Merleau-Ponty writes, wonderful. It is a gift and a riddle. But in order to realize this, it is necessary to suspend our ordinary blind and thoughtless taking the world for granted (Zahavi 2019, p. 67).
23. [The aim is] making evident an essential distinction among the possible ways in which the pregiven world, the ontic universe [*das ontische Universum*], can become thematic for us. Calling to mind what has repeatedly been said: the lifeworld, for us who wakeningly live in it, is always already there, existing in advance for us, the “ground” of all praxis whether theoretical or extra-theoretical. The world is pregiven to us, the waking, always somehow practically interested subjects, not occasionally but always and necessarily as the universal field of all actual and possible praxis, as horizon. To live is always to live-in-certainty-of-the-world. Waking life is being awake to the world, being constantly and directly “conscious” of the world and of oneself as living *in* the world, actually experiencing [*erleben*] and actually effecting the ontic certainty of the world.
- The world is pregiven thereby, in every case, in such a way that individual things are given. But there exists a fundamental difference between the way we are conscious of the world and the way we are conscious of things or objects (taken in the broadest sense, but still purely in the sense of the lifeworld), though together the two make up an inseparable unity. Things, objects (always understood purely in the sense of the lifeworld) are “given” as being valid for us in every case (in some mode or other of ontic certainty) but in principle only in such a way that we are conscious of them as things or objects *within the world-horizon*. Each one is something, “something of” the world of which we are constantly conscious as a horizon.
- On the other hand, we are conscious of this horizon only as a horizon for existing objects; without particular objects of consciousness, it cannot be actual [*aktuell*]. Every object has its possible varying modes of being valid, the modalizations of ontic certainty. The world, on the other hand, does not exist as *an* entity, as an object, but exists within such uniqueness that the plural makes no sense when applied to it. Every plural, and every singular drawn from it, presupposes the world-horizon.



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This difference between the manner of being of an object in the world and that of the world itself obviously prescribes fundamentally different correlative types of consciousness for them (Husserl 1970, pp. 142–143).

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### Full citations for definitions

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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 ambiances;
- 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 this issue's page 36, which outlines a series of relevant questions originally published in the 25<sup>th</sup>-anniversary issue of **EAP** in 2014 (vol. 25, no. 3, p. 4).

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