



# Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter

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This is the first issue of 2001. We thank the sixty-one readers who have renewed their subscription. We are especially grateful to the many persons who have made an extra contribution with their subscription. Donors are listed on the next page. Many readers have forgotten to renew and, if so, you will find a second notice inside.

This issue focuses on a phenomenology of sound and the soundscape. We feature a review of music scholar Joachim-Ernst Berendt's *The Third Ear: Listening to the World* and reprint two selections from this perceptive work. Next, soundscape researchers Hildegard Westerkamp and Darren Copeland write about specific real-world experiences involving the world of sound. Last soundscape researcher Justin Winkler considers two concepts--*acoustic horizon* and *keynote sound*--as they contribute to a phenomenology of soundscape. We end with a poem by writer Judyth Hill.

## WE NEED YOUR SUBMISSIONS!

Note that we are *short on materials for future issues*. Please consider contributing. We can use reviews, personal news, essays, drawings, commentaries, designs, art work--whatever you think readers might find interesting or useful. If you teach, consider sending us essays or other work by your students. Often student efforts are remarkably perceptive and fresh. We'd be pleased to publish student essays, reviews, drawings, designs, and so forth that relate to issues with which *EAP* deals.

## PHENOMENOLOGY CONFERENCE

The annual conference of the **Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences (SPHS)** will be held 4-6 October 2001 at Goucher College in Towson, Maryland. The emphasis is "the application of phenomenological methodology to the specific concrete investigations of the human and social sciences." Paper abstracts are due by March 15. Contact: Gary Backhaus, Philosophy Dept.,

Morgan State Univ., Baltimore, MD 21251  
([SPARKS.GBACKHAUS@prodigy.net](mailto:SPARKS.GBACKHAUS@prodigy.net)).

The 20<sup>th</sup> **Human Sciences Research Conference** will be held 19-22 August 2001 at Taisho University in Tokyo, Japan. The conference theme is "Caring for the next generation." Paper abstracts must be received by 28 February. Contact: Japan IHSRC Planning Committee, Counseling Institute, Taisho Univ., Nisisugamo 3-20-1, Toshimaku, Tokyo 170-8470 Japan (<http://www.nyc.go.jp>).

*Below: The Japanese ideogram for Sesshin, a kind of intense Zen meditation. The three "ear" symbols indicate the importance of hearing in the practice. A rough translation is "Listen! Listen! Listen! With hand and heart." From Berendt's *The Third Ear*, a study of hearing and listening. See review on p. 5.*



## DONORS FOR 2001

As always, we would like to thank individuals who have contributed more than the base subscription for 2001. Again this year, readers have been most generous. We are grateful.

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## ITEMS OF INTEREST

The **Trumpeter**, originally a hard-copy journal of deep ecology, is now an on-line quarterly journal edited by Dr. Bruce Morito at the Center for Global and Social Analysis at Alberta's Athabasca University, 1 University Drive, Athabasca, AB Y9S 3A3. Topics discussed include environmental ethics, ecological thought, and environmental policy. <http://trumpeter.athabascau.ca/> (780-675-6111).

The 14<sup>th</sup> annual conference on **Interdisciplinary Qualitative Studies** will be held 12-14 January 2001 at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education at the University of Georgia in Athens. The theme is "Social and Economic Justice: Deconstructing Myths and Masks through Qualitative Research" ([quigconf@arches.uga.edu](mailto:quigconf@arches.uga.edu)). Conference Chair: Kathleen deMarrias (706-542-4600; [kathleen@cole.uga.edu](mailto:kathleen@cole.uga.edu)).

The **Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence** celebrates significant urban places integrating effective processes, meaningful values, and good design. Gold Medal: \$50,000; four silver medals: \$10,000 each. Applications: Bruner Foundation,

130 Prospect St., Cambridge, MA 02139  
([www.brunerfoundation.org](http://www.brunerfoundation.org)).

**Soundscape** is a journal of acoustic ecology and the biannual publication of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE). The journal is "a place of communication and discussion about interdisciplinary research and practice in the field of acoustic ecology, focusing on the connections between sound, nature, and society. The publication seeks to balance its content between scholarly writings, research, and active engagement in current soundscape issues." JAE, School of Communication, Simon Fraser Univ., Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6 ([jwfae@sfu.ca](mailto:jwfae@sfu.ca))

The 29<sup>th</sup> International conference on **Making Cities Livable** will be held 4-8 March 2001, in Savannah, Georgia. The conference is based "on a holistic vision of the city, on the recognition that its social and physical aspects are interdependent." MCL, PO Box 7586, Carmel, CA 93921 ([www.livablecities.org](http://www.livablecities.org)).

**Healing Environments** is an organization that encourages "hospitals, hospices, and individuals to nourish patients, families and caregivers with healing environments," which are defined as "offering sustenance to the soul and meaning to experience, pointing people in the direction of connecting with the universal through the transformative power of beauty and art." The group publishes the journal, *A Light in the Midst*. ([www.healingenvironments.org](http://www.healingenvironments.org)).

The conference, **Social Issues and the Environment: A Green Approach to Improving Our Communities**, will be held 6-8 March, 2001, at the Arbor Day Farm, Lied Conference Center, in Nebraska City, Nebraska. Organizers hope to look "at how natural resources and use of green space contributes to the success of a community and provides benefits to society." National Arbor Day Foundation, PO Box 81415, Lincoln, NE 68501 ([www.arborday.org/socialissues](http://www.arborday.org/socialissues)).

The conference **Environment and Community** will be held 8-10 February, 2001, at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah. Topics include environment and the visual arts; art, literature and community building; sense of place, and cultural conflict and the environment. Prof. M. Vause, Honors



Dept., WSU, 2904 University Circle, Ogden, UT 84408 ([www.weber.edu/wildmcdcause](http://www.weber.edu/wildmcdcause)).

The Minneapolis publishers **Milkweed Editions** have begun the **World as Home** book series, which explores "the ethical, cultural, and esthetic dimensions of our relationship to the natural world." The publishers are "actively pursuing and bringing into print new and established writers who focus on the question of living ecologically sane lives, whether in wilderness, rural, suburban, or urban settings." The first catalogue of the series includes over 30 books already published.

Recognizing the importance of place in forming attachments to the world, the publishers have organized their web site by ecoregions and provide information on publications as well as environmental organizations and other relevant topics. The publishers welcome "book-length literary manuscripts appropriate for a general reader." Milkweed Editions, Open Book, 1011 South Washington Ave., Suite 300, Minneapolis, MN 55415 (800-520-6455; [www.worldashome.org](http://www.worldashome.org)).

## REFERENCES RECEIVED

Kevin Blake, 1999. Sacred and Secular Landscape Symbolism at Mount Taylor, New Mexico. *Journal of the Southwest*, vol. 41, no. 4 (winter), pp. 487-509.

This article explores the symbolism associated with this mountain in various cultural and community contexts, including Spanish colonials, Albuquerque urbanites, and the Native-American groups of the Acoma, Laguna, and Navaho.

Gary J. Coates, 2000. The Living Image of Time. *Ptah: Architecture Design Art*, vol. 1, pp. 23-30 [[www.alvaraalto.fi](http://www.alvaraalto.fi)].

A discussion of the spiritual significance of metamorphosis in the architecture of Swedish-Danish architect Erik Asmussen.

Eduard Füh, ed., 2000. *Building and Dwelling: Martin Heidegger's Foundation of a Phenomenology of Architecture [Bauen und Wohnen]*. Munich, Germany: Waxmann Verlag GmbH; NY: Waxmann.

This collection of 13 articles, the majority in German, explores Heidegger's philosophy as it offers a foundation for a phenomenology of architecture. Contributors providing articles in English

include Gunter A. Dittmar ("Architecture as Dwelling and Building: Design as Ontological Act"), Karsten Harries ("In Search of Home"), Alberto Pérez-Gómez ("Architecture as Mimetic Techno-Poiesis: Dwelling on Heidegger"), and David Seamon (Concretizing Heidegger's Notion of Dwelling: The Contributions of Thomas Thiis-Evensen and Christopher Alexander). The collection includes an audio CD with a record of Heidegger's important early 1950s talk, "*Bauen Wohnen Denken*" ["Building Dwelling Thinking"].

John Hannigan, 1998. *Fantasy City: Pleasure and Profit in the Postmodern Metropolis*. NY: Routledge.

This sociologist considers the postindustrial city as an entertainment hub. With examples from casinos, malls, heritage developments, and theme parks, the author "traces the rise of urban entertainment at the beginning of this century, its decline after World War II, and its surprising renaissance in the 1980s and 1990s." Harrigan asks whether such development "ends up destroying communities or creating new groupings of shared identities and experiences."

Benjamin Schwarz & Ruth Brent, 1999. *Aging, Autonomy, and Architecture: Advances in Assisted Living*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

Premised on the belief that "places makes a difference in human life," this book emphasizes "places for the most vulnerable people in our society, old and frail persons." Includes a number of chapters taking a qualitative approach to place and older people, including R. Brent's "Gerontopia: A Place to Grow Old and Die," L. Pastalan and J. Barnes' "Personal Rituals: Identity, Attachment to Place, and Community Solidarity," and B. Schwarz's "Assisted Living: An Evolving Place Type."

Simon Swan, 1999. "Hassan Fathy's Elegant Solutions," in *Aramco World*, vol. 50, no. 4 (July/August 1999), pp. 16-26.

This article reviewing his life and work is part of a special issue on the architecture of Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy. Lavishly illustrated, the magazine also includes an unpublished 1981 interview with Fathy, a discussion of work by two of his students, and the transcription of a conference held on Fathy's work at the University of Texas at Austin in 1998. Complimentary copies are available from Aramco, 9009 West Loop South, Houston, TX 77096.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Suzanne Bott recently completed her doctorate, "The Development of Psychometric Scales to Measure Sense of Place," in the Department of Natural Resources, Recreation, and Tourism, at Colorado State University in Ft. Collins. The abstract reads in part:

Sense of place has been described as a highly personal construct without formalized definition or set of determining criteria. This research, first, develops a formal definition of sense of place; and, second, develops scales for evaluating factors influencing perception of sense of place.

Two sites at Colorado State University were the research setting: (1) the historic Oval, a traditional landscaped mall with significant vegetation and regional vernacular architecture; and (2) the modern Clark Plaza, with noncontextual architecture, non-native buildings, and limited vegetation.

Focus groups were held to discuss the factors influencing sense of place, and an expert panel developed a summary list of 90 factors to be used in a written survey. These factors were organized into two broad sets (setting and individual/personal factors), four general domains (physical and cultural *setting* domains, affective and functional *individual* domains), and fifteen subgroups or scales (e.g., setting scales such as natural and built; individual scales such as memory and aesthetics; and functional scales such as purpose, prospect, refuge, and well-being).

The study resulted in: (1) a simplified interdisciplinary definition of sense of place as *the perception of meaning associated with a site*; (2) a set of psychometric measurements for sense of place; (3) a holistic model of the factors contributing to sense of place (suzbott@hotmail.com).

**Ted Lowitz** operates a decorative tile company and has a strong interest in Christopher Alexander's Pattern Language. His background is in art and about ten years ago he started his company. He writes: "Our first tile collection, called *Talisman*, is a suite of rustic, hand-formed relief tiles with stone-like glazes. A few years ago we introduced a second collection called *Foundry Art*. These tiles are first carved in wax and then cast in bronze. We sell our tiles through tile specialty stores around the world.

"Tiles occupy a very appealing place in the world of decorative arts—a place somewhat insulated from fashion trends. Since tiles become a permanent part of a home or building, people tend to take the long view and follow their hearts a little more in choosing them. Happily, this allows us to keep our designs that we find deeply appealing, without having to worry too much about what's in fashion (tlowitz@lowitzandcompany.com; www.beautifultile.com).

**Beverly White Spicer** recently completed her master's thesis in Architecture at the University of Texas at Austin under the supervision of Prof. Robert Mugerauer. The title of the thesis is "Rhythms of the Environment: Architecture, Behavior and the Brain: Islam's Ka'bah, in Consideration of Eliade's Homology of Cosmos: House: Body." Spicer's work won the award for "Outstanding Thesis in the School of Architecture, 1999-2000." The abstract reads as follows:

This study examines and substantiates the homology "Body, House, Cosmos" as suggested by Mircea Eliade in *The Sacred and the Profane* (1961)—i.e., the cosmocization of human beings through architecture, using as case study the *Ka'bah* in Mecca. Human-kind, explains Eliade, "reproduces on the human scale the system of rhythmic and reciprocal conditioning influences that characterizes and constitutes a world, that in, short defines any universe... the homology also applies in the reverse direction: in their turn the temple or the house are regarded as a human body."

Five times a day the one-and-one-quarter billion practitioners of the Islamic faith turn in prayer toward the *Ka'bah*, which symbolizes the meeting point between heaven and earth. Central to the organization of this behavior are the rhythms set by the rising and setting sun. Because circadian and related cosmic rhythms are crucial to neurological and physiological processes, because the complex behavior of religious practice in Islam incorporates these rhythms, and because the *Ka'bah* in Mecca serves as a highly organized symbol marking a central focus of that practice, it can be said that the brain, the body, the house (*Ka'bah*) and the cosmos are in profound homological relationship as suggested by Eliade.

## WORK ON SACRED ARCHITECTURE AND HERMENEUTICS

Harvard University Press has recently published scholar of comparative religion **Linsay Jones'** two-volume *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2000). Volume I of this significant work discusses "monumental occasions: reflections on the eventfulness of religious architecture," while volume 2 examines "hermeneutical calisthenics: a morphology of ritual-architectural priorities."

In the foreword to the first volume, Series Editor Lawrence E. Sullivan writes: "...to understand



[sacred architectures] we must come to grips with the religious events and experiences that swirl around built forms. Rightly understood, sacred architecture represents, in a distilled and crystallized form, the religious experience of humankind, on both a communal and an individual scale. The difficulty in understanding the religious experiences associated with architecture is that, though the remnants of the architecture may linger for long periods of time, performances and events that interact with them are often ephemeral.

"...Jones proposes some eleven sorts of relationships that exist between monuments and ritual. For each relationship he opens a path of hermeneutical inquiry distinctive to that relationship... These eleven nodes form an interpretive framework, or morphology, of ritual-architectural events....

"The eleven-point framework develops across the several levels of orientation, commemoration, and presentation in the context of performance. It covers the way sacred architecture, in ritual events, *orients* participants: (1) to the universe itself by presenting a microcosmic replica; (2) to rules, prece-

dents, standards, and convention displayed in sacred architecture; (3) to stars and heavenly bodies with which sacred architecture is aligned.

"Regarding the content of ritual events, sacred architecture *commemorates*: (4) the deities and ultimate realities housed or recalled in sacred architecture; (5) the mythical and miraculous episodes in sacred history; (6) the social order of authority and economic arrangement legitimates (or sometimes challenged) in the politics that swirl around sacred architecture; (7) the ancestors and the deceased brought to mind in the ritual commemorations held within sacred architecture.

"In a ritual performance, sacred architecture *contextualizes* the presentation of (8) theater enacted against the backdrop of sacred architecture; (9) contemplation, especially where sacred architecture becomes the focus for meditation or devotion; (10) offerings of appeasement, aiming to please sacred beings through the very process of construction; (11) pure sanctuary, a state free from imperfection."

## BOOK REVIEW

Joachim-Ernst Berendt, 1988. *The Third Ear: On Listening to the World*. NY: Henry Holt [originally published as the German *Das Dritte Ohr* (Rowohlt Verlag GmbH, 1985)].

First published in 1985, this book by music scholar Joachim-Ernst Berendt is a remarkable emancipation of hearing. In our modern Western experience, he argues, we have largely lost the ability to gain attention through listening as our eyes and vision have become dominant. Berendt's aim is to reattune us to the significance of sound and thereby exercise a "third ear." He writes:

through listening, we can gain knowledge, make discoveries, and find connections inaccessible to seeing. The more examples the better in order to convince Westerners, brought up to glorify the eye, that they also possess another wonderful sense organ whose elevation is long overdue (p. 129).

Though he never uses the phrase, Berendt says much about a phenomenology of hearing and sound. In a series of insightful, opening chapters, he examines the differences experientially between sight and hearing. His examples are regularly creative and thought-provoking. For example, at one

point he highlights the relative communicative abilities of eye and ear by contrasting the silent film and radio play:

Even the masters of silent film in the twenties did not succeed in putting across the totality of their works' message by exclusively cinematic means. They could not do without the occasional title conveying information about time ("Twenty years later") or place ("Back at home") otherwise impossible to communicate. Such titles were almost always important, making it possible to understand the story.

The radio play, on the other hand, transmits the entire story and all the information without resorting to non-acoustic assistance.... Even great creative artists, such as Charlie Chaplin, were unable to compensate for that revelation of vision's inferiority, no matter how hard they tried.

Also worth of mention in that connection is the fact that during the era of silent film it was usual for the action to be accompanied, more or less dramatically, by pre-selected pieces of music or an improvising pianist or organist. The audience "needed" an aural stimulus to complete an experience that would otherwise have been deficient. But no listener to radio plays would hit on the idea of looking at pictures so as to round off that experience (p. 13).

Through his contrast of sight and sound, Berendt moves toward the book's central point that the eye takes a person's attention *into the world*, whereas the ear brings the world *into the person*. Berendt also emphasizes the possibility that sounds can much more often and powerfully evoke an emotional dimension of experience--what he calls "the particular tenderness of hearing."

Though some readers will be distressed by Berendt's critique of the modernist Western world view and experience (which he describes in the

now-conventional poststructural way as piecemeal, cerebral, patriarchal, positivist, and eye-dominant), he writes with a convincing power that awakens readers to the world of sound and gets them to refocus attention on what exactly it is to hear and listen. In this sense, Berendt's book is a valuable contribution to a "first-person" phenomenology of the senses and environmental encounter.

--David Seamon

## LISTENING WORDS

Joachim-Ernst Berendt

*The following two selections are drawn from Joachim-Ernst Berendt's The Third Ear. Note how, in the first selection, Berendt asks the reader to try to hear vicariously the sound indicated by the particular word listed--a kind of firsthand vicarious phenomenology of hearing. The second selection makes an intriguing link between geographical experience and the dominant Western ontological and epistemological reality.*

Language confirms that our ear is assimilative, receptive, passive, and feminine, whereas our eye is emanative, aggressive, active, and masculine. For passive activities there are fewer words than for active. Such words as: hear, listen, eavesdrop... If we want to go beyond that we must visualize the process of hearing by resorting to such expressions as to "prick up one's ears," "hang on someone's words," etc.

We accord visual perception very many more linguistic possibilities whose significance is far more than linguistic: see, scrutinize, overlook, contemplate, see through, observe, eye, inspect, stare, gape, gawk, goggle, glare, peer, blink, wink, look, sight, behold, oversee, notice, perceive, espy, squint, examine, glimpse, behold, discern, mark, note, notice, regard, view, witness, envisage, and revealingly, catch site of.

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A completely different picture is produced if we examine language in terms of the *outcome* of the man seeing words--and also of the few words describing the activity of hearing. Such examination confirms that the eye can go wrong much more frequently than the ear. Many expressions concerned with the possibility of illusion and error come from the visual sphere: overlook, appearance, semblance,

imaginary (from the Latin *imago*=picture), mirage, apparition, obscure, myopic, blind spot, etc....

Our eye scans surfaces. Seeing basically entails a ray of perception which scans surfaces. I have been looking for an hour at the sheet of paper on which I write these ideas, but I cannot penetrate even a fraction of a millimeter beneath its surface. The eye glimpses surfaces and is attached to them, always remaining superficial (=on the surface). The ear penetrates deep into the realms it investigates through hearing.

The number of words describing what is experienced through listening is therefore almost endless. Some verbs are listed here. The reader should note the subtle and precise differences involved, and the accuracy the ear demands of language in its delineation of what has been heard. Such accuracy and subtlety derive from the ear itself. The reader should--for a moment--demand that of himself or herself by pausing at each of the following words and attempting to allow the sound described to resound within. It may take quite a while to "read" this but that will provide a training in sensitivity of hearing and--beyond that--of our inner ear. Here are some of the words:

Babble, bang, bark, bawl, bellow, bicker, blare, blather, bleat, bleep, blubber, bluster, boo, boom, bray, bubble, burp, buzz;



Cackle, carol, caterwaul, caw, chatter, cheep, chide, chime, chuckle, clang, clank, clap, clatter, click, clink, cluck, coo, crack, crackle, crash, creak, croak, crow, crunch, cuss;

Dribble, drip, drivel, drone, drool;

Echo, explode;

Fizz, flap, flop, flutter;

Gasp, gargle, giggle, grate, grind, groan, growl, grumble, grunt, gurgle;

Hiss, honk, hoot, howl, huff, hum;

Jabber, jibe, jingle, jubilate;

Knock;

Lisp, low;

Moan, mumble, mutter;

Nag, natter, neigh;

Ooze;

Pant, patter, peal, plop, pound, prate, prattle, puff, purr;

Quack, quarrel;

Rap, rasp, rattle, rejoice, ring, roar, rumble, rustle;

Scrape, scratch, scream, screech, shriek, shuffle, sigh, sizzle, slam, slap, slosh, slump, smack, smash, snap, snarl, sneer,

sneeze, sniff, snigger, snivel, snore, snort, sob, spit, splash, splutter, squeak, squeal, stamp, strum, stutter, suck, swish;

Throb, thump, thunder, tick, tingle, tool, tootle, tremble, trickle, trill, twang, tweet, twitter;

Wail, warble, wheeze, whimper, whine, whinny, whirl, whisper, whistle, whoop;

Yap, yell, yelp, yodel;

Zip.

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Experts in information theory have discovered that there exists a relationship between the number of words we dispose of in a specific sphere and the wealth of differentiation, meticulousness, and attentiveness possible within that area. Language confirms what we have established elsewhere--that the ear is more precise than the eye. The eye can compensate for that deficiency by utilizing thousands of expressions to describe and circumscribe what it sees. That, however, remains compensatory, an attempt at making up for the ear's precision as expressed in each instance in a single word. The difference becomes particularly striking if one compares the exactitude of all those verbs and all the inaccuracies with which the eye has to contend in depicting color [discussed in chapter 1 of Berendt's book] (pp. 61-63).

## PETRARCH ON MONT VENTOUX

Philosopher Jean Gebser sees Petrarch's ascent of Mont Ventoux in Provence in the year 1336 as a key event in the development of eye dominance in Europe, far beyond what had already been initiated by the Greeks. At that time the Italian poet lived northeast of Avignon near Vaucluse, which has become celebrated for its fountain emerging so mysteriously out of the rocks....

Petrarch constantly had Mont Ventoux before his eyes. That mighty mountain arose miraculously out of the hilly landscape between the Alps and the massif Central into what was already a Mediterranean sky. No one "expects" such a monumental peak there, which is why the challenge of climbing it is so great. Petrarch accepted that challenge. It is scarcely comprehensible that no one had done so long before, but an old shepherd, who encountered

the poet and his brother Gherardo in a gorge at the foot of the mountain, said he "had never heard of anyone embarking on such a venture." The shepherd warned Petrarch against what he was undertaking.

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One must have stood on to of Mont Ventoux oneself to appreciate what Petrarch's achievement signified. Gebser calls it "epoch-making," and the poet himself spoke of "a shock" where he felt "as if petrified with terror" and "transported out of space into time."

From Mont Ventoux you can look out onto a major European landscape: from the Alps in the northeast to the Mediterranean in the south--and even as far as the island of Corsica on days before the Mistral arises, and to the Pyrenees in the West.

*Europa in nuce*. Somewhere in the haze the Atlantic is to be sensed. And the Mistral comes from Africa....

Jean Gebser has shown that awareness of perspective in seeing, painting, and drawing is profoundly connected with Petrarch's initial conquest of this mountain in Provence. It was at any rate at that time that a new awareness of space began to make its way in painting--as a synchronistically linked development rather than as a casual outcome of the mountain having at last been climbed. At that time, poets, painters, and also thinkers started to conquer space; and even musicians joined in--if one thinks of the way in which, say, Venetian composers set about "playing" with the acoustics of San Marco a little later. For painters conquering space entailed confining three dimensions within two and forcing them onto a flat surface, i.e., painting in perspective.

In the whole of Greek and Roman literature--with the possible exception of Ovid--there are hardly any poetic descriptions of landscapes; and where they do exist they are just attempts and mostly inventories--a "means of surveying a specific area for administrative and practical reasons" (Gebser). Not even that was to be found in the Middle Ages. Petrarch's climbing of Mont Ventoux was a triumph for the eye-dominated man. We know what landscape is ever since that day in the year 1336. Even Petrarch had some ideas of the importance of his deed since in a celebrated letter to another brother he wrote that his ascent would "certainly be of benefit for many." Gebser views that day as marking the beginning of a "new way of regarding nature, realistic, individual, and rational."

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As so often in the history of ideas, however, a "deficiency" lay embedded in that development right from the start. "From that day onwards human responsibility grew to such an extent that, confronted by the contemporary situation, we must doubt whether man was able to cope with it." When he was on top of Mont Ventoux, Petrarch opened at random Augustine's *Confessions*--a heavy pigskin-bound volume he had carried up to the summit--so

as to see what the Church Father had to say to him there, and reported: "As God is my witness, my gaze fell on the following passage: 'Men travel to wonder at the height of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the orbits of the stars, and they pass by themselves without wondering.'" Petrarch was awe-struck.

Just two hundred years later, with the advent of Descartes and Bacon, people began to get some idea of why Petrarch had been so awe-struck and why man was perhaps "giving up" and had to be asked whether he could "cope" with the situation. The space that the poet had caught a glimpse of as if it were a marvel, experienced as a mystery, transformed itself into the three-dimensionality of physical space, into the demand that we rely solely on what our eyes can see and measure with that space--as if man had banished the miraculous from the prospect from Mont Ventoux without asking whether anything then remained of the space concealing that wonder.

The development of European scientific thinking, launched by Descartes, Galileo, and Bacon, can be traced back to Mont Ventoux and the year 1336. That development took place within the visible, three-dimensional arena of space until time was added by Einstein six centuries later as a fourth invisible spatial dimension, leading to the unfolding of new ways of thinking, new ideas about space and matter, beyond what can be merely seen.

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What began with Petrarch as a wonder and an unanticipated enrichment of human perspectives has become Gebser's "deficiency" and degeneration. Space became more and more empty. The world became more and more empty. We all became more and more empty. The mystery vanished from space. The world lost its magic.

What got under way with *measuring* ended with *missing*--and once again one is shocked by the profundities of language, since both those words derive from the same root, are basically still a single word originated in *metra* (womb), which is also the source of *mother* (pp. 21-23).



## SILENT NIGHT

Hildegard Westerkamp

*Soundscape researcher Hildegard Westerkamp has been a major impetus for the work of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (see "items of interest," p. 2). She teaches in the School of Communication, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6. This essay and the following essay by Darren Copeland were originally published in the New Soundscape Newsletter and are reprinted with the permission of Editor Justin Winkler. © 2001 Hildegard Westerkamp.*

*Udaipur, Rajasthan, India, November 26, 1997.*

It is warm and sunny here in Udaipur today. As I write this, I am sitting on a rooftop terrace looking at the town's magnificent palace, the labyrinthine streets, and the surrounding mountains. I hear the usual hustling, bustling Indian soundscape: always autorickshaws, cars, scooters, always horn honking, always music from somewhere (live or through tinny, distorting speakers), people's voices everywhere in traffic-free pauses, hammering, sweeping, a hawker calling out his wares, some metal clanking, shutter opening, metal gate squeaking, drumming from the nearby temple, occasional chanting, a bicycle bell... A busy, bustling place that never really quiets down before midnight and then begins again before sunrise.

Voices are always reverberant in tiled environments, buildings always acting as amplifiers and resonators, inside and outside, crows', parrots', songbirds' calls always present and suddenly a resonant moo from one of the cows moving aimlessly like tourists through the streets; or a loud protesting voice from one of the donkeys being herded to a construction site to pick up--for the umpteenth time--a heavy load of sand. A small temple bell rings, sounding more like a blacksmith's hammer hitting an anvil. A cricket is singing somewhere nearby. A camel, carrying two tourists from nowhere to nowhere, is passing below, its bell tinkling.

This is the season of weddings in India. Last night we witnessed a glittering, rich version from this same rooftop terrace. Some relative of the Maharaja of Udaipur was getting married. Musical sounds floated up to us from where the guests were gathering to receive the bridegroom. Gradually, distant band sounds mingled with the music below:

drums, trumpets, and euphoniums were approaching from our left, getting louder and at times covering up the other music.

We can see the band now, a whole procession of instruments, lights, and people accompanying the bridegroom who is arriving on a magnificently decorated elephant. A servant on the seat behind is silently fanning the bridegroom with some exotic bird feathers to keep the mosquitoes away. A majestic scene, but the music sounds just as raunchy as any ordinary Indian wedding. On the street below another small procession announces itself with explosions from friendly firecrackers, two glittering bridegrooms on horseback, and huge musical clamor. This time there is no live band. Instead, one of those loudspeaker-carts (a portable Indian-style amplification system) is pushed through the streets and blasts a similarly raunchy music with maximum reverb, in tandem with the live band still playing at the other wedding. I think of Charles Ives' music as I hear this.

Cars, scooters, autorickshaws are not deterred and squeeze past the procession honking their way through the music-filled street. The generator for the bright lights, wheeled along on a cart to illuminate the two bridegrooms, provide a loud, percussive bass ostinato to the whole scene. In the middle of all this, as if there was still room for more sounds, we suddenly hear electronic fragments of "Silent Night." The source: a small passenger car. Every time the driver puts the car into reverse gear, this electronic signal is turned on, continuing the carol tune wherever it had stopped the last time he drove backwards. As the driver maneuvered the car back and forth in a small alley, we have the pleasure for several minutes of hearing "Silent Night" ripped into small, sonic shreds.

## THE SOUNDS OF DISPLACEMENT

Darren Copeland

*The "shared listening journey" described in the following essay took place 4-6 August 1997 after the annual meeting of the International Congress of Acoustic Ecology in Paris. Twelve participants, including the author, embarked on three days of travel through France. The theme of the journey was "sounds of displacement" as the group moved from one locale to another on various types of rail transport that ranged from the "soft hum of the TGV train" to the "rattly and metallic shaking" of narrow-gauge trains. What follows is a commentary on the trip in general terms and a description of a few soundscape highlights. © 2001 Darren Copeland.*

*Charles de Gaulle SNCF Station, Monday, 4 August, about 9:30am.*

To start the journey, the group convened at a drop-off point that overlooked the Charles de Gaulle SNCF Station. While waiting, I looked down on the train platform through a succession of white steel-arched beams. A glass roof covered the white beams. This added to the diffused and hazy acoustic character of the vast, arena-like, open-air train station. Within this cloud of acoustic haziness came a strange musical interaction between the airplanes, trains, cars, and buses that all arrived and departed within earshot of our rendezvous point.

One incident began with a prolonged cadence from a piece of Celtic-sounding accordion music playing over the PA system. After drifting into a thick cocoon of overlapping reverberations, the decay of the music drifted seamlessly into a gradually ascending glissando from a departing TGV train. As a bus pulled in and eventually obliterated the train's presence, the glissando was passed over to the bus and dipped downward as the bus came to a full stop. All of these arrivals and departures found a strange cohesive unity under the station's heavy blanket of reverberation.

Later on, an airplane had pulled up just beyond the station. As soon as the plane turned ninety degrees away from me, the sound of its propellers or engine diminished considerably in loudness from being an enormous grimace of white noise down to a soft background murmur. This was certainly a very rare occasion because it is not often you encounter a sound with so much directionality in an environment with such murky acoustics.

*Descent from Fourvière in Lyon. Monday 4 August, about 11pm.*

Around eleven o'clock that same evening, our group walked down the hillside in Lyon along what seemed like a never-ending staircase. Reflections

were crisp. The ear could follow the music of these reflections with every step down the stone staircase, thanks to the remarkable absence of automobile roar from the city below. My body relished the clarity and activated the space with tongue clicks and finger snaps.

The climax of the journey was near the bottom of the hill. A narrower space between the parallel stone walls produces very pronounced eigentones. I responded with a series of shouts and aahs to draw out the color of the space. I noticed that by moving a couple of steps in any direction, the eigentones disappeared. It was as if the area in which the eigentones occurred was a sort of invisible cone into which one could enter and indulge oneself acoustically. After leaving this phantom playground, the group segued slowly into the night-time ambience of Lyon. Whereupon, the journey back to the hotel, through the narrow cobbled streets, ended.

### DIFFICULTIES IN GROUP LISTENING

Complaints were raised that the sounds of the group were overtaking the listening journey. For instance, when travelling as a group in the train, there was always the temptation for individuals to talk with one another. This caused frustration for the recordists who kept noticing the same voices over and over. This also kept listeners from fully engaging in the soundscapes they inhabited. As one participant said, "We are hearing the sounds of each other far too often." It became apparent that much more self-discipline was required from each listener in a group situation than perhaps what is necessary in a private context.

*Listening Privately in the Mont Aiguille region. Tuesday, 5 August.*

The day in the mountains was a good break from our previous experiences. At last I could listen on my own. I took a walk in the afternoon along a



winding road in the quiet rural mountainside. Events in this soundscape passed by gently in the distance. Each event approached one respectfully in single file. In contrast, the previous soundscapes all clamored and moaned with a multiplicity of events spilling out onto one from every possible direction.

A few of us went up the mountain for a short sound walk in the evening. One participant made an interesting comment about the crickets we heard in the field: "The fact that there is continuity in the sound is because there are lots of individuals out of phase with one another." What this person called continuity I perceived as a mass of unified vocal activity. Earlier that same evening during dinner I experienced a different texture of overlapping voices. This, however, could not be qualified in the same way.

I was among the first to arrive at dinner. Our tables were in a reserved area, the kind normally given over to large groups. As participants arrived, a gradual crescendo in volume and density climbed upward for about 30 minutes. I didn't say very much that evening and concentrated more on the activity around me. I followed just one conversation at first. Then some moments later my attention was split between two conversations. Later still, I found myself listening to the two conversations in closest proximity, while sliding over occasionally to those that drifted in from other parts of the table. Finally, I strained to take in just one conversation right in front of me, while fighting to tune out tempting snatches of hearsay, speculation, and laughter.

It was never possible to step outside the group and hear all the voices as one unified mass. I was enveloped inside the texture and lived and breathed with each player of the orchestra. Which meant that, unlike the sound of the crickets, I could distinguish unique characteristics of each individual voice and distribute various ones into different groupings. Only when I could walk away into an adjoining room could I ever start grouping the overlapping conversations into a unified mass of sound. But even then other factors would prevent me from experiencing them in this way. I would still distinguish differences in the timbre and register of each voice, not to mention any differences in contents of speech, tone of voice, gender, age, loudness, and so forth. Do the crickets actually experience something similar? Are the voices of their own group full of individual characters competing for attention, while

the collective groupings of other animal species, such as humans, form a thick ball of uniform vocal activity?

## SEIZING THE MOMENT

The listening journey was a difficult challenge because the notion of displacement and constant movement restrained the listening experience considerably. Many times we rushed to catch a train or make an appointment. Often during sound walks there was no time to just stop and listen.

A month after the listening journey, I finally realized that the trip was actually orchestrated in the most realistic way possible. It became apparent to me that nine out of ten times the most interesting sounds in my soundscape were heard while I was in the midst of performing one task or another. Often these tasks revolved primarily around the use of vision, which I had always believed to hinder the extent I could listen to the soundscape. Thus, the challenge of the journey was to keep the ear engaged in any type of everyday task, despite how straightforward or perplexing it might seem.

To meet this challenge, however, the group had to put aside our preconceptions of what conditions were ideal for listening. Why, for example, ignore the soundscape on account of being stressed or preoccupied, when none of us probably ever listened to the soundscape completely free of internalized social pressures? As an alternative, why could one not skip along the road briskly, perhaps late for work, while still being open and aware enough to catch the darting Doppler of a roaring fire engine? Likewise, as one walked through a tight narrow corridor between buildings, why could one not take a second to snap one's fingers and hear the flicker of echoes bouncing this way or that?

Moments of discovery invariably await one on the most unsuspecting occasions. It was just a matter of "seizing the moment" whenever it came. I have since realized that the key to seizing the moment existed all along inside a kernel of alert listening sensitivity. Every listener could access this kernel within him or herself despite whatever distraction existed on the outside or on the inside. Our biggest limitation, in the end, was in letting the distractions stand between the soundscape and our listening.

The journey provided me with a glowing illustration of how everyday social pressures build up in

one and occupy the junction that connects the ears with the imagination. The trip made it apparent that this junction should be kept free of any unnecessary clutter. It also reminded me of the discoveries that were possible only when the imagination was engaged in the activities of the present moment.

It so happened that upon my return to Birmingham, the local soundscape rippled with a new fascination. A simple activity, such as water sprinklers on the rugby field, could be dissected from many new angles as so much more detail became apparent. Perhaps this detail was evident because I had been away for a week. Then again, maybe it came to me because I had been reminded that I was virtually running from the sounds around me. Alas, I

could listen around the issue of performing some menial task, which in this case was walking to the studio on campus.

The underlying moral of the journey was that, even when running to catch a train, one was never free to run from the soundscape. The moment was always there latent with new possibilities. The soundscape never fell silent when one was dashing after the train. Only the ears had fallen silent at that moment to create what was ultimately an illusion of silence. At whatever speed one had been traveling, moments lingered at the edge of the lobe. From there, they awaited discovery for future reflection and enhanced understanding.

## FROM 'ACOUSTIC HORIZONS' TO 'TONALITIES'

Justin Winkler

*Winkler originally presented the following essay as a talk at the conference, "Sound Escape," held in July 2000, at Trent University in Peterborough Ontario. The author wishes to thank the organizers of the conference for providing him the opportunity to develop the themes in this paper. © 2001 Justin Winkler.*

*Soundscape* is an artificial word, playing on the acoustic similarity of *sound* and *land*. Composer and sound theorist Murray Schafer created the word in the late 1960s. Simultaneously and independently, Michael Southworth at MIT also used the term. The *World Soundscape Project* at Simon Fraser University made the word widely known and linked with a specific approach subsumed under the then new and fashionable notion of *ecology*. The seeming opening for systemic approaches provided by this term has an anti-phenomenological tendency in the sense that its aesthetic and perceptual aspects constitute the world of sound only in a functional way.

What analytical terms have been proposed for soundscape studies in the last thirty years? All notational and classificatory systems devised since the 1970s must face the fact that the sonic experience—like other perceptual modes—is composed of objective and subjective worlds, of facts and values. The first empirical study testing this idea was conducted by Porteous and Mastin in 1985 (Porteous & Mastin, 1985). In their statistical analysis of significant relations among sounds of a neighborhood in Victoria B.C. these researchers concluded dryly

"that the World Soundscape Project sound categories do not form statistically reliable constructs."

Here I want to re-examine two of these categories—*acoustic horizon* and *keynote sound*—that were borrowed from visual space and from music, respectively. These two concepts have played a significant role in soundscape studies. Results from my field work (1995a/b, 1997) indicate that these concepts have a capacity for enhanced phenomenological use.

### ACOUSTIC HORIZON

*Horizon* is a word we use in everyday speech; it has realistic, figurative and scientific meanings. The Greek *horizein* denotes posing limits, making dispositions and defining a term. The image is the one of a furrow that divides virgin land into cultivated parts and thus signifies reclamation from nature and the creation of interior and exterior. Throughout the Middle Ages, *horizon* denoted a metaphysical frontier between the historical and spiritual worlds. With the fading away of the platonic and theological foundations of this sense of the word, *horizon* began to be applied to the realm of the physical world.



The idea of *acoustic horizon* appears in a European village soundscape study by the World Soundscape Project, where the solar winds of Brittany's Lesconil are reported (1977, 54). Here the notion of horizon, as proposed by Schafer, implies the *far-reaching* presence of sounds, in analogy with the *far-away* visual horizon. The prerequisite for this experience is conceived as a kind of complex, rural silence synonymous with acoustic transparency—notice again the visual metaphor. Any machine sound will then destroy this silence (which equals acoustic transparency) by masking and therefore deteriorating the acoustic content of the extended surroundings.

This interpretation sets the values of noise-abatement ideals. Noise modifies the acoustic horizon by temporally narrowing it. By its very definition, however, the horizon cannot be annihilated: the term *horizon of silence* (singular) introduced by Don Ihde (1975, 50) can serve as a fundamental definition of what the *acoustic horizons* (plural) are. Then noise has to be called a specific horizon of silence—a seemingly paradoxical but phenomenologically correct and necessary expression: the acoustic horizons of noise as silencing other sounds and as operators of the finiteness of aural space and time.

What are the qualities of this horizon of silence? It is perfect, existential and cannot be transgressed, in a still more compelling way than the visual horizon. On the other hand, this horizon of silence fluctuates in space and time. Because it is not *there in front*, it urges us to adopt descriptions like "almost," "nearly," or "perhaps." Spatially as well as temporally, we get incessantly to a specific horizon of silence—each pause between a cicada's chirping volley, in every breath taking in a flow of conversation, in the hours of quiet in the middle of the night, or in winter's rest of the season's tonalities. Every horizon circles the other by demanding a different span of listening consciousness.

In other words, the silence in *horizon of silence* is not just the silence after dying sonic presence but must be conceived as the silence of unheard sounds. And there is an objective "acoustical" and a subjective "aural" side to this experience. Either a sound object does not reach us physically, or we ourselves withdraw our listening attention and let the horizon of silence be constituted by our span of attention. Phenomenologically, unheard sounds

are not stocked in some kind of sonic distant and hypothetical unconscious but simply do not exist. This is naturally true for those sounds that have *not yet* occurred or have *already vanished*.

Our cultural practice with the multiplicity of acoustic horizons within the soundscape-as-experienced makes constant attempts to transgress the spatial and temporal limits by semantic and symbolic action. Often our listening is framed by external cues—e.g., signal sounds from bells, sirens or train passages—that indicate the beginning and end of the active daytime.

One example is foghorns of the 1920s, reported in *The Vancouver Soundscape* (World Soundscape Project, 1978, 19): "We heard them as we went to sleep and again first thing in the morning. As biological cycles are capable of mastering the future, cyclical behaviors and recurring events enable us to plan, to infer and to anticipate and thereby to structure our everyday world. Another example is the sounds of passing trains, which add imaginatively-spatial connotations by their provenance and destination; their whistles arouse memories and add biographical temporal depth.

The idea of the *horizon of silence* is realized as a variety of *acoustic horizons* in the physical world and in the perceptual world. A phenomenology of the edges of the acoustic world has to consider that the physical world which, although with seemingly stable appearance, is constantly transgressed by cultural practices, anticipating the *future*, offering reminders of the *past*, representing *distant spaces*. The horizons of our soundscapes are constantly moving and reminding us of the fact that sounds both indicate moving sources and are movement themselves. This leads us to a phenomenology not of stable or dead objects, but of dynamics in concrete time and concrete space.

## TONALITY

Schafer's *keynote sound* is one of the musical terms introduced in soundscape studies. This term denotes sounds that "are heard by a particular society continuously or frequently enough to form a background against which other sounds are perceived" (Truax 1978, 68). This term metaphorizes soundscape as a musical entity, hinting at a feature that the variety of actually heard sounds might have in common. When a melody involves its keynote, its tonal center might not be sounding yet still be pres-

ent. Similarly, a keynote sound is not a kind of *ground* according to the gestalt concept (or a *back-ground* in an inadequately visualizing metonymy) but an organizing principle of the sounds-as-experienced in a real-world context (Truax 1978, 68).

When trying to find a German equivalent for *keynote sounds*, I felt that I must avoid the corresponding term *Grundton* from the musical terminology, since *Grund* denotes *basis*, *ground*, and is closer to *background* than *keynote*; this word would lead to a static idea not suggesting the dynamic character of the subject. I therefore proposed *tonality* applied to soundscapes. This word appeared toward the middle of the 19th century with approximately the present meaning, identifying a principle of regulating the relations between sounds (Dahlhaus 1980, 51-55). This term gives a direction that neutralizes the static connotation in *keynote sound/Grundton*. In addition, *tonality* is close to German *Stimmung*—*atmosphere*, *mood*, *temperament* or *tune*—a term that bridges the musical, technical realm and environmental experience.

Etymologically, tonality goes back to the Greek *tónos*, which signifies a rope or link between two objects that tend to drift apart, the force of hauling exerted by the rope and finally this force itself: the tension necessary for a string to produce sound. Introducing a concept of tension and distension, *tonality* signifies primarily relations, not objects. Applied to the soundscape, tonality helps solve the odd difficulty that we are talking of—viz., the concrete sounding world and its play of relationships.

Already twenty years ago, Jean-François Augoyard (1978, 161-174) used the terms *sound climate* and *tonality* when talking about sounds that "give the keynote" in a particular soundscape. The *sonic climate* envelopes lived moments in such a way as to create within the same physical or social space different sonic universes. Tonality conceived as an open and synthetic term avoids too formal musical-like criteria and leaves room for the cultural codes implied or expressed in soundscape elements, containing the values that make soundscapes emotionally resonant and semantically overdetermined.

## PHENOMENOLOGY & SOUNDSCAPE

As Gernot Böhme (1997, 34) suggests, a phenomenology of nature is only possible as a phenomenology of nature-for-us and of the body-self being itself part of nature. This is problematizing conventional ecological approaches grounded in the natural sciences. Acoustic horizons and environmental tonalities are always sonic nature-for-us and inevitably anthropocentric. Frogs will not tell us about their experience of their soundscapes; we can infer their experience but only on the basis of our own.

A term like *acoustic ecology* has a moral value—preserving pristine sonic environments, fighting urban noise—but leads to a number of methodological difficulties. When proposing a phenomenological approach and terminological tools like *acoustic horizon* or *tonality*, I do not suppose that all difficulties can be solved. I would like to assume, however, that, through phenomenological studies, some essential qualities of sound can be better assessed: the basic dynamism of the sound world, the historicity of sonic places, the presence, reminiscence and anticipation functions of the soundscape's temporal scope. All these possibilities are hopefully not in false opposition to a pretendedly-dominating visual world but complementary to it and allowing us to hone our intellectual tools.

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## THE ECONOMICS OF GENEROSITY

The sun rose and ravens flew,  
Stellar Jays on the Amaranth,  
bright blue on vermilion seed heads.

Golden, light, luscious. This morning, my husband says,  
To grow Amaranth is a political act of unstinting beauty.

Last night, our neighbor's cow  
in our garden again.

Open range here, our responsibility to fence them out.

Early Spring, the garden barely in,  
I drove in my nightgown and a rampage down to Joe's,  
howling that his cows were out, and on our land.

They'd eaten the young Locust trees to bare branch,  
we lost one.

Joe was sorry that day, said he'd try.

He has. 'till the tell tale Moo at 3:00am.  
I was too tired to fling stones at cows or entreaties at Joe.

Autumn and exhaustion make me generous.  
What corn we've left is dry on the stalk,  
first frost has already taken the tomatoes.

I ponder neighbors, and fences and the few cosmos left,  
crimsons and creams. Junkos and siskins  
feasting on the heavy heads of sunflowers.

It's all of a piece. We're flush with honeyed light,  
and the hustle of small feeders in spent beds.  
In this season we are actually rich.

What is one fence less, one cow more?

--Judyth Hill