



# Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter

Vol. 3, No. 1

Winter 1992

This issue marks the start of *EAP's* 3rd year. Some *EAP* readers have promptly renewed their *EAP* subscription, but many others are in arrears. In fact, the renewal rate has been disappointingly low. For the first time, we face a sizable deficit (also partly due to an increase in copying costs). **Please, if you have not done so, renew your subscription.** Otherwise, we may have to discontinue the newsletter. The rate is \$6 (\$8 foreign in dollars). For those readers who have not yet renewed, we include a renewal form.

The major focus of this issue of *EAP* is "place and place experience." We begin with philosopher Richard Capobianco's review of architectural theorist Christian Norberg-Schulz's *New World Architecture*.

We also include one poem by geographer Jill Yesko and four essays: Composer R. Murray Schafer's picture of a suburban Toronto soundscape; geographer J. Douglas Porteous' discussion of the difficulties in trying to reconcile insiders' and outsiders' senses of place; philosopher Anthony Weston's essay on place and environmental ethics; and geographer Ted Relph's comments on postmodern landscapes. The 18th-century engraving, lower left, of London street cries is by William Hogarth and is reproduced from Murray Schafer's *The Tuning of the World* (see p. 9).

Please note an error in the last *EAP* issue. The correct address of Sacred Sites International Foundation is: 1442A Walnut Street, No. 330, Berkeley, CA 94709. Also, the phone no. has changed and is now 510-540-0671. We apologize for any inconvenience this error might have caused.

## 1992 EDRA MEETINGS IN COLORADO

The annual meeting of the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) will be held at the University of Colorado at Boulder, April 9-11, 1992. The conference theme is "Equitable and Sustainable Habitats." The deadline for submissions has passed, but information on attending the conference can be had by writing: EDRA 23, Campus Box 314, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309 (303-492-6399).

Tentatively, the Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology network will hold an informational meeting at the conference. As far as the *EAP* editors know presently, there are no scheduled sessions devoted fully to phenomenology, though there will be several individual presentations involving phenomenological or other interpretive approaches.





## EVENTS, PUBLICATIONS, GROUPS, AND PROGRAMS

**Vernacular Architecture Forum** encourages the study and preservation of all aspects of vernacular architecture and landscapes through interdisciplinary methods. Members receive the quarterly *Vernacular Architecture Newsletter* and information on VAF conferences and tours. Address: VAF, c/o Peter Kurtze, 109 Brandon Road, Baltimore, MD 21212.

The **Person-Environment Series** is a new collection of articles announced by the Center for Environmental Design Research at the University of California at Berkeley. Papers in which *EAP* readers may be interested include:

- Trevor Boddy, "From Physics Envy to Philosophy Abuse: Architects Search for Meta-Theory."
- Galen Cranz, "A New Look at the Person in Person-Environment Relations: Theoretical Assumptions about the Body."
- Elizabeth Porter, "The Enveloping Image: Built Environment as Clothing."
- David Seamon, "Experientialism, Architecture, and Phenomenology: Toward Reconciling Order and Freedom."
- Anselm Strauss, "Social Worlds and Spatial Processes: An Analytic Perspective."

Each working paper is \$4.00 and may be ordered by sending a check, made payable to "UC Regents," to: Center for Environmental Design Research, 390 Wurster Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720 (415-642-2896).

**EcoSocialist Review** is the quarterly publication of the Environmental Commission of the Democratic Socialists of America. The editors welcome "contributions of news and commentary on anything remotely having to do with socialism and ecology." Themes for coming issues include "Cultural Ecology" and "Pacific Rim." Annual subscription is \$8. Address: 1608 N. Milwaukee, 4th floor, Chicago, IL 60647 (312-752-3562).

The **Earth Ethics Research Group** is an international non-governmental organization that supports research in environmental ethics. The group is "a pluralistic forum which encourages a diversity of viewpoints." EERG publishes a newsletter, *Earth Ethics Forum*. Write: George Bortynk, EERG, 13938 85th Terrace North, Seminole, Florida 34646 (813-397-9042).

**TRANET**, the Transnational Network for Appropriate/Alternative Technologies, is a bi-monthly newsletter and directory of individuals and groups "who are participating in transformation, people who are changing the world by changing their own lives, and people who are adapting alternative technologies." Write: TRANET, Box 567, Rangeley, ME 04970 U.S.A. (207-864-2252).

The **E. F. Schumacher Society**, founded in 1980, promotes the humanistic economics of E. F. Schumacher, author of *Small Is Beautiful*. The Society seeks to be a gathering place and clearing house for information that might help to "restructure our economic systems to lead toward a more equitable, humane, and decent world." Address: Box 76, RD 3, Great Barrington, MA 01230 (413-528-1737).

The **Institute of Traditional Studies** explores the contribution that a modern-day understanding of sacred geometry might offer to environmental design. The Institute seeks to find ways whereby present-day architecture might contribute to healing the earth, helping the impoverished and homeless, and restoring a sacred dimension to human life. Address: Dr. Robert Meurant, Institute of Traditional Studies, P.O. Box 143, Whangamat, New Zealand (tel. 00-649-410-8703).



### ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS & PLACE: CALL FOR PAPERS

*The National Geographical Journal of India* will feature a special 1993 issue on "Environmental Ethics & Power of Place." Interested contributors are asked to submit an article title and abstract (150 words) by March, 1992, and full papers by October, 1992. Write: Prof. Rana P. B. Singh, *National Geographical Journal of India*, No. B29/12A Lanka, Varanasi, U.P. 221005, INDIA.



## CITATIONS RECEIVED

Wayne Attoe and Robert Mugerauer, 1991. Excellent Studio Teaching in Architecture, *Studies in Higher Education*, 16, 1, 41-50.

Based on interviews with 20 faculty who have won awards for teaching excellence in design studios, this article identifies 14 qualities that appear to contribute to effective studio teaching. Clustered around the three larger themes of "teacher as self," "personal style," and "course format," these qualities include, for example, vitality for teaching, genuine engagement with subject matter and methods of design, belief and mission, personal interest in course, and sense of collegiality among students. The authors emphasize that their study results do not lend themselves to making policy or teaching evaluation but, rather, might "help teachers who are dissatisfied with their teaching... to modify their approaches."

Arnold Berleant, 1991. *Art and Engagement*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. ISBN 0-87722-797-7.

This philosopher explores "how appreciation of the arts, like their creation and performance, involves active participation." The book considers "how participatory engagement influences landscape painting, architecture, environmental design, literature, music, dance and film."

Gerald L. Pocius, 1991. *A Place to Belong: Community Order and Everyday Space in Calvert, Newfoundland*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

This book explores how this Newfoundland village's "physical and social structure is shaped by shared concerns about the community's livelihood and welfare"--for example, "the use of an annual lottery to allocate fishing berths."

James A. Swan, ed., 1991. *The Power of Place: Sacred Ground in Natural and Human Environments*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books. ISBN 0-8356-0670-8. \$14.95, softcover.

This edited collection includes 25 articles originally given as presentations at the 1988 and 1989 Spirit of Place symposiums (see *EAP*, vol. I, no. 1). Major headings around which the articles are organized include: "The Meaning of Place," "Traditional Views of Place," "Ancient and Modern Geomancies," and "The Spirit of Place in Modern Times."



## NOTEWORTHY READINGS

Christopher Alexander, 1991. A New Way of Looking, *Hali*, vol. 13, no. 2 (April), pp. 114-125.

Published in *Hali*, an "international magazine of fine carpets and rugs," this article discusses the aims of Alexander's exhibition of early Turkish Rugs held last fall at San Francisco's DeYoung Museum in conjunction with the sixth International Conference on Oriental Carpets (see *EAP*, spring 1991). The key question asked in this article is "What makes these carpets great?" He answers that "A great carpet--when I stand before it--makes me feel the force of my own life." He goes on to relate this force to any creative act, including architecture:

In architecture, as in the art of carpets, the main question is this--can I make something which has its own life?...The buildings of recent decades have not attempted this. Instead, the modern movement and the so-called post-modernists have tried to reach some strange imaginary criterion of art where they can trade compliments as part of an in-club. But they fail completely to deal with this task of making a thing that has life, or which makes you experience your own life intensely.

This phase is doomed. It is a silly thing, which has lasted a few decades and is now dying. Very soon, we shall once again be part of a world view in the art of building, in which the main task is to make things which intensify our lives, buildings which make us feel our life and our existence more vividly, more intensely.

The full account of Alexander's understanding of these rugs and their significance for design, including architecture, will be published as *A Foreshadowing of 21st Century Art: The Color and Geometry of Very Early Turkish Carpets* (NY: Oxford Univ. Press).

*EAP* readers might also be interested to know that the January-February 1991 issue of the Indian design journal *Architecture + Design* features an interview with Alexander conducted by Bombay architect Avani Parikh. For *EAP* readers interested in Alexander's latest design work, see the report on four of his recent projects in the July 1991 issue of *Progressive Architecture*. These works include two houses; the Julian Street Inn, a center for the homeless in San Jose, CA; and the New Eishen School, a \$13 million, 30-building high school and college campus outside Tokyo Japan. The issue also includes an "Architectural Manifesto" by Alexander.



## NOTEWORTHY READINGS

Patrick M. Condon, 1991. Radical Romanticism. *Landscape Journal*, 10 (spring), 3-8.

Writing in a special issue of *Landscape Journal* devoted to the "Avant-Garde," this landscape architect argues that current landscape design reflects two diametrically opposed approaches--the "poststructural" and "radical romantic." Condon concludes that the poststructuralists, best represented by Bernard Tshumi's *Parc de la Villette*, "seem only to recognize the problems consequent to language's lack of solid substance, but they can offer no progressive response, only more alienation and ennui..." (p. 8). Siding with radical romanticism, Condon argues that the approach "breaks free of despair through a rediscovery of a category of experience that is truly substantial: human relations with the earth itself" (p. 8).

Paterson, Douglas, 1991. Fostering the Avant-Garde Within. *Landscape Journal*, 10, (spring), 27-36.

This landscape architect attacks most current efforts in landscape design, including the work of Robert Smithson, Robert Morris, Mary Miss, and Martha Schwartz. Paterson calls for landscape design that emphasizes "human beings, nature, experience, and specific places. These places do not shock or surprise--they delight. They inform us without snobbery, arrogance, or conceit. They invite us in to think, to feel, and to love--not merely to observe. This is, after all, the way we create great gardens" (p. 35).

The article includes creative juxtapositions of landscape photographs--for example, the Basin of Apollo (said to be, like the rest of Versailles, "imbued with myth, mystery, and a sense of wonder.... Ideas, energies, and ideals abound in this scene") vs. the Disneyland entrance capped by a huge plastic figure of Mickey Mouse ("despite being the most famous icon of both modern and postmodern times, he represents little more than some vague, childlike fantasy of eternal happiness in a world of escapism. Much of the work of the Disney organization and similar modern landscapes for entertainment take on either a kitsch or an avant-garde-like behavior or appearance").

Nicholas Markovich, Wolfgang Preisner, & Fred Sturm, 1990. *Pueblo Style and Regional Architecture*. NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold. ISBN 0-442-31896-0.

This collection of 21 essays examines "the complex interplay of culture and design in New Mexico" (p. 1). Several of the articles contribute to a phenomenology of region, place, and world-grounded-in-region--for example, Fred Sturm's "Aesthetics of the Southwest;" Tony Anella's "Learning from the Pueblos;" Louis Hieb's "The Metaphors of Hopi Architectural Experience;" Tsiporah Lipton's "Tewa Visions of Space;" and Rina Swentzell's "Pueblo Space, Form, and Mythology"

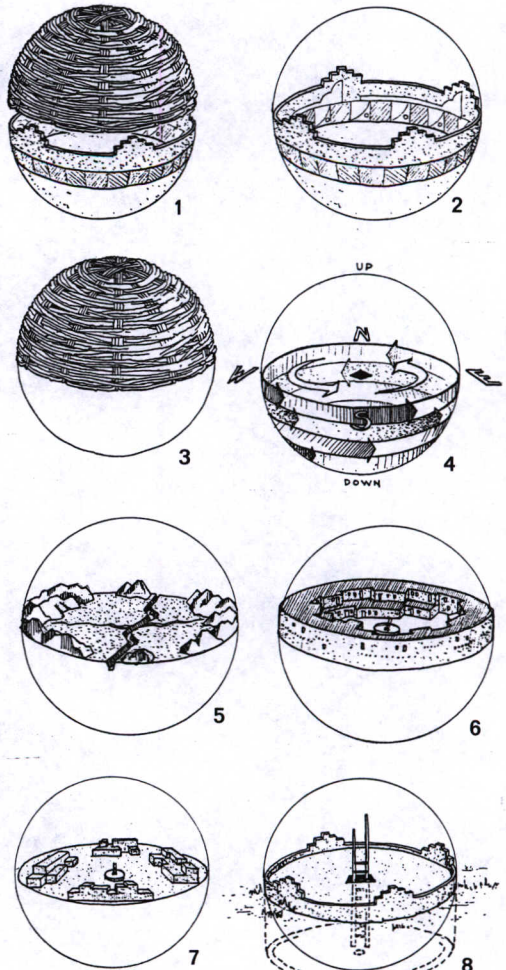
In chapter 1, "Overview," V. B. Price presents a list of questions that the articles, as a whole, suggest. Some of these questions, in slightly revised order, are reproduced in the box on page 5. In regard to these questions, Price suggests the following possibilities:

When viewed as a whole, this volume suggests that the usefulness of regional style architecture in New Mexico is suspended today in a polarity that has at one end an excess of zeal in promoting Revival styles and at the other end a cynical disregard for the emotional and symbolic importance of regional styles in maintaining the unique cultural landscape of New Mexico.... On one side is the meaning of regionalism as a symbol of identity, of psychological nurture, as a container and preserver of self-evolving culture, and as an act of homage in gratitude for the wisdom and richness of the Pueblo and Hispanic traditions. On the other side we see regionalism as purely an economic force, as a gentrifying compromiser of vernacular culture, as a marketing device, and, paradoxically, as a chief opponent of the national franchise, fad and formula architecture that is inundating the rest of the nation's localities, but unfortunately also as an inhibitor of creativity.

Perhaps the synthesis some seek is, indeed, an evolving, organic regionalism. Such a synthesis would be one in which existing vernacular cultures and their people are deemed to be more important than zone-enforced building styles. But regionally sensitive design zoning would in turn be viewed as contributing both to a contemporary architecture respectful of context and to a local expression that neutralizes the homogenizing influences of global aesthetic fashion and architecture as forms of bureaucratic utility and corporate advertising. Such a synthesis would be guided by the spirit of self-respecting open-mindedness that is the hallmark of the best of New Mexico's cultural heritage (pp. 6-7).

Though they apply nominally to the difficult tension among New Mexico's pre-Columbian, Hispanic, & Anglo traditions, Price's questions also relate to other regions, places, and building traditions:

- Is there a fundamental discontinuity or a continuity of spirit between ancient and vernacular forms and New Mexico revival styles?
- What are the functional & symbolic differences between vernacular models, high-style regional architecture based on those models, & mass-produced suburban products that allude to them both?
- Is there an inherent conflict, an economic and semantic clash, between the meaning of symbolic and nostalgic forms and the architectural packaging of public relations tourist imagery?
- Can historic preservation conserve cultural iconography without freezing cultural imagery in the past & blocking the design flexibility financially impoverished cultures must exhibit to survive?
- What are the major differences among archaeological ruins, vernacular building traditions, and regional revival styles with respect to the influence they might have on contemporary architectural practices?
- Is regionalism in architecture irrevocably bound to mass-market tourism, or does it have higher cultural, educational, and psychological functions?
- What are the implications of the differences between architecture as sculptural form and architecture as the moral and cosmological symbol it is among the Pueblos?
- Are architecturally traditional Hopi villages more culturally secure than modernized Zuni Pueblos, or, in other words, does architecture not only contain culture but also shape and reinforce it?
- Given its deeply materialistic culture, is it possible for "European" America to develop a cosmologically symbolic architecture as the Pueblos have done? Or, to ask the question another way, can buildings of symbolic significance contribute to the creation of a new social ethos?
- Is architecture as memory doomed to be replaced by architecture of commerce?



Drawings by Jeremiah Iowa from Rina Swentzell's essay, "Pueblo Space, Form, and Mythology," in Markovich, Preiser, and Sturm's *Pueblo Style and Regional Architecture* (p. 23, 24, 28). The drawings show the many ways in which an image of a spherical cosmos helps to organize the Pueblo world: (1) sky basket (top) & earth bowl (bottom); (2) earth bowl; (3) sky basket; (4) four levels and six directions; (5) the cardinal landscape; (6) houses, plaza, and kiva; (7) the town: houses, plaza, and kiva; (8) kiva.



## BOOK REVIEW

Christian Norberg-Schulz, 1988. *New World Architecture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press.

This short book is a revised version of three lectures on American architecture given by Christian Norberg-Schulz at the Architectural League of New York in 1987.

The lectures restate many of the insights that Norberg-Schulz has presented in his remarkable phenomenological studies over the past twenty years. Yet, of special interest in these lectures is his more concerted effort to incorporate into his phenomenological account of the house and of the city an appreciation of the building and dwelling especially characteristic of the modern and contemporary world. He observes that the modern world is an "open" world which resists the stabilizing, systematizing, and hierarchizing tendencies of closed traditional societies. American culture, in particular, has celebrated an "open" world, and the associated existential meanings have been compellingly concretized in the building up of American society.

In the lecture on "The House," Norberg-Schulz shows how Jefferson, in the design of his own home, Monticello, modified the classical vocabulary in ways that manifested the American virtue of "openness." Jefferson used porches, bay windows, and terraces to open the interior of the house to the natural world in an "active" way that was not characteristic of the classicism in the Palladian tradition. What is more, he used classical columns and pediments not so much to define a figural whole as to define directions and individual places. Writes Norberg-Schulz: "The point of departure is not the wish for creating an articulate, plastic body of the traditional classical kind but to define a composition of spaces. The open world of America was thereby expressed; it was understood and visualized for the first time." Jefferson was the first in a long line of American architects—including Wright, Venturi, and Stern—who have designed houses that have profoundly corresponded to the distinctive openness and freedom of movement of the modern American experience.

In the lecture on "The City," Norberg-Schulz examines how the meanings of American life have been made manifest in the building of the American city. Old World cities emphasized place; the path or

street in the European city "led to a goal where the purpose of the movement was explained as part of a closed systems of meanings." In the American city, however, "the street becomes the primary fact," thus concretizing a different set of existential meanings: movement, change, flux, openness, freedom, possibility, and opportunity.

The primacy of the street in the American town or city was already in evidence in such apparently Old World towns as Williamsburg. Norberg-Schulz observes that the main artery, Duke of Gloucester Street, is a long, broad avenue, and "although it has a public building at either end and a Market Square in the middle, there is hardly any feeling of an enclosed, urban space in the traditional European sense." He adds that "The plan of Williamsburg is laid out in relation to goals, but at the same time it expresses a new sense of infinite space."

The triumph of path over place in the American city was accomplished with the gridiron plan. Lewis Mumford had bitterly criticized the design element as essentially nihilistic, but Norberg-Schulz defends the grid, praising it as fully manifesting the American spirit. Streets and avenues which go "nowhere" as in New York and Chicago express the American commitment to an open and dynamic world in which people create their own identities and destinies. Furthermore, the urban grid represents a stark refusal of unearned privilege: each building or cluster of buildings must earn its distinction within the egalitarian framework of the checkerboard pattern.

After examining in greater detail the nature and history of American urban architecture and design, Norberg-Schulz concludes that the American city "represents a valid alternative to the traditional European city." These splendid lectures represent an advance in our understanding and appreciation of the existential meanings concretized in modern and contemporary architecture and design.

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## A DECEPTIVE NEIGHBORHOOD: THE SOUNDSCAPE OF TORONTO'S LOWER FOREST HILL

R. Murray Schafer

*R. Murray Schafer is a Canadian composer and writer well known for his influential The Tuning of the World, which has been translated into several languages. He is also the former director of the World Soundscape Project, a research group concerned with sonic environments (see box on p. 9).*

There is no doubt that some people sense more acutely with their ears than their eyes, at least when it comes to sensations of pleasure or pain. Sounds hit the ears with an immediacy that provokes instant emotional reactions.

Throughout my life, I have chosen or rejected places to live on the basis of whether the soundscape would be attractive or at least tolerable, rejecting those near airports, main roads, or with hear-through walls. I have also left places because they were too noisy, and suspect that my behavior is not unique. There are times when a beautiful visual environment can be totally destroyed by ugly noises, no matter how transient they may be.

The polluting acoustics of the city are increasingly difficult to avoid and by now they have rubbed their way thoroughly into the older residential parts of the city no matter how elegant the houses or how pretty the gardens may appear. So it was when I left Toronto a few years ago after having lived for two years in an area referred to by its inhabitants, somewhat wishfully, as "lower Forest Hill."

This is an old neighborhood of large houses, large gardens and very large beautiful old maple and chestnut trees. I chose Forest Hill because it looked sedate and not too thickly-populated. Here, at least, I thought I could be insulated in a large thick-walled

old room in winter and camouflaged in a secret corner of the garden in summer.

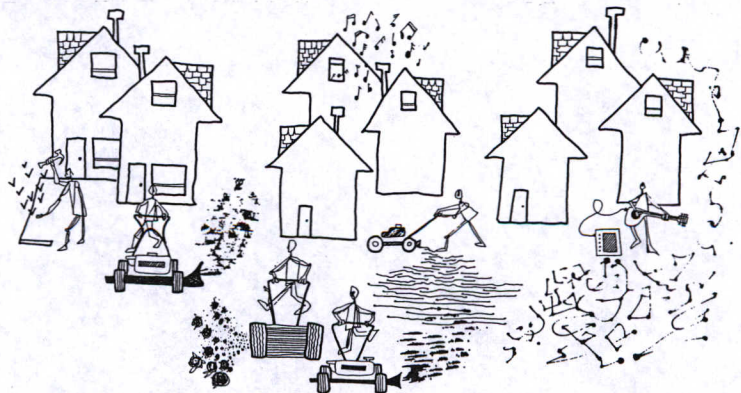
Actually, the area is much noisier than many other parts of Toronto. The houses need frequent repairs. Many of them are now passing from their original families to new owners, who wish to make significant changes: sun porches, family rooms, larger windows, and landscaping. There are even cases of people's buying houses only to flatten them and totally rebuild.

This means that the neighborhood suffers continuous construction noise, which everyone tolerates knowing that his turn will be next. You can hardly complain about a neighbor's backhoe when you are waiting the arrival of your own cement mixer.

The roots of the old trees often get into the city's sewer system and the branches interfere with the telephone and water lines. Frequently, whole trees have to be taken out limb by limb in order not to destroy anyone's property. This work can keep a chain-saw crew occupied for a week.

These are sounds much more rare in young areas of the city where the vegetation is less developed or non-existent. Other sounds are different too: for instance, swimming pools.

I used to be able to see four swimming pools from my lower window in Forest Hill. In each case, large





old trees had been rooted out to make room for them. The rustling of leaves was replaced all summer by the competing hums of these pools, to which at night was added the hefty vibrations of countless air conditioners—which everyone had.

These sounds would be less pronounced in newer suburbs. I used to notice this fact on visits to my brother's house in Markham. In a new development, there is little road or sewer repair work to be done. The owners have not yet grown tired of their homes and have not yet begun to remodel them. There are few swimming pools. They will come after the mortgages are paid off.

Another difference is in ways of gardening. Lawn mowers remain the same but, while everyone in the suburbs cuts his own grass, in Forest Hill no one did. They had Portuguese or Greek gardeners who arrived often at 7:30 am and went from one lawn to the next, finishing at about noon.

In the suburbs, lawns are cut after work or on weekends; here, one hears the recital over orange juice.

I believe that there is no reason for a society to call itself "advanced" when it has made no effort to silence the power lawn mower—a device now almost 50 years old. The price of one concert ticket added to the cost of a lawn mower could provide a muffler sufficient to reduce noise emission by 20 decibels.

One professional-gardening instrument that has not yet made its way to the private arsenal is the leaf blower—one of the most thoughtless inventions of modern civilization. It is debatable whether this device clears leaves and grass better than a rake; it is certain that this noisy contraption destroys the hearing of their operators.

Only a brutish society would allow itself to be awakened each morning to such non-natural noises as these without a murmur of protest. Gone is the careful shaping of vegetation that once marked the gardener's art. Grass is shaved, flowers are chopped, and anything else is shredded. Finally, the debris is blown around in circles in a vague attempt to make piles.

The characteristic autumn sound of leaf raking has been replaced in lower Forest Hill by the howling of the blower. And there is an abundance of leaves from the large old trees to make mighty work for the lawn men.

I used to notice how they would often drive up in their trucks again in the late afternoon to step out and blow the leaves off the driveways so that their patrons will have a nice, clean place to park when they come home from the office.

Such operations must, of course, be performed daily from early October until the first snowfall when snow plowing begins. The old autumnal smell of burning leaves, so strong in my childhood memories, has been replaced by city trucks with huge nozzles and an incredible scream. These trucks move through the streets to suck up leaves and pulp them.

Autumn is also a time for draining swimming pools. Maintenance men arrived with pumps that roared continuously for three hours. The reverse occurred in May when the same men cleaned and filled the pools. These two sounds framed the summer in lower Forest Hill as faithfully as the flocks of migrating Canada geese frame the seasons of the rural soundscape.

There were many other characteristic sounds in Forest Hill that distinguished it from other parts of Toronto. Most of the neighborhood canines were large and looked like guard dogs. None of these dogs stayed out all night, so at about eight a.m., their owners would let them out.

Since these owners were off to work by nine, and since they would not consider "disturbing the neighborhood" by leaving the dogs to bark all day, they were presumably put back inside before the owners left. The only other time the dogs barked was about 10:30 p.m. when they were taken out for their evening walks. One rarely heard a dog earlier in the evening because the owner had gone out for the evening. And only rarely would a neighborhood party spill out over the block to keep one awake all night.

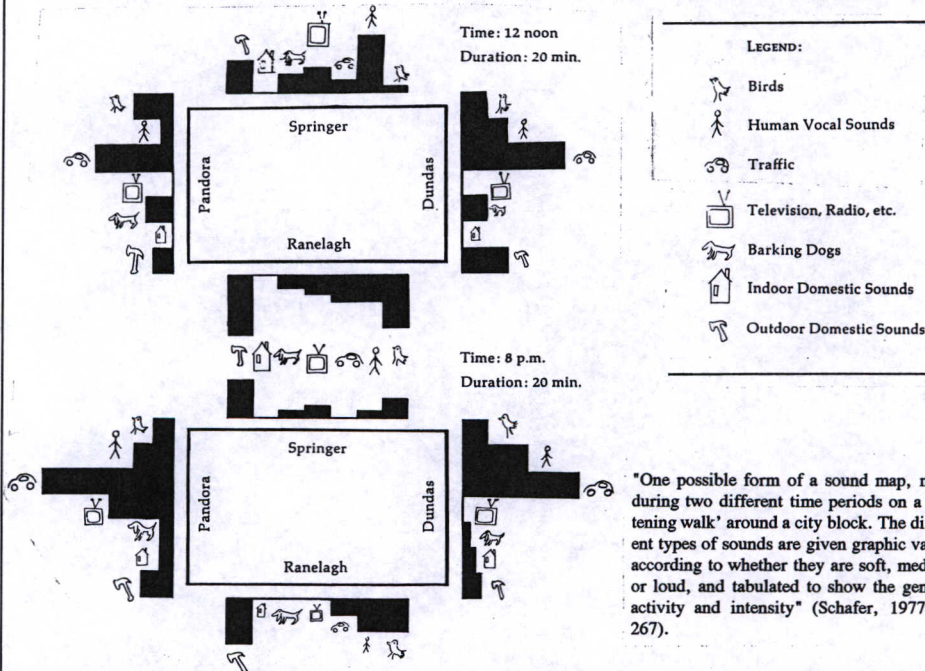
All together it was a deceptive neighborhood, quiet and respectful, in one way, but, in another way, far more ferocious than many other parts of the city. The noises were part of the technological transformation experienced by all older parts of Toronto in which decaying properties and utilities are repaired.

What amazed me was the evident faith that—since money procures, among other things, peace and quiet—the residents had acquired that condition by buying in the best part of town. They seemed dead scared to admit they were stuck in a world that, soundwise, was as painful as pleasurable.



The work of R. Murray Schafer and the World Soundscape Project is central to any phenomenology of environmental experience, particularly in regard to the soundscape. Here, we provide a sampling of publications. For a complete list up to 1982, see Torigoe below. Some of these publications are available in reprint editions from: Arcana Editions, Indian River, Ontario K0L 2B0 CANADA:

- R. Murray Schafer, 1970. *The Book of Noise*. Wellington, New Zealand: Price Milburn.
- R. Murray Schafer, 1973. *The Music of the Environment*. Geneva: Unesco.
- R. Murray Schafer, 1977. *The Tuning of the World*. New York: Knopf.
- R. Murray Schafer, ed., 1977. *Five Village Soundscapes*. Vancouver: A.R.C. Publications.
- R. Murray Schafer, ed., 1977. *European Sound Diary*. Vancouver: A.R.C. Publications.
- R. Murray Schafer, Acoustic Space, 1985. In D. Seamon & R. Mugerauer, eds. *Dwelling, Place and Environment*, pp. 87-98. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Keiko Torigoe, 1982. A Study of the World Soundscape Project. York University, Master's Thesis.
- Barry Truax, ed., 1978. *Handbook for Acoustic Ecology*. Vancouver: A.R.C. Publications.



"One possible form of a sound map, made during two different time periods on a 'listening walk' around a city block. The different types of sounds are given graphic values according to whether they are soft, medium or loud, and tabulated to show the general activity and intensity" (Schafer, 1977, p. 267).

Recently, present and former members of the World Soundscape Project have begun a regular publication, *The Soundscape Newsletter*, which seeks readers who are concerned about the quality of the contemporary soundscape, the quality of listening, and those who are actively addressing issues such as acoustic ecology, acoustic design, noise, and silence in a "muzak-ridden" world." The prospectus reads:

The publication of this newsletter comes at a time when interest in the soundscape is on the increase, in tandem with a growing concern for the world's ecological balance in general and for the balance of the acoustic environment specifically. It seems appropriate, therefore, to establish... a "Soundscape Community" through which we can get to know each other, combine our varied expertise and knowledge, work more effectively.... (pp.1-2).

A subscription is \$10/year. Write: The World Soundscape Project, Department of Communication, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B. C. Canada V5A 1S6.



# THE MUTUAL IMPENETRABILITY OF WORLD DISCOURSE

J. Douglas Porteous

*J. Douglas Porteous is a Canadian geographer known for his studies of the sensual dimensions of human environmental experience, which he has most thoroughly discussed in his recently-published Landscapes of the Mind: Worlds of Sense and Metaphor (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). The following essay relates to his earlier book, Planned to Death: The Annihilation of a Place Called Howdendyke (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), which describes Porteous' native English village of Howdendyke, irrevocably changed because of economic development imposed by private, regional, and national interests. From this book, we reproduce a map of Howdendyke, c.1800, and maps that show planned changes in the village for 1960 and 1985, a period during which the character of the village shifted dramatically, mostly for the worse.*

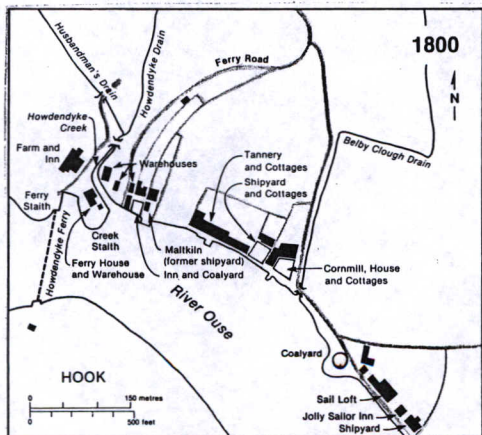
The world-views of the powerless differ considerably from those of the powerful. In particular, the planned-for inhabit a universe of discourse which is alien to the planners who regulate their lives (Lipman, 1974, Porteous 1977).

Recently, I investigated the process whereby "planners" (in this case a cabal of business corporations, politicians, and bureaucrats) are legally destroying an English village to replace it with an industrial park (Porteous, 1989). As part of a project to record the feelings of both planners and villagers, I made an attempt to promote dialogue between the two groups. I felt this to be important because the planners had signally failed to foster any form of public participation. Indeed, in terms of Arnstein's (1969) "ladder of citizen participation," the planning process corresponded to rungs 1 ("manipulation") and

2 ("therapy") of the eight-stage progression toward full citizen involvement.

As other modes of participatory research (Wisner, Stea and Kruks 1991) proved impossible to organize, I settled on a "go-between" format. First, I depth-interviewed both the remaining villagers and those already relocated, with a focus on the continuing destruction of the village. The material derived from these interviews was collated and condensed to create a text representing the villagers' opinions. The underlying themes were: grief at the destruction of their community; anger that the process had been imposed upon them without consultation; and despair that, despite strenuous protests, the destruction was still continuing. This text was used as a basis for semi-formal discussions with the planners (corporate directors and managers, existing and former politicians, and housing, health and planning officials). In contrast to the impassioned language of the villagers, the planners spoke in measured tones, rehearsing the apparently irresistible, impersonal forces which compelled them to destroy the village for the economic good of the region.

These responses were in turn collated and condensed to produce a second text, which was presented to the villagers in a series of re-interviews. Reactions varied, but most villagers expressed bafflement that such imponderables as "international market forces" or "the national interest" could be the motive forces for the destruction of the concrete reality of their lives—homes, gardens, favorite walks, webs of neighboring, and a whole well-loved landscape. The feeling was that the planners, spoken of as a faceless "them," had failed to address the villagers' greatest concern—the loss of the physical structures in which





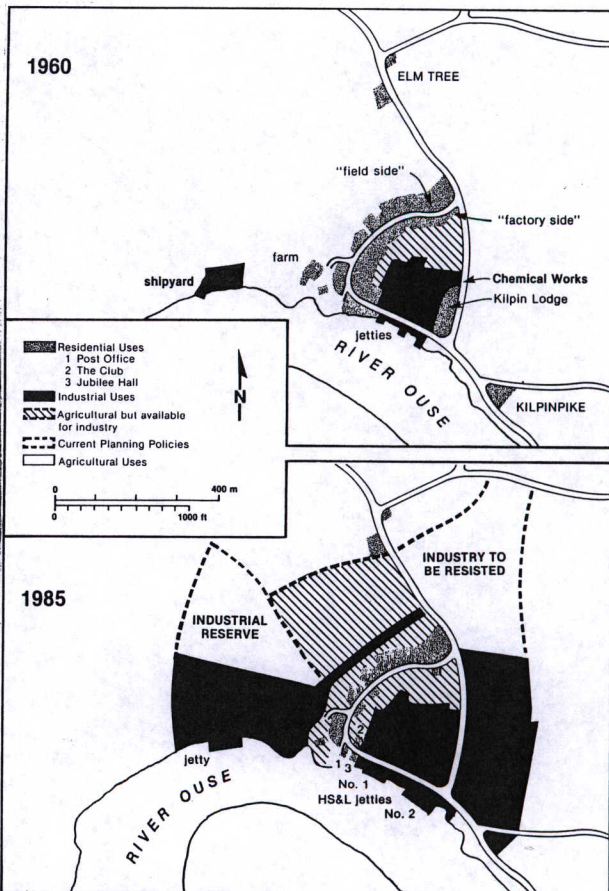
their multigenerational way of life was embedded.

I regret that the project failed to promote dialogue between the planners (educated, powerful non-residents acting as agents for wider constituencies) and the villagers (poorly-educated, deferent, working-class people with interests largely local). As the go-between (a difficult position, as L.P. Hartley has demonstrated), I found myself battering at alternate walls of indifference and incomprehension.

The planners spoke universally of concepts such as unemployment, location theory, site selection, market forces, regional and national interests, the highest and best use of land, and "the general good." To them the village was space; for many of them, indeed, it was merely map space. They were uncomfortable when told that to the villagers the village was a place, a repository of memory, activity, and love, a known and comfortable world. These feelings were regarded as "sentimental." As one politician said, "We can compensate for housing-value, but we cannot compensate for sentiment." The planners could not empathize with villagers' desire to remain old, dilapidated homes when modern houses in a nearby town were being offered as alternatives. Indeed, some planners justified manipulating the villagers in terms of the supposed therapy of providing good public housing elsewhere.

In this case, impact of the go-between technique was minimal. The social, administrative, and imaginative distance between the two groups was too wide to bridge. Even when power elites try to understand the positions of the powerless, they are unable to "feel" such positions, and readily dismiss them as self-serving and narrow in outlook. Irony indeed.

The villager is concerned with "being" in a world that is concrete, warm, and local. The planner, *qua* planner, adopts a persona that is abstract, impersonal, and universalist. For powerless residents, love makes space place. But the powerful, working in a world of intangibles, see place chiefly as space.



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## ETHICS OUT OF PLACE

Anthony Weston

Recent essays in *EAP* have discussed a variety of values that might be embodied in built environments. In general, there is agreement that architectural forms can and should express such ethical values as respect for nature, respect for other people, "voluntary simplicity," and experiential richness.<sup>1</sup>

I am at least as struck, however, by the converse effect. That is, the character of our architectural forms—in general, the character of the places and spaces they open up—shapes ethical values in turn. Certain rooms can be designed, for example, so that respect for other people in them is seriously compromised. Eastern European courtrooms seat the judge and prosecutor high above the accused and his or her defender. This room already carries the message "guilty!" Or our familiar classrooms, with fixed student seats laid out in rows below the instructor's dias, require resistance at every turn if the students are not to be condemned to distant passivity. If values shape such rooms, such rooms also shape values. Think of Quaker meeting halls, however, or (some) seminar rooms, and it is quite clear that it is possible to build a basic equality and mutual respect into the structure of a room. Let me emphasize again, however, that this structure does not merely express "equality" but also helps to create it.<sup>2</sup>

What I want to suggest here is a similar effect with respect to the values of place and of natural environments in particular. One effect of modern "placelessness" is to undercut and destroy the *values* of place (of particular natural places, and of place as such) to the point that even our attempts to recover the values of place tend to be carried out in self-defeating ways.

For one thing, it has been widely noted that the homogeneity of modern building has the effect of devaluing the heterogeneity of place. Not surprisingly, this homogeneity is most marked in the realm of transportation, which is also the primary medium for the "overcoming" of place. Our superhighways, motels, commercial strips, gas stations, and so forth make travelers feel that they are in the same place wherever they go. It is not just the "cheap" character of so much of this environment that is discouraging. It is also the sheer sameness. One can drive all the

way across the country without being struck once by something unique. And where every place is the same, no particular place means very much.

Still more perversely, much modern building seems to be dedicated to the sheer exclusion of natural place. Public buildings are built either without windows at all, or with fortress-like slits for protection from break-in. Even when one can see outside, the windows typically don't open: so we cannot feel the breezes, smell the lingering scent of the azaleas or the electricity of the coming storm, or hear the birds or the rising wind. At best we are reduced to vision (and a reduced form of vision at that). We will be charmed by the breezes and the smells of the flowers when we do sense them: walking between buildings on a lucky errand, maybe. But the message carried by the exclusion of these buildings from the places where we spend most of our time is that these places are no part of the important business of life.

One more example. Between the homogenization and the exclusion of place lies what we might call the *confusion* of place. Many subdivisions are now built by bulldozing all the natural vegetation and by reshaping the lay of the land itself to the whim and needs of the builder. Then houses are put up, in a style determined mostly by construction-company fads. "Plantings" are left to the new owners. So one has, maybe, a former Long Island potato field full of neo-Grecian houses and some struggling Japanese maples and Kentucky bluegrass. Where are we? I think that this confusion of place is psychologically unsettling: perhaps bad conscience over what was destroyed; at least simple disorientation. Maybe this is why even those areas left "natural" in such developments have to be completely reconstructed into managed parks or "recreation areas." Nothing of the original character of the place can be left.

Our way of building, then, clearly shapes our values. Partly on account of our way of building itself, the distinctness of place matters less, "nature" is relegated to the peripheries of our ethical lives as well as of our physical lives, and the wild world that commands respect because of its difference is replaced by a lawn-world that can be rearranged by a



simple call to the "landscape contractor".

Our values, we might say, have an "ecology": they do not transcend the worlds out of which they arise. The effects of the exclusion of the larger world from our lives may even shape entire philosophies. English philosopher Mary Midgley points out that existentialism, for example, is above all an *urban* philosophy.

The really monstrous thing about Existentialism is its proceeding as if the world contained only dead matter (things) on the one hand and fully rational, educated, adult human beings on the other—as if there were no other life-forms. The impression of desertion or abandonment which existentialists have is due, I am sure, not to the removal of God, but to this contemptuous dismissal of almost the whole of the biosphere—plants, animals, and children. Life shrinks to a few urban rooms; no wonder it becomes absurd.<sup>3</sup>

"Urban" may not be the right category—after all, cities do at least contain children—but the point becomes even more appropriate if we consider that academic environments—the places where we are expected to "do" and teach ethics—do exclude everyone and everything but "rational, educated, adult human beings." Even our bodies are not fully welcome. I have never worked in an academic building that was actually comfortable, even in the "lounge."

This leads to my final, most distressing point. It is precisely in these academic settings that philosophers now try to develop and teach "environmental ethics": that is, some form of respect for nature and, correspondingly, some form of respect for place. Yet these settings are among the most relentlessly placeless in the modern world. I think it not surprising, then, that much of the environmental ethics offered by contemporary philosophers is very often the most abstract, wholly intellectual construction, with all of the defects of the placeless places of its origin.

Contemporary environmental ethics tends to homogenize all types of natural places and values under a single ethical principle. This is now even insisted upon as a kind of conceptual requirement.<sup>4</sup> The predominant point of view very seldom takes other animals or "place of power" seriously enough to allow them a voice in the shaping of what is nonetheless advertised as an ethic "for" them.<sup>5</sup> As a matter of professional principle, this perspective even regards the actual experience of values in nature as suspicious.<sup>6</sup> At any rate, such experience is rarely discussed in the environmental-ethics literature. How

many times I have walked to my evening classes watching the blazing Long Island sunset, only to lose sight and thought of it as I am pulled into our windowless lecture building—even as I plan to discuss the values of nature! But what the literature offers fits the building, not the sky the building hides.

We must begin to build, then, in *placeful* ways—not merely to express the new-found values of place but also to make such values even *possible*. We must not be forced to think and teach about the values of nature in places from which nature is relentlessly excluded. Last year, for example, when I was teaching a small seminar in the philosophy of nature, we finally left the classroom entirely and met for several sessions in a wigwam in a nearby state park. We discussed the Native American idea that "The Earth is Alive"—an idea close to senseless in our classroom. But in a wigwam, cold with a small fire, the slow rain, and the calls of some nearby wild geese, our voices interweaving among the animals', the mists from our breath and the steam from our up joining the fog and the curling smoke—then we were closer to the reality of the Indian world. The notion of "Earth as Alive" seemed natural.

The Indians were only stating what for them was obvious. That the world itself was alive was an everyday experience that hardly needed to be thematized at all, until they encountered another people who, incredibly, had somehow missed it. Our challenge, once again, is to build in ways that not only express such values but that also help to create and to sustain them.

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#### NOTES

1. E.g., *EAP*, 2, 2 (1991) 5-7, 11-13.
2. On classroom design, see my "Uncovering the 'Hidden Curriculum,'" *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy*, 90, 2 (Winter 1991), 36-42.
3. Mary Midgley, *Beast and Man* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), pp. 18-19.
4. E.g., J. Baird Callicott, "The Case Against Moral Pluralism," *Environmental Ethics*, 12 (1990), 99-124.
5. For discussion, see Jim Cheney, "Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology," *Environmental Ethics*, 9 (1987), 99-124.
6. See Eric Katz, "Searching for Intrinsic Value: Pragmatism and Despair in Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics*, 9 (1987), 231-41.



# PLACE, POSTMODERN LANDSCAPES, AND HETEROTOPIA

Edward Relph

*The following selection by geographer Edward Relph originally appeared in the Canadian Geographer (1991, vo. 35, no. 1, pp. 98-105) as part of an extended review of David Harvey's The Condition of Postmodernity (1989), Philip Cooke's Back to the Future (1990), and Edward Soja's Postmodern Geographies (1989). Here, with the permission of the Canadian Association of Geographers, we reprint the last section of Relph's review, which provides a precise and helpful picture of place in our "postmodern" times.*

If I were to choose a single word to describe post-modern geography as it is manifest in actual places and landscapes, it would be *heterotopia*. This word originates with Michel Foucault (1970), and it is picked up by Harvey (1989) and Soja (1989), who use it briefly to refer to the fragmentary and apparently incongruous spaces of post-modernity, such as the diverse ethnic districts of Los Angeles. It is described by Cooke (1990) as a space in which the drawing of definite centers, boundaries, and regularities is impossible. These are interesting comments, but for me, they do not go nearly far enough.

For Foucault, heterotopia is a space with a multitude of localities containing things so different that it is impossible to find a common logic for them, a space in which everything is somehow out of place. It consists of geographical non-sequiturs, and "disorder in which the fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately... without law or geometry" (Foucault, 1970, p. xvii). This should be enough to make anyone think of Disneyworld, or perhaps an evening of network television. But what happens when the imagineered logic of Disneyworld becomes the logic of the rest of the world?

In the late 20th century an immense power exists to produce, invent, manage, control, and destroy places at all scales; this power transforms the old meanings of time and space, history can be reconstructed in such things as pioneer villages, and the idea of geographical context everywhere becomes obscured. The manifestations of this confusion of time and place are already so commonplace that they appear as unremarkable.

Yet consider, for example, the sorts of restaurants you might see in a 19th-century commercial block in many Canadian cities--Indian, Italian, Vietnamese, Mexican, American, and so on. Some will probably be franchises, some perhaps with facades supposedly

designed to fit in and others the standardized outlets hooked into continent-wide networks; some probably belong to international family businesses. Some beam in sporting events by satellite. All are connected to local ethnic communities. Some cater primarily to tourists, but none has anything to do with the original meanings of the architecture and street. What is locality here? What would it mean to say that these restaurants are in or out of context? Quite frankly, I have no idea.

Nothing is new about cultural diversity in particular places, of course, though its intensity may now be greater than ever before. Diversity is, however, only a small part of the matter. Heterotopia is the geography that bears the stamp of our age and our thought--that is to say, it is pluralistic, chaotic, designed in detail yet lacking universal foundations or principles, continually changing, linked by centerless flows of information. It is artificial, and marked by deep social inequalities. It renders doubtful the conventional ways of thinking about landscapes and geographical patterns.

It is also a serious challenge for cartographers. Perhaps atlases, like universal theories, are obsolete. Perhaps the best that can be done is to redescribe places and inquire into the myriad sources of diversity, a task that will require good powers of observation, nimble minds, and methodological agility. Perhaps the time has come at least for revisionist geographers to begin work on dislocation analysis and centerless place theory. Then again, I'm just an ironic post-modernist, so perhaps not.

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*Edward Relph's work is central to research in environmental and architectural phenomenology. His Place and Placelessness, published in 1976, is a pioneering study of the phenomenology of place. Relph has written widely, though sometimes in publications that are not well known. We provide a list of some of his work here.*

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## DO NOT ASK ME TO EXPLAIN

Uncreasing the well-worn map  
 you traced a familiar path with your finger  
 Bamako, Ségou, Mopti  
 You spoke of rivers, a station house, the odd tree  
 These were my places  
 This was my home  
 You can not begin to understand  
 You can not feel this  
 You can not know

How could I tell you of my garden,  
 how I spent my afternoons  
     my clothes  
     the night air  
     my dreams

You know only small things, details and gossip  
 Even my language is unpronounceable to you

Now it is midsummer, the time of the high sun  
 In this heat I often slip away  
 Do not try to find me  
*Je suis tres loin d'ici*  
*Kita, Djenné, Goundam*  
*T sais, mon ami*  
*finalment, tu comprends*

—Jill Yesko

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