This issue of *EAP* includes article and book commentaries as well as our first movie reviews--of *Places for the Soul*, the recent film dealing with architect Christopher Alexander. We also include a poem by anthropologist John Sherry. We are especially pleased to feature a special section on "graduate theses and phenomenology;" note our front-page illustration below is from one of those works.

Please note that this *EAP* is the last issue for 1992. We enclose a renewal form and ask that you respond promptly so that we will not need to send a second reminder at the start of the new year. Note that, because of increasing expenses, we have raised the subscription rate to **$7** for 1993.

Also note that we have a line on the renewal form for any *EAP* readers who would like to make an additional contribution. Our finances are not entirely stable, and we would be grateful for any extra support. Last year we received some $70 in contributions. We express our thanks to all who donated.
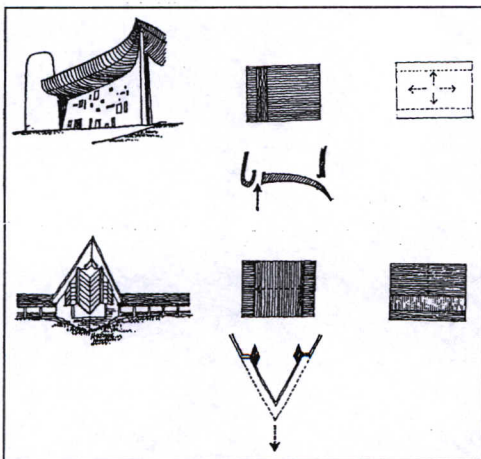
A Thiis-Evensen Interpretation of Le Corbusier's Ronchamp Chapel & Wright's Unitarian Church (see p. 7).

EAP MEETING AT EDRA

The annual meeting of the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) was held in Boulder, Colorado, April 9-11, 1992. Some 15 members attended a business meeting of the Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology Network. The following notes were recorded by co-chair Margaret Boschetti.

Co-chair David Seamon reported that the *EAP* newsletter currently has 145 subscribers, of which 27 are EDRA members. During 1991, $770 was received from *EAP* subscribers; cost of the newsletter was $600. Other issues discussed included:

- With so many non-EDRA members subscribing to *EAP*, how useful is it to have a "phenomenological" focus at EDRA? Is there any way non-EDRA members might participate in relevant EDRA sessions and events without being required to become a full EDRA member and pay full conference fees?
- Should the *EAP* network sponsor a plenary session at the next EDRA?
- Should there be efforts to schedule phenomenology sessions at other conferences to which EAP members belong?
- Could there be generated a list of *EAP* network members and their interests to encourage greater interchange?

A wide-ranging discussion followed as to the purposes of the *EAP* network and the kinds of possibilities it sought to stimulate, both academically and professionally. There was considerable debate as to whether the network should work in an understated way and seek to complement conventional approaches to environment-behavior research, or whether *EAP* should be more "insurgent" and work actively to change conventional methodological, epistemological and ontological stances. Seamon pointed out that the current tack, at least of the newsletter, is to support a broad range of perspectives, from those that see

qualitative research as an "adjunct" to quantitative work to, at the other end, radical points of view that seek major conceptual and philosophical shifts in the environmental disciplines and professions.

Architect David Saile, an organizer of next year's EDRA meeting in Chicago, invited the network to organize a day's workshop around the conference theme of "Power of Design." The group discussed several possible workshop topics:

- perspectives on phenomenology, including philosophical, methodological, and practitioner-usable;
- personal life-histories of researchers and designers who have found the phenomenological approach important for their work;
- historical roots of phenomenology in environment/behavior research and environmental design;
- the question of whether phenomenology can be taught;
- a debate on the ideological boundaries between phenomenology and positivism;
- paths to phenomenology--what it means to individuals, from "card-carrying" phenomenologists to outsiders who simply are curious about it.

Two people at the meeting expressed possible interest in organizing workshops, and anyone wishing more information or having interest in participating, should contact them: Architect **Duncan Case**, 1625 Brent Blvd., Lincoln, Nebraska; and **Douglas Paterson**, Landscape Architecture Program, 248-2357 Main Mall, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia V6T 2A2 Canada.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Architecture and the Great Plains: The Built Environment, Past and Present with be the theme of the 17th annual interdisciplinary symposium sponsored by the Center for Great Plains Studies and to be held April 22-24, 1993. The "Call for Papers" reads in part: "The Center invites proposals for papers on the general topic of structure and space and the Great Plains. Several broad themes may be explored, such as, an examination of the impact of the physical and cultural context of the Great Plains upon the design and construction of the region's built environment; an investigation of those peculiar features of habitation distinctive to this region; and comparisons of Great Plains built environments with those in other plains settings... or built environments created by the same

culture in different natural landscapes... Interdisciplinary proposals are encouraged." For further information, write: Professor H. Keith Sawyers, Center for Great Plains Studies, 1213 Oldfather Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588-0314 (402-472-3082)

"Tuning of the World," an international conference on acoustic ecology, will be held in August, 1993, at the Banff Centre for the Arts, Banff, Alberta. Some of the questions to be addressed include: "What is the proper balance between natural, human and technological sounds? In what ways are our attitudes to soundmaking and listening changing? What effects do the media have in the modern landscape? What particular role does music play in shaping sensory awareness...Is it possible to develop principles of acoustic design for environments of the future and if so what can we learn from the past, from other cultures, or from technological developments taking place today?" For further information, write: The Director of Program Development, Banff Centre for the Arts, P.O. Box 1020, Banff, Alberta, Canada T0L 0C0 (403-762-6290).

The Society for Human Ecology promotes "an interdisciplinary understanding of human ecology and its applications." Though the group is predominantly positivist in outlook, there is a growing interest in qualitative approaches to ecological themes, especially from the perspective of deep ecology. SHE's 6th annual meeting, "Human Ecology: Crossing Boundaries," will be held 2-4 October, 1992, in Snowbird, Utah. For membership and conference information, contact Jonathan Taylor, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 4512 McMurray Avenue, Fort Collins, CO 80525-3400 (303-226-9438).

A new book series, **Environmental Philosophies**, will be published by Routledge and edited by philosopher Andrew Brennan. Titles of volumes already commissioned include *Environmental Philosophies* (by Andrew Brennan), *Deep Ecology* (by Eric Katz), and *Ecological Feminism* (edited by Karen J. Warren). Contact: Andrew Brennan, Philosophy Dept., Univ. of Western Australia, Perth, WA 6009, Australia.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Alfred Bay is a master's student in Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. He writes that his thesis "will be a collection of short investigations into issues of phenomenology and the building/design process. One focus will be on topoanalysis as presented by Gaston Bachelard and used by Clare Cooper Marcus [University of California] and Jaimie Horowitz [Iowa State University].

"Another [chapter] will be called "True Measure and Right Measure" and will explore the use of measurement, from the most immediate (e.g., actual juxtaposition and comparison) to the most abstract (e.g., scaled metric drawings). This piece will discuss the appropriatene ⁻f these various measuring stances for various design uses. A third essay will be a rumination on the chapter discussing inside-outside dialectics in Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*.

"After graduating, I hope to continue my design-build work (I earlier owned a construction company) and to teach design from a phenomenological basis." Address: Graduate School of Architecture, 310 Wurster, Univ. of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

Robert Habiger, liturgical architect, writes that "I am extolling the benefits of phenomenology and environment-behavior design here in Albuquerque. I now have a small architectural, planning and liturgical design consulting firm, three full-time staff. Our principle foci are custom homes and churches. This past fall I completed a two-year program for liturgical consultants and received certification. Locally, we have been working on several church master plans and some building projects as well as on one post-occupancy evaluation." Address: R. D. Habiger & Associates, 11930 Menaul NE #221, Albuquerque, NM 87112.

John F. Sherry, Jr., who contributed a poem to this issue (see p. 15), writes: "I was delighted to discover *EAP*, which speaks directly to my interest in humanistic anthropology. I teach courses in marketing and consumer behavior. Several issues back, the essay you ran about the rocking chair [by Louise Million, winter, 1991] touched so poignantly upon my interests in consumer-object relations in postmodern perspective that I determined to submit a poem when

the opportunity presented itself. I eagerly await your subscribers' aesthetic efforts!

"I am an anthropologist who explores the ways in which individuals resist and succumb to the forces of consumer culture. I am especially interested in the experience consumers have of the marketplace and its products. I wrote the poem while on a field trip to Belgium, where I was investigating the dark side of gift-giving behaviors and searching for a sense of things medieval by becoming 'emplaced' to the extent that a Chicagoan can.

"I lived in the old beguinage [see photograph, p. 15], which is the poem's central conceit. The building is part of a convent dating from the 13th century and formerly inhabited by a class of women in the liminal space between religious and laity. They indulged their spirituality but retained their material possessions (which suited my interest in consumption perfectly). My field house was the attic apartment of one of these buildings. The poem was catalyzed by this place."

Sherry's work has much to say to a phenomenology of the economic lifeworld; recent essays in which *EAP* readers might be interested include: "Unpacking the Holiday Presence: A Comparative Ethnography of Two Gift Stores" (with M. McGrath), in *Interpretive Consumer Research* (Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research); "A Sociocultural Analysis of a Midwestern American Flea Market," *Journal of Consumer Research, 17* (June 1990); "To Everything There Is a Season: A Photoessay of a Farmer's Market" (with D. Heisley & M. McGraft) *Journal of American Culture, 14* (3), 1991. Address: J. L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University, Leverone Hall, 2001 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60208-2008.
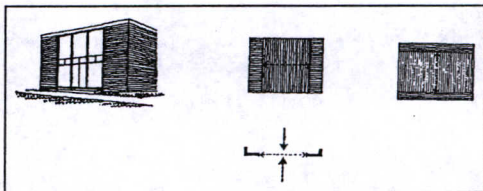
A Thiis-Evensen Interpretation of the Wall of Mies van der Rohe's IIT Chapel (see p. 7).

NOTEWORTHY READINGS

James F. Weiner, 1991. *The Empty Place: Poetry, Space, and Being among the Foi of Papua, New Guinea.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. ISBN 0-253-36382-9.

This anthropologist presents the world of the *Foi*, a New Guinea tribe who garden, forage, hunt, fish, and cultivate tree crops. Weiner gives greatest attention to how poetry reflects and supports the Fois' lifeworld, especially the importance of *season*, which allows for an "interchangeability between landscape and temporality" (p. 8). He writes:

> ...I describe a nexus of Foi discourse that includes their geography and spatial relationships, their existential confrontation with death, their architecture and dwellings...their poetry, song, magic, and performance. I want to preserve the essential unity of this nexus, *not* to portray the above phenomena as a bundle of separate things with semantically homologous structures. I want instead to convey the ideas that language and movement across the earth both involve bodily activity; that...the spatial relationships that are found in Foi dwellings and territory are products of the same discursive creation of subjectivity within a communally lived world; that poetry is not confined to a game of supercharging ordinary metaphors but is a fundamental property of the discursive life of a community.
>
> These considerations lead us away from structuralism, still the orthodox analytic framework of anthropology, and toward phenomenology and existentialism, and to attempts made in this century to get around the a priori distinctions between language and other activity, between building and dwelling, mind and body, between the being of life and the being of death, all of which are smuggled in by the Cartesian foundations of structuralism...I want to dissolve the factitious boundaries between these phenomena and by doing so reveal the aesthetic constitution of Foi society. Foi poetry exposes the basis of this aesthetic not as a mystery that has to be decoded but as the revelation of the most fundamental spatial and temporal life conditions, death and language (p. 8).

EAP received the following from Weiner when requesting permission to quote from his book.

One of the first instances I recorded of the sung poetry of the Foi people was the following:

ibu buru
water blue
duma buru
mountain blue
e, tahamo nomo mera'ae
eh, over there is my place

This used to be sung in very casual occasions by young men and boys as they sat and looked upon the mountain range to the north of their village. It has 17 syllables, like a Japanese haiku, and is completely Oriental in its imagery and form. All by itself, it leads to the comparisons I make in *The Empty Place* between haiku, Imagism and Foi poetry, and the connections I draw between them and Heidegger's views on language and poetry.

I've been waiting for the right opportunity to acknowledge that little poem. Thank you for providing it!

James F. Weiner
Department of Social Anthropology
University of Manchester, Brunswick Street
Manchester M13 9PL, England

Below: The Foi Men's Longhouse (p. 67).

NOTEWORTHY READINGS: CONCEPTUAL REVIEWS

One aim of EAP is to highlight articles and books that discuss the conceptual state of the social sciences and the environmental disciplines and professions. In this issue, we feature three theoretical overviews that provide useful insights in comparing and contrasting postmodern and poststructural work with the kind of existential-phenomenological efforts covered in EAP.

Pauline Marie Rosenau, 1992. *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Whether one is supportive or not, he or she must sooner or later deal with the growing scholarly and professional power of postmodern, poststructural, and deconstructionist approaches. This book does the seeming impossible: it provides a clear, sensible account of postmodern perspectives and their meanings for social science. Rosenau's grasp of a difficult and esoteric literature is extraordinary; her lucid presentation is most helpful for readers who can't fathom the original postmodern texts.

Rosenau, a political scientist, seeks to identify postmodern strengths and contributions as well as weaknesses and potential dangers. She masterly explores such themes as theory, epistemology, methodology, representation, and politics. *EAP* readers might be especially interested in her sections on "displacing modern time and place" and "postmodern social science--without history, on new time, drifting in space." Here, to indicate the clarity of Rosenau's work, we reprint her opening description of postmodern approaches and her later summary discussion of weaknesses (boxes, below and right).

Rosenau's first description of postmodernism:

Post-modernism challenges global, all-encompassing world views, be they political, religious, or social. It reduces Marxism, Christianity, Fascism, Stalinism, capitalism, liberal democracy, secular humanism, feminism, Islam, and modern science to the same order and dismisses them all as logocentric, transcendental totalizing meta-narratives that anticipate all questions and provide predetermined answers. All such systems of thought rest on assumptions no more or no less certain than those of witchcraft, astrology, or primitive cults. The post-modern goal is not to formulate an alternative set of assumptions but to register the impossibility of establishing any such underpinning for knowledge...The most extreme post-modernists urge us to be comfortable in the absence of certainty, learn to live without explanation, accept the new philosophical relativism (p. 6).

Some of Rosenau's critical afterthoughts:

Self-deconstruction is seldom on the post-modern agenda, but if it were, such activity would reveal at least the following seven contradictions...

First, post-modernism devalues any pretensions to theory building. But an anti-theory position is itself a theoretical stand....

Second, although stressing the importance of the irrational and expressing grave doubts about the Enlightenment's intellectual tools of reason...and rationality, post-modernists employ these latter instruments in their own analysis. Deconstruction, for example, is a highly logical, reasoned, and analytical process.

Third, post-modernists neither judge nor evaluate interpretations as good or bad. But does their suggestion that social science focus on the excluded, the neglected, the marginal, and the silenced, not indicate an internal value structure implicitly favoring certain groups or perspectives over others? And does this not conflict with their supposed refusal to prioritize?....

Fourth, post-modernists emphasize intertextuality, but many of its versions, especially those inspired by Derrida, treat the text in isolation.

Fifth, many post-modernists reject modern criteria for assessing theory. But if post-modernists draw conclusions of any sort, such as the undecidability of questions modern social science seeks to answer, they cannot argue that there are no valid criteria for judging. They themselves must have criteria, implicit perhaps, on which they make such pronouncements. And if such criteria exist, then post-modernists are making a statement to the effect that there is some certainty in the world.

Sixth, although warning of modernity's inconsistencies, they reject being held to consistency norms themselves. They openly deny that they need make any special effort to avoid self-contradiction; this hardly seems fair.

Seventh, post-modernists contend that anything they say or write is itself only a local narrative, relevant only for its own constituency. But very few post-modernists entirely relinquish the truth claims of what they write, and this also makes for self-contradiction. (pp. 176-177)

Partly because of its small size as a discipline, Geography is one of the few social sciences whose practitioners involve themselves in conflicting conceptual perspectives yet continue to seek disciplinary dialogue. These three British geographers seek to overview the current philosophical debates in the discipline by arguing that there are four competing, conceptual points of view: (1) Marxist-structuralism, (2) humanistic and phenomenological approaches, (3) structuration theories, and (4) postmodernist and deconstructionist perspectives. Chapter by chapter, the authors provide a lucid overview of these points of view and offer comparison and contrast.

Though Cloke, Philo, and Sadler conclude that these various points of view often negate each other, the authors end with a call for mutual respect and at least grudging tolerance. Their conclusion also speaks to other disciplines and professions facing similar philosophical conflicts:

...in attacking all forms of 'totalizing' discourse (on the grounds that such discourses obliterate difference) postmodernist thinking risks undermining any project of working towards alternative human and social states. Indeed, it throws into question the whole spirit of 'enlightened modernism'... and thereby risks denying the pursuit of a moral or political agenda designed to make the world a 'better place' for us all to live in. Just such an ambition has been somewhere present in the efforts of virtually all of those individuals who have sought to secure a viable post-positivist human geography, even if the results for Marxists, humanists and others have often ended up being quite different, and this means that debate at the 'critical edges' between those who subscribe to the spirit of modernism and those who do not is destined to be heated and perhaps quite destructive.

But we would also express the hope that a measure of creative dialogue can still ensue between geographers whose intellectual and more personal beliefs seemingly head off in divergent directions: in part because the taking seriously of difference is now accepted by the majority of modernist geographers; and in part because there are radical versions of postmodernism in which the 'local knowledges' of particular peoples in particular places are celebrated not just for their own sake, but in the context of a wider inquiry into--and perhaps as a more practical strategy of 'empowering'--the experiences of those groupings (labour, women, ethnic minorities, the unemployed, the sick and so on) who repeatedly 'lose out' in the face of the more material restructurings endemic to the postmodern condition.

Maybe it will be possible for human geographers to continue talking to one another, then, and in the process to respect the differences that separate their approaches rather than seeing those differences as insurmountable barriers to insight (p. 201).

This article is a useful review of recent philosophical developments in planning and discusses: (1) changing views about positivist science and rational planning; and (2) post-structural philosophies and a post-structural planning that recognizes multiple narratives and moves toward "what possibility for liberation there may be" (p. 1).

Mugerauer reviews the philosophies of poststructuralists Lyotard, Foucault, and Baudrillard: "According to their critique, planning theory and research which clings to the idea of 'objective' methodology and 'rational' practices is a naive and insupportable exercise in arbitrary power" (p. 1). Instead, the poststructural position calls for "a multiplicity of localized interpretations and historical narratives capable of promoting collective decision making" (p. 1).

Mugerauer concludes that, in the 1990s, planning policy and research have three options: (1) that they continue current practices that might seek to become more sophisticated through "more subtle descriptions of the scientific process, hypothesis articulation and falsification, and rule formation and modeling" (p. 16); (2) that planners shift to poststructural research as a liberating interpretation and narration; or (3) that they explore critical theory, phenomenology and hermeneutics as positive alternatives to the poststructural agenda.

Mugerauer makes no final decision on which of these three ways is best. As he concludes: "The goal

has been to explore what the issues are and why they take their current forms. Clearly, the challenge to planning research *is* issued by post-structuralism. *The* question is whether poststructuralism needs to be accepted. It does appear that poststructuralism carries the day against traditional empirical approaches. [If this is true,] must poststructuralism be embraced... Or, are there valid alternatives [i.e., critical theory, hermeneutics, and phenomenology] to poststructuralism that avoid its shortcomings without retreating to ungrounded positions?" (p. 21).

GRADUATE THESES AND PHENOMENOLOGY

Periodically, EAP *will list graduate research involving phenomenological and similar qualitative approaches in regard to environmental and architectural themes. Please, if you are doing such work or know someone who is, let us know so that we might provide a description.*

Angus Barnes, 1992. Mount Wellington and the Sense of Place. Master's Thesis, Department of Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.

Mount Wellington is a major feature of the topography of Hobart and the surrounding area of Tasmania. Using a phenomenological approach, this study describes the significance of Mount Wellington, which was investigated with reference to physical setting, activities on the mountain, and its more general meanings.

Some artistic depictions of Mount Wellington's various poses were described. Early portrayals tended to focus on topographical idealism while later depictions often sought to emphasize the deeper meanings that Mount Wellington engenders. The many activities that people have pursued on Mount Wellington presented a diversity of relationships that people have developed.

It was suggested that certain activities are more conducive to sensing the essence of Mount Wellington while others ignore this essence. The deeper meanings of Mount Wellington were described and it was noted that Mount Wellington has great significance for Hobartians. These meanings become most apparent through authentic dwelling.

Yuan Lin, 1991. Le Corbusier's Chapel at Ronchamp. Frank Lloyd Wright's Unitarian Church, and Mies van der Rohe's Chapel at IIT: A Phenomenological Interpretation of Modern Sacred Architecture Based on Thiis-Evensen's *Archetypes in Architecture*. Master's Thesis, Department of Architecture, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.
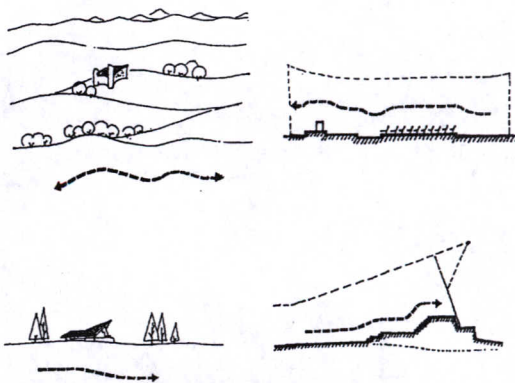
In *Archetypes in Architecture* (NY: Oxford, 1987), the Norwegian architect Thiis-Evensen seeks to discover a universal language of architecture that is derived phenomenologically through the human experience of the built environment.... Thiis-Evensen establishes "a set of archetypes which can contribute to an understanding of the universality of architectural expression"(p.8). He refers to these archetypes as "the most basic elements of architecture" and identifies them as three--the *floor*, the *wall*, and the *roof*.

In this thesis, I seek to demonstrate the value of Thiis-Evensen's ideas in better understanding three 20-century works of sacred Christian architecture--Le Corbusier's Chapel at Ronchamp, Frank Lloyd Wright's Unitarian Church, and Mies van der Rohe's IIT Chapel. My thesis outline is as follows:

- First, I review several conceptual approaches to architectural meaning and architectural aesthetics, since Thiis-Evensen's work is centrally related to this research area.
- Second, I review the concepts of sacred space and sacred architecture, since the buildings I interpret are churches.
- Third, I elaborate Thiis-Evensen's theory of archetypes and discuss its power in understanding sacred architecture.
- Fourth, I present my research method, which is threefold:

- I develop my own personal interpretation of the churches, using Thiis-Evensen's theory as my interpretive base;
- As one way to verify my interpretation, I compare and contrast it with the three architects' and architectural critics' comments on the three churches.
- As a second way to check my interpretation, I examine whether people unfamiliar with Thiis-Evensen's theory find in the three churches the same meanings I found in my own interpretation. The test instrument is a questionnaire with two parts--one involving open-ended-responses; the other, bipolar-descriptions. I had non-design undergraduate students respond to this questionnaire.

In the concluding chapter, I compare and contrast my results. Also, I discuss the effectiveness of Thiis-Evensen's archetype theory and a phenomenological approach to architectural design and to the study of architectural aesthetics.

Ronchamp's undulating natural & interior floors (upper left & right, respectively); Unitarian's sinking natural floor (lower left) & rising interior floor (lower right).

Marie Louise Million, 1992. "It Was Home": A Phenomenology of Place and Involuntary Displacement as Illustrated by the Forced Dislocation of Five Southern Alberta Families in the Oldman River Dam Flood Area. Doctoral Thesis, Saybrook Institute Graduate School and Research Center, San Francisco, California.

This dissertation examines how place and its forced loss--what I call *involuntary displacement*--show themselves in the lifeworld. Chapter 1 identifies the significance of both phenomena and justifies a phenomenological approach. This chapter also describes the five families who were forced to sell their farms and ranches during the late 1980s to make way for the Oldman River Dam reservoir bed.

Chapter 2 reviews phenomenological literature, beginning with a summary of the geographical aspects of place followed by a more detailed exploration of "insideness" and "outsideness"--existential dimensions as they are

Figure 1. Experiential Stages of Involuntary Displacement.

presented by Edward Relph in his seminal *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976). These distinctions emerge as foundational to the proposed study. In fact, this dissertation can be understood as an elaboration of Relph's work.

Chapter 3 outlines a rationale and criteria for the selection of five families and describes the method used to gather reconstructions of both phenomena. These "conversational narratives" constitute the study's primary experiential "data." A brief description of how the researcher worked with the narratives is followed by a summary of each of the five families who participated in the study.
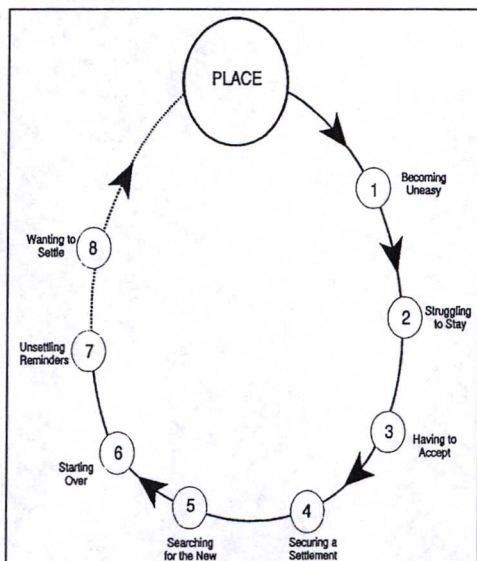
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Chapter 4 explores the founding of place as it shows itself by way of the conversational narratives. At this stage, *work-in*, *pleasure-in*, *name-in*, and *living-within-place* emerge as the significant experiential themes. From a phenomenological perspective, chapter 4 explores the background constituents of place. Chapter 5, in contrast, directly examines "existential insideness," or belonging. Here, the themes of *everything-in-place*, *habit-in-place*, *reach-in-place*, and *time-in-place* deepen and extend the work of the previous chapter.

Chapters 4 and 5 also emerge as a necessary context for the exploration of involuntary displacement. In this study, it is argued that place is prior to involuntary displacement. For that reason, involuntary displacement can be understood metaphorically as a forced journey constituted by a series of moments represented in figure 1 [preceding page].

Becoming uneasy [1 in figure], *struggling to stay* [2], and *having to accept* [3] emerge in this study as the first three moments of involuntary displacement and are the subject of Chapter 6. Chapter 7 explores *securing a settlement* [4] and *searching for the new* [5]. These fourth and fifth moments constitute "living in between"--the middle stage of a forced journey and those moments farthest away from place. Finally, *starting over* [6], *unsettling reminders* [7], and *wanting to settle* [8] belong to rebuilding place.

In the context of a study that joins rebuilding in its third year, the end of a forced journey remains to be seen. As a consequence, Chapter 8 explores the hopeful possibility of rebuilding place.

Kent A. Munro, 1991. Planning for Place: Phenomenological Insights in Urban Design. Master's Thesis, School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Much of the present-day planned environment is regarded as placeless, meaning that it is physically homogeneous, standardized, and bland. More importantly, it is experientially predictable and uninspiring. Contrary to placelessness, a place can be thought of as a physical setting that inspires a heightened awareness of human experience.

Like all other environmental-design disciplines, planning and urban design are fundamentally concerned with placemaking; they strive to create what is popularly referred to as a sense of place. What is this elusive sense of place and how can urban designers plan for it to be experienced?

At the extremes of a theoretical dualism, the concept of place can be understood from a perspective oriented in the tenets of positivism, or it can be understood through a phenomenological approach. This thesis contends that, currently, planners rely on a rational approach that is founded in the positivist tradition. Phenomenology is a theoretical perspective that aims to elucidate a personal, experiential understanding of a phenomenon's essential qualities. It is a qualitative approach that strives to uncover what have been called the expressive qualities of place experience: imagination, memory, emotion, feeling, metaphor, meaning and the unconscious.

This thesis explores the potential insights of phenomenology in urban design by espousing the approach and assessing its contribution. It is argued that a rational approach to understanding places emphasizes positive knowledge but denies a holistic appreciation of meaning because the approach dismisses personal knowledge of the experiential or expressive qualities of place. This study shows that the urban designer can engage the insights of phenomenology to progress beyond the material qualities of place to an understanding of place as experienced....

With respect to procedural value, the study demonstrates that a phenomenological approach cannot be considered a prescriptive methodology. Nevertheless, the approach cultivates a way of thinking that has conceptual utility. Phenomenological understanding cannot be directly applied to a given situation, thus the approach must be incorporated into traditional urban design procedures and methodologies.

Phenomenology is a means of eliciting sensitivity, care, and empathy for places and place experience. By incorporating the phenomenological spirit and insights into planning discourse, the urban designer can begin to inspire the creation of environments that have a sense of place.

This study uses Thomas Thiis-Evensen's *Archetypes in Architecture* (NY: Oxford, 1987) to explore the nature of *wood* as a building material, specifically focusing on the relationship of wood to architectural form. The *Yoshimura house*, a Japanese vernacular dwelling, is the interpretive context and is examined in terms of Thiis-Evensen's archetypes of *floor, wall,* and *roof.* The interpretations of the archetypes are linked by demonstrating how wood contributes to their specific expressions and, more importantly, to the dialectic between inside and outside.

Using the three archetypes as an interpretive base, it becomes possible to appreciate the form of the house both holistically and rigorously. While the examination of the three elements assures a rigor to the method, the common focus on how these elements sustain a specific *inside/ outside relation* binds the interpretations into a cohesive whole.

The interpretations are grounded in shared bodily experiences through which the expressive potentials of the architectural forms are recognized. This experiential orientation avoids the danger of succumbing either to one's personal preferences alone or to a deterministic historic or theoretical explanation.

In the Yoshimura house, the archetypal elements of floor, wall, roof are linked not only by their common function of delineating an interior space, but also by their use of wood, which imparts certain common qualities to the three elements. All the elements are expressive of a strong geometric order which emphasizes linearity, openness, and lightness.

The thesis emphasizes that architectural character is essential to a collective sense of place and is inseparably woven into the making of a built environment. Materials hold meanings that are intersubjectively experienced across culture and history. The study argues that the nature of the construction material interacts with the formal aspects of a building. The result is an overall architectural character.

The study concludes that the design process best proceeds from an intimate understanding of materials, their design, and building processes. This harmonization of materials and design requires a study different from the common technological perspective. What is needed is the questioning of the nature of materials from an existential and experiential perspective. This thesis is one start toward such a phenomenology.
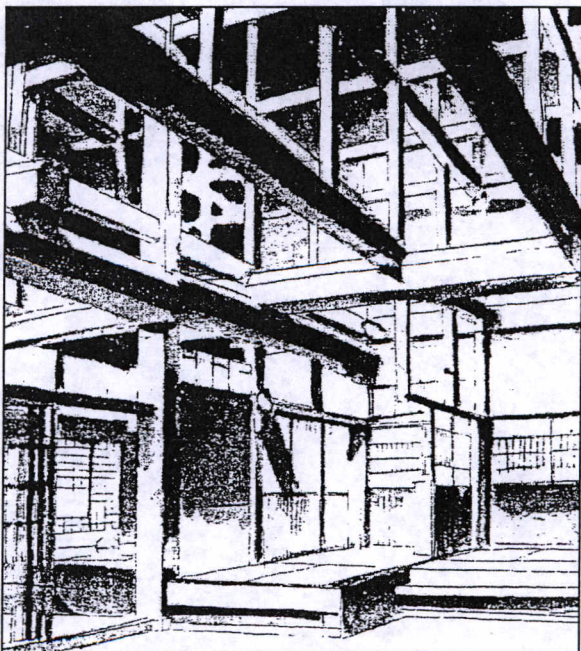
Yoshimura house, Interior (from a watercolor by Murali Ramaswami).

Places for the Soul, *produced and directed by film maker* **Ruth Landy**, *presents the work of architect* **Christopher Alexander**, *whose ideas have major relationship to a phenomenology of environment and architecture. Here, we present two student reviews of Landy's film--the first by* **Ashima Kenkre**, *KSU graduate student in Landscape Architecture; and the second by* **Lyle Hornbaker**, *KSU undergraduate student in Architecture. For information on ordering the film, write: University of California Extension Media Center, 2176 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704 (415-642-0460).*

PLACES FOR THE SOUL: WHOLENESS AND A SENSE OF BELONGING

"I feel like crying." These are the words I wrote in my notebook the first time I saw *Places for the Soul*, a 29-minute film about the theories and designs of architect Christopher Alexander. I had known Alexander's work for only a few weeks, but already I was in total sympathy with his theories. His sole desire is to create timeless buildings and environments that have a sense of place and a wholeness and that arise from genuine feeling and need. And one of the successes of this film lies exactly here. With brilliance and sensitivity, the film maker Ruth Landy evokes this sense of wholeness, place, and beauty.

How? The film is direct and relies on no special effects. It is exactly this simplicity and honesty--a certain unexplained rawness--that touches the viewer. At the same time, however, the film is sophisticated and shifts back and forth between two of Alexander's recent projects--the New Eishin University, a 13-million-dollar, 30-building high school and college campus outside Tokyo, Japan; and the Julian Street Inn, a center for the homeless in San Jose, California. The film uses these projects to illustrate and concretize Alexander's architectural theories. These projects also help Landy to uncover Alexander's emotions and frustrations, what he loves and why, what he dislikes and why. Through interviews with him and with his clients for the two projects, Landy offers a deeper view of Alexander, far beyond the face of just another usual big-name architect.

The film opens by introducing Alexander in his studio among several objects he loves and respects--a small painting by Bonnard, an old, well-used axe, and a piece of a tile from Alhambra. As he holds these objects, each in turn, he speaks about their beauty, perfection, and wholeness. These qualities, he believes, are the entire point of architecture but

are often missing today. He emphasizes that once we realize this lack, life will again become interesting. Life is a process and cannot be produced from a drawing. Nor can architecture because it, too, reflects life. "Feeling comes first," Alexander declares, "and process is paramount."

At this point comes one of the more striking parts of the film. As Alexander stands at the door of his Center for Environmental Structure in Martinez, California, Landy asks him to summarize his architectural aim. For a moment, Alexander looks around askance. Then, he gazes into the camera and says, "to make God appear in a field." A split second later, the camera has moved to a view of a field and, because the sequence is so slickly done, I almost expected to see God. Immediately, however, the viewer realizes that the field is an athletic field at the New Eishin University.

From here, the film alternates between Eishen and the San Jose homeless project, comparing and contrasting aims, tensions, successes, frustrations, and outlook of the two clients. With each shift, the music subtly changes between a Japanese-sounding theme and a Western-classical motif.

School principal and Eishen client Hisae Hosai discovered Alexander's work after a year-long search in what Hosai calls "the forest of modern architecture." Browsing through a Tokyo book shop, he discovered Alexander's *The Oregon Experiment*. From that moment, Hosai says, there was no looking back. He sensed he could finally create a new kind of school and university that would have "an inner feeling of freedom and peacefulness."

In the evolution of this campus, not only were Alexander and Hosoi involved, but also the teachers and students--right from the conceptualization of their

dreams and desires to the actual physical construction. But the path to completion was not easy. Differences of opinion between Alexander and the Japanese contracting firm delayed for many months the realization of the all-wood gymnasium [below].

Seeing the completed building, I felt the delay was worth every moment. The building's handsome facade, internal floor, walls and the light, elegant lines of the wooden trusses all evoke a warm wholeness. I was touched when Hosoi described the "indescribable pleasure" that the completed university gave him. I sensed he had realized his dream.

This is not so much the case for the director/client of the Julian Street Inn in San Jose, who also discovered Alexander after a long search and interviews with several other architects. What impressed director Al Diludovico was Alexander's conviction that architecture and built space contribute to human healing. The director believed that this was exactly what the homeless needed--a place that healed and gave them a sense of belonging so that perhaps their lives could change for the better.

The director became upset with Alexander, however, because his way of designing and building took so long and went over budget. A central point of dispute was the building's dining-room trusses, which Alexander was determined to make beautiful and

whole, no matter how many months or resources required. Diludovico, on the other hand, felt that precious time was being wasted over a mere roof support while the homeless waited for shelter in one of the bitterest San Jose winters on record.

Standing in the completed dining room, Alexander explains why he went to such lengths to do the trusses in the way he wanted. Sitting in his office, Diludovic worries about cost over-runs and his agency's reputation. He even hints that a "building like a box" might have been better, since his agency would have saved time, money, and its credit rating.

Both architect and client have valid points, and I empathized with both men as they described their contrasting frustrations. But somehow in a subtle way, the film made my heart go out to Alexander as he sat there beneath his trusses, almost forlorn.

And the trusses themselves? They look like concrete Belgian lace, and I felt they were beautiful. As I write this review, I realize that the moments leading up to their revelation was partially contrived through words, images, and sound. The church-like music begins softly, then suddenly swells to a crescendo just when the trusses appear. Still, at least for me, this sequence was heartrending, and the camera's panning toward and under these trusses was the climax of the film. Superb, perfect, these structures made me believe that all the anger, frustration, and torment had been worthwhile. For me, the trusses seemed that they would evoke the healing that Alexander claimed.

For anyone interested in architecture and place, this film is a "must see." I recommend it even for the person unfamiliar with Christopher Alexander and his architectural ideas. Also, I would not be surprised if this film evoked a part of the viewer that is not often present but missed--a wish to find wholeness and a sense of belonging and place in a present-day world that is too often placeless.

Ashima Kenkre
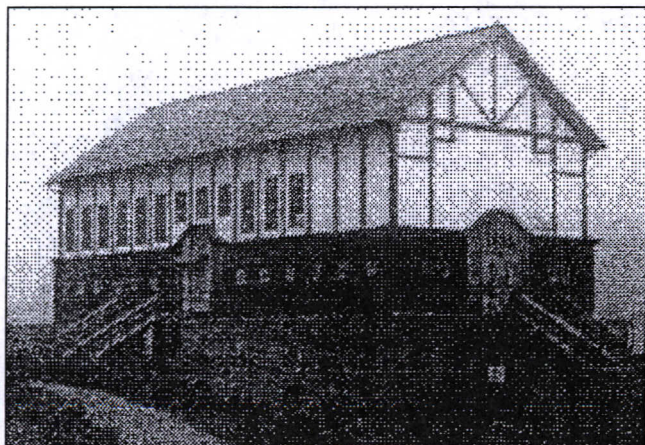
The Eishen School's Gymnasium

PLACES FOR THE SOUL: OCCUPYING A UNIQUE NICHE

When a film title includes an intangible like "soul," the viewer can be sure that the subject matter won't provide definitive scientific studies or incontrovertible evidence proving the film's point of view. And a title with the word "place" suggests that the viewer will not find the placeless architecture that so often pervades our world today.

The film opens with a slow pan across some of the art works and tools that architect Christopher Alexander has collected. As he holds a small pastel by Bonnard, Alexander talks about how it holds and expresses "life." For viewers familiar with Alexander's work, these comments clarify the notion of "wholeness" that is the centerpiece of his work. For viewers unfamiliar with his ideas, interest is immediately piqued about how un-inanimate themes like "soul" and "life" can be created through architecture.

In the scenes that follow, the producer offers an in-depth look at how Alexander and his colleagues strive to accomplish wholeness and re-introduce soul to architecture. A film that presented finished buildings produced by Alexander's design philosophy and then "explained" those buildings with extracts from his published works would be too "intellectual." Instead, the director chooses present two of Alexander's most recent finished works through the eyes of the people who matter most--the clients.

The two designs are a shelter for the homeless and mentally ill in San Jose, California, and a combination high school/college campus near Tokyo, Japan. When we first meet the two clients, it appears that they are both happy with the buildings that Alexander has created for them. As their stories unfold, however, the viewer realizes that there are fundamental differences in the way the two clients understood the planning and design *process* that Alexander used.

Necessarily, the design method that Alexander uses is slow and meticulous. The site, users, and building are all integral parts in a sequence in which each stage is crucial and interconnected with all the others. It is this demanding, time-consuming process that delights one client but frustrates the other. In regard to the Eishen school, school's principal and client had a lofty vision of an architecture that would enhance both student learning and faculty teaching. This man had searched high and low for an architect to actualize his vision for the school.

In contrast, the director of the San Jose shelter had come to his vision only after hearing Alexander speak of the healing possible in a sensitively-created environment. On one hand, the high school principal was willing to accept the way of building required to bring about his vision. On the other hand, the shelter director tried to walk a tightrope between vision and reality. He became angry and dissatisfied with a schedule and budget overrun.

As this focus on the two clients suggests, one should not expect this film to be a concise compilation of Alexander's architecture. And do not expect profound insights into Alexander's design philosophy. What the viewer will find, however, is an easy way to begin to sense Alexander's design vision. More importantly, the viewer realizes the significant and difficult changes in architecture that must occur before Alexander's way of designing can realize its greatest potential.

I believe that"Places for the Soul" occupies a unique niche in the body of works presenting Alexander's design philosophy. For critics of his approach, the film demonstrates the many problems inherent in attempting to actualize his design vision. And for proponents, the film suggests that the results are well worth the difficulties and effort. One can even hope to imagine a whole city or region that embraces Alexander's "timeless way of building."

Lyle Hornbaker
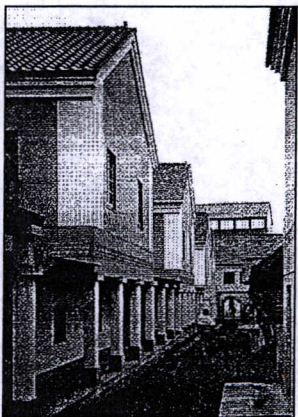
Eishen School's "Walking Street"

BOOK REVIEW

It's late Monday night and many Americans watch *Cheers* on TV. Meanwhile, in Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand, viewers tune in to *Coronation Street*, now in its third decade. The tavern and pub are the setting for both shows, which capture a spirit of informal community that most viewers know only vicariously. What is the fascination with these television programs, and what do they have to do with a book entitled *The Great Good Place*?

While the realism of these shows is questionable, their appeal may lie in the vision of an ideal--a sense of true community, a coming together across the barriers of income and occupation to a simple enjoyment of one another. In *The Great Good Place*, sociologist Ray Oldenburg argues that the most important place in many people's day is not the work place or the home, but, rather, some *third place* like the *Cheers* bar or the pub of *Coronation Street*.

Oldenburg's thesis is simple, appealing and persuasive: For people to have community, they must have neutral ground on which to forge communal bonds of trust and acceptance. There must be opportunity for the informal, unplanned and yet regular meeting of friends and strangers in a location that generates a "no strings attached" interaction.

This location is the third place, or "Great Good Place," as he calls it in the title of his book. A spirit of community, Oldenburg claims, cannot exist when one's daily routine consists only of work and home. Work involves one set of people who typically share similar values and outlooks on life. The home is a private realm--a place where meeting and socializing can be controlled and restricted. A spirit of community cannot develop in an environment where one moves between two realms, both of which are devised for the purpose of reducing interaction with people outside a prescribed group. Hence the need for a third place, which encourages and supports unplanned, casual and yet vital relationships.

The third place is everything work and home are not. Third places have no requirement for belonging

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From Oldenburg's Introduction:

In their kind and number, there has been a marked decline in gathering places near enough to people's homes to afford the easy access and familiar faces necessary to a vital informal public life. The course of urban development in America is pushing the individual toward that line separating proud independence from pitiable isolation, for it affords insufficient opportunity and encouragement to voluntary human contact. Daily life amid the new urban sprawl is like...incurring the aches and pains of a softball game without the fun of getting together for a few beers afterward. Both the joys of relaxing with people and the social solidarity that results...are disappearing for want of settings that make them possible (p. xvi).

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other than to be present. They have no fixed hours, nor do they require prior arrangement for participation. The attraction of third places is that they require no demands. The third place, therefore, is opportunity for the taking: people are present, conversations take place, and participants come and go according to the whims of the moment. In short, one is accepted without having to prove worthiness.

The third place is a democratic gathering of the highest order. Typically the third place is the local pub or bar, the coffee house or café, the donut shop or the general store. The primary function of the third place is not to drink or eat or purchase, but simply to be present. Oldenburg stresses that not every pub, bar or coffee shop is a third place: what is crucial is the particular style of interactions happening within the establishment.

For designers or planners, the notion of the third place raises a key question--is it possible to designer plan for such places, since they are apparently the product of people and personalities? Oldenburg's answer is a resounding "yes." We undervalue their importance that we exclude opportunities for the growth of third places from our planning and de-

signs. In a series of case studies, he points to the similarities, differences and cultural peculiarities of several different third places that range from the English pub to the Viennese coffee house. His conclusions strongly suggest that there are some universal requirements for such places, of which one of the most prominent is the need for *proximity*--the third place must be convenient and accessible. The right to stop at the corner bar for a drink may be guaranteed by no less a document than the American Constitution, says Oldenburg, but this right is of little practical use if there is no bar on the corner.

Although Oldenburg's argument is persuasive and enormously appealing, there are problems. One difficulty is his brief and superficial treatment of women's need for a third place. He says much about the sterility of suburban life, yet those who suffer most--women at home with young children--would appear to need the third place most. Most of Oldenburg's discussion centers around men's need for relief from the pressures of work and "the wife."

Equally superficial is his treatment of the needs of teenagers, whom he considers in terms of parental supervision rather than in terms of their need to be taught to become adults through active community life and participation.

Perhaps the most troublesome aspect of Oldenburg's argument is his assumption that the only real third places are the bars, cafés and hangouts that have a decidedly working class ambience--the locales of "real men." In contrast, Oldenburg finds little good in the more recent wine bars that cater to the yuppie groups of the 70s and 80s.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, *The Great Good Place* offers much hope for what American society could become, in part through the designed environment. The book encourages readers to look beyond themselves and their neatly subdivided world, to contemplate the meaning of the freedom of association protected by the American Constitution, and to question why policy-makers persist in planning practices that ignore third places.
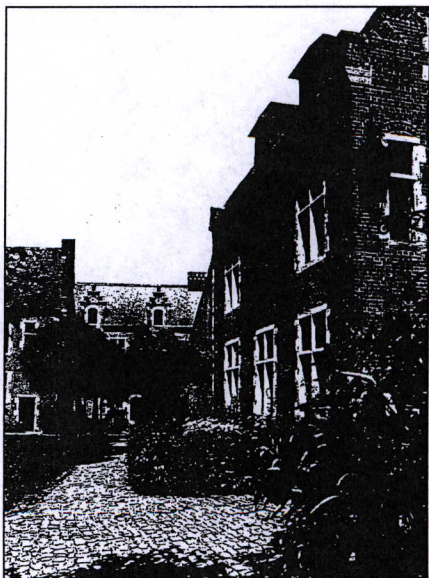
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ATTIC EPIPHANY

[Field Journal\Groot Begijnhof\Leuven]

Great vaulting ribs, hewn rough and
    raised to cure
In place, inviting touch, rewarding
    touch with slivers and a
Certainty of sharing wounds with pilgrims
    for all time.
Rude nails join strut to strut,
    unfinished soiled and splintery souls
Notched and knotted, pegged and pinned,
    lost in a rapture of rafters, beaming,
Ascend in silence deafening
    this moment.

--John Sherry

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