



Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter

Vol. 1, No. 1

Winter 1990

Welcome to the first issue of the *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter*. *EAP* is a forum and clearing house for research and design that incorporates a qualitative approach to environmental and architectural experience. One key concern of the newsletter is design, education, and policy supporting and enhancing natural and built environments that are beautiful, alive, and humane. Topics that the newsletter hopes to cover include:

- sense of place;
- home, dwelling, and journey;
- environmental encounter and its relation to environmental ethics, responsibility, and action;
- human experience of the natural and built environment e.g., how do architectural form and space affect emotional mood?
- the role of everyday things--furnishings, tools, clothing, landscape features, and so forth--in supporting peoples' sense of environmental well-being;
- sacred space, landscape, and architecture;
- the geographical and built environments as contributors to human being-in-the-world;
- bodily dimensions of human environmental and architectural experience;
- the environmental and architectural dimensions of lifeworld, both for human beings and other living creatures;
- the interpretation of artistic media such as painting, music, cinema, and imaginative literature as a way to understand environmental and architectural experience;
- environmental design as place making.

EAP is partly subsidized by the

Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) and will be published three times a year. The idea for a phenomenology network relating to environmental behavior and design was first had by geographer David Seamon, Kansas State University, and philosopher Robert Mugerauer, University of Texas at Austin. Presently, *EAP* will be edited by Seamon and Margaret Boschetti, an interior-design educator in the Department of Textiles, Clothing, and Interior Design at Kansas State University.

Since this is the first issue of *EAP*, it is important to clarify what the newsletter is and what it isn't. First, the word "phenomenology." As many readers know, there are as many phenomenologies as there are phenomenologists. In this newsletter, we refer primarily to the *existential*-phenomenological tradition associated with philosophers Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty and transcribed for use in the human and environmental disciplines by, especially, the Duquesne School of Phenomenological Psychology.

By "phenomenology," we mean the exploration and description of the essential nature of *phenomena*--i.e., things and experiences as human beings experience those things and experiences. Phenomenology is a science of beginnings that demands that the scholar do a thorough, in-depth study of the phenomenon. The aim is clear sightings and interpretations of the phenomenon that the phenomenon would be proud of if it could speak.

We have had much difficulty in arriving at a title for the newsletter that would make a link between phenomenology and environmental and design concerns. We have considered such titles as "Phenomenological Ecology," "Qualitative Approaches to Environ-

ment," "Phenomenology and Environment," "Ecophenomenology," and so forth.

In the end, we chose "Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology," realizing that the wording goes against tradition in that "phenomenology" is usually used as an adjective--thus, phenomenological psychology, phenomenological geography, and so forth. For a discipline as eclectic as environment-behavior research, however, we decided that it might be best to hold "phenomenology" as a noun and to use "environment" and "architecture" as adjectives.

In this way, we hope to appeal to the wide range of scholars, professionals, and environmental scales that might use the phenomenological approach--from clothing and interior design to architecture and landscape architecture to urban planning and regional geography. We hope to provide insight into experienced qualities that range from the human-body-as-given and immediate natural and built environments to the worlds of sound, temperature, weather, topography, plants, animals, and region.

READER RESPONSE

The empirical crux of existential-phenomenological research is *firsthand experience*. In regard to a newsletter, this fact means that we *very much desire reader involvement*--letters, poems, or drawings; commentaries and reviews; outlines for courses, and so forth. Especially, we would like to run columns on the following themes; if you have other ideas, please send them along:

- notices of noteworthy publications, both scholarly and popular;
- reviews of classic texts reinterpreted phenomenologically--e.g., Andrew Jackson Downing's *Treatise on Landscape Gardening*, Ellen Churchill Semple's *Influences of the Geographic Environment*, Harold Searle's *The Non-Human Environment*, or Jane Jacobs's *Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Send along suggestions and, better yet, reviews;
- Favorite-place essays and renderings by

you, students, novelists, artists, and others;

- descriptions of methods and techniques used to sensitize students to the role of environment and place in human life;
- comments and work that would address the question, "What might a phenomenological graphics and design be?" As space allows, we very much wish to publish examples. In this issue, we reprint drawings from Mary Hufford's *One Space, Many Places* (see "noteworthy publications");
- information about and reviews of meetings and conferences dealing with qualitative and phenomenological approaches to the environment--e.g., Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA), the Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences (SPHS), the Society for the Evolution of Science (SES), and so forth;
- listings of journals, magazines, newsletters, and other publications open to phenomenological and qualitative research on the environment;
- descriptions of graduate and other educational programs that support qualitative and phenomenological research on environmental and architectural themes.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Current plans are to publish *EAP* three times a year. Since the newsletter is partly subsidized by the Environmental Design Research Association, interested EDRA members will receive the newsletter at no charge. To receive the newsletter, however, we ask EDRA members to inform us of their interest. We ask non-EDRA members to subscribe at the rate of \$5.00 per year. Please use the subscription form enclosed.



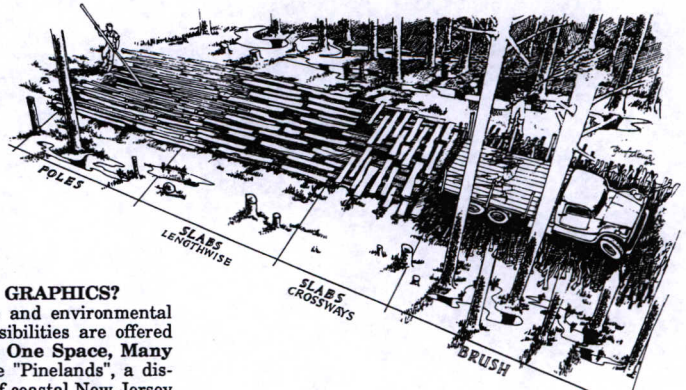
JOURNALS AND NEWSLETTERS

EAP highlights journals, magazines, and newsletters that provide a forum, partly or fully, for phenomenological research relevant to the environment. The editors hope this information will help qualitative scholars find places of publication for their research. These outlets help our work to survive. Please make sure your libraries subscribe to them!

Places is a quarterly journal of environmental design that sometimes publishes articles relevant to environmental and architectural phenomenology. The journal emphasizes shorter essays with illustrations, including color graphics. *Places* recently changed publishers and is now supported by the Design History Foundation, 330 W. 42nd St., NY, NY 10036. The most recent issue, guest-edited by Clare Cooper Marcus, focuses on "The Future of Urban Open Space." Qualitative researchers represented include Cooper as well as Michael Brill, Lyn H. Lofland, Mark Francis, Randy Hester, and Anne Whiston Spirn. A valuable issue for those interested in a phenomenology of city.

Architecture and Behavior is an "international and interdisciplinary journal devoted to the man [sic]/built-environment relationship." This journal has been regularly supportive of phenomenological and related research. The most recent issue (vol. 5, no. 2, 1989) is entirely devoted to the "phenomenology of home," and contributors include such well-known phenomenological researchers as Gilles Barbey ("Introduction: Towards a Phenomenology of the Home"), Anne Buttimer ("Phoenix, Faust, Narcissus: In Search of Home"), and Carl F. Graumann ("Towards a Phenomenology of Being at Home").

The articles are presented both in English and French and are revised versions of papers from a symposium on the phenomenology of home held at the 1988 meetings of IAPS (the International Association for the Study of People in Their Physical Surroundings). In his introduction, Barbey writes that "the home is by nature immeasurable and inexhaustible. Phenomenological analysis, which, better than any other, makes it possible to approach the unsaid and implicit, helps us to relate our experience of a



TOWARD AN EXPERIENTIAL GRAPHICS?

Can there be a graphics of place and environmental experience? Some intriguing possibilities are offered by illustrations in Mary Hufford's *One Space, Many Places*, a qualitative study of the "Pinelands", a distinct natural and cultural region of coastal New Jersey (see noteworthy publications). This drawing illustrates the construction of a Pineland "crossway," a pole road that enables woodsmen to haul cedar timber over infirm swampland (Hufford, p. 69). This and other drawings by Jan Adkins.

given place in the form of a narrative or of sensory observation".

For further information on A & B, contact: Prof. Kaj Noschis, Architecture Department, Federal Institute of Technology, P. O. Box 555, 1001 Lausanne, Switzerland.

Environmental Ethics is an interdisciplinary, quarterly journal "dedicated to the philosophical aspects of environmental problems." One of the leading, if not the leading, environmental philosophy publication. The journal has been especially good for providing a forum for a Heideggerian environmental ethics. In the last few years there have appeared seminal essays by Michael Zimmerman, Bruce Foltz, and Jim Cheney (see noteworthy publications). Address: Prof. Eugene Hargrove, Editor, Department of Philosophy, University of Georgia, Athens, GA. 30602.

The Journal of Environmental Psychology is a British quarterly journal that is to be admired for its efforts to present a variety of methodological, epistemological and ontological approaches to environment-behavior and place research. The journal has published major phenomenological articles by David Seamon, Perla Korosec-Sefathy, and Jonathan Simms. Contact David Canter, Psychology Department, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey GU 25XH, England.

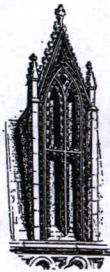
The Newsletter of the Study Project in Phenomenology of the Body (SPPB) is edited by phenomenological philosopher Elizabeth A. Behnke. This study project is "a research venture and networking organization devoted to studying the lived body and bodily experience, in their invariant structures and their historical and cultural variations. The SPPB is phenomenological in orientation, but interdisciplinary in scope." Clearly, a crux of environmental and architectural experience is the body, and this newsletter is excellent in informing readers of recent research, publications, and events. A subscription (for two issues) is \$ 5 a year. Well worth it. Write

to: Elizabeth A. Behnke, SPPB Coordinator, P. O. Box 0-2, Felton, CA. 95018.

CONFERENCES

"Sacred Values of Land and Sustainable Communities" will be the theme of the third *Spirit of Place* symposium. Organized by James Swan and the Institute for the Study of Natural Systems, this conference will be held at Mesa Verde National Park, September 18-23, 1990. One focus is how sacred values can be effectively translated into environmental design. The conference will also emphasize the unique contributions of the peoples of the Four Corners to modern society. Further information is available from: Institute for the Study of Natural Systems, Box 637, Mill Valley, CA. 94942 (415-383-5064).

"Coming of Age" is the theme of the 21st annual conference of the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA), April 6-9, 1990, hosted by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. As its support of this newsletter indicates, EDRA has consistently supported qualitative approaches to environment-behavior-design research. Each year at the EDRA meeting, there are several papers and sessions dealing with phenomenological and related research focusing on environmental experience and design. The deadline for paper presentations has past, but information on attending the conference can be had from: Prof. Robert Selby, Chair, EDRA 21, School of Architecture, 608 Taft Drive, Champaign, Illinois 61820 (217-244-6514).



CONFERENCE REPORT: 1989 SPEP & SPHS MEETINGS, DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

1989 marked the first time in several years that the Society for Phenomenology and Philosophy (SPEP) and the Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences (SPHS) have met together, a welcome event for people interested in the implications of phenomenology for environmental and architectural research. The centennial of German phenomenological philosopher Martin Heidegger's birth was a focus of the meetings, as was apparent from sessions devoted to his impact on the interpretation of Western culture and on current methodological approaches.

Perhaps more strongly than previous years, these meetings examined the political and social dimensions of Heidegger's thought, in particular, and the phenomenological tradition, in general. For example, papers covered topics such as the space of subjectivity, praxis and social theory, and the relationship between knowledge and power.

The two major emphases of the meetings were Heidegger's problematic relation to National Socialism and feminist interpretations of phenomenology. Two major sessions and several individual papers were devoted to Heidegger's political position and the implications for the continued application of his thought.

Debate centered on whether Heidegger's engagement with the Nazis was either a deeply unfortunate personal mistake or a systematic trait of his philosophy. Though there was no consensus, it was emphasized that the need is for more thoughtful attention to the meaning of what is known and for the recognition of responsibility for our own prejudices that bear on the future of an increasingly technological world. As philosopher William Richardson concluded, though we are not in any position to judge Heidegger's authenticity, we must attend to our own.

In this regard, there was strong interest in the contribution of feminist insights to phenomenology. There were presentations on "phenomenology and women's experience," "femininity and the sublime," "feminism and

poststructuralism," "French feminist theory," and "feminist phenomenological analysis."

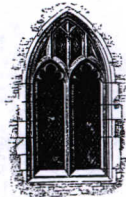
A major phase of rethinking the modes of embodied consciousness appears to be underway, exploring, for example, women's bodily, unconscious, and socialized engagement in the world.

There were a number of sessions and papers of special interest for environmental and architectural phenomenologists. Fundamental aesthetic-social issues were developed by analysis of the sublime experience of nature through art, the environmental vision of Anselm Kiefer, and popular-media images of the earth. There were also presentations on the phenomenology of Midwestern porches and a Heideggerian interpretation of architecture as opening for the world.

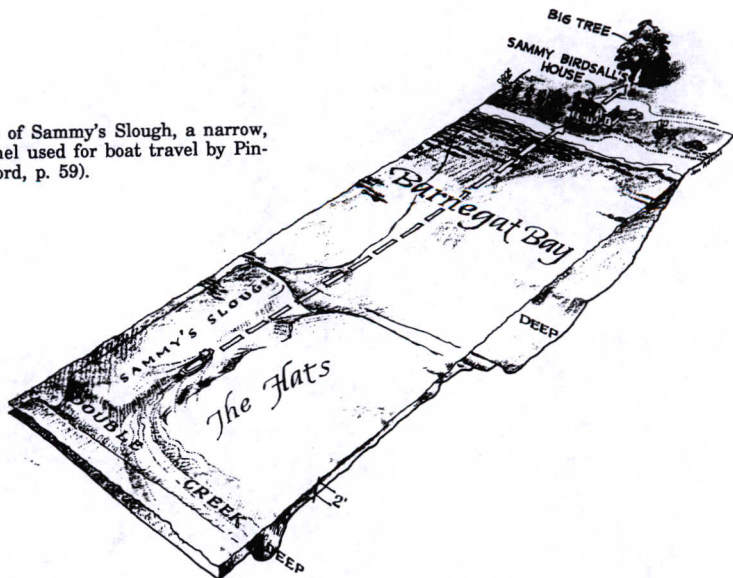
The fruitfulness of phenomenology was most apparent in exploring the existential fact that the environment is never given as a pure or brute fact (as positivism would have it) but, instead, is always already interpreted. That environmental meaning is the holistic result of architectural, artistic, and perceptual patterns means an inexorable intertwining between the dual tasks of: (1) environmental research and interpretation; and (2) architectural design.

Moreover, given the important social and political themes raised in the conference, it is clear that a phenomenology of architecture and environment has a primary responsibility to nurture wholesome modes of dwelling in a technological age. Such a value-centered approach is not idiosyncratic or arbitrary, but a call we ignore at our own personal and professional peril.

Robert Mugerauer
University of Texas at Austin



On the right is a map of Sammy's Slough, a narrow, unmarked ocean channel used for boat travel by Pineland fishermen (Hufford, p. 59).



NOTEWORTHY PUBLICATIONS

EAP will regularly publish an annotated list of recent work relevant, either directly or indirectly, to environmental and architectural phenomenology. Please send along items you would like announced, including, if possible, a brief overview (100-300 words).

Mary Hufford, 1986. *One Space, Many Places: Folklife and Land Use in New Jersey's Pinelands National Reserve*.

Washington, D.C.: American Folklife Center.

In this 144-page monograph, folklorist Mary Hufford and a team of researchers seek to articulate the sense of place of the *Pinelands*, a distinctive cultural-geographic region of over 300 square miles in southern-coastal New Jersey. In 1976, the U.S. Congress designated the Pinelands as the first National Cultural Reserve. One long-term aim was an assessment of the region's environmental, human, and cultural resources.

Hufford's report is one result of this assessment and is a striking example of one effort to understand sense of place through multiple qualitative methods that include interviews, observation, direct participation, archival

research, and interpretation of folklore.

The report is simply written yet does a notable job of maintaining a conceptual viewpoint, drawing largely on folklorist and humanistic-geographic traditions. Also, the drawings and other illustrations (several featured in this issue of *EAP*) suggest innovative possibilities for graphics illustrating environmental experience. A good text for introducing undergraduate students to research on sense of place.

Stephen Perrella, ed., 1988. *Form; Being; Absence: Pratt Journal of Architecture*, vol. 2 (spring). New York: Rizzoli.

For phenomenological researchers who believe that there are various universal, invariant qualities of environmental and architectural experience, this issue of the *Pratt Journal of Architecture* is a useful confrontation and a way to examine one's intellectual convictions.

In the last several years there has been a growing rift between, on the one hand, reflexive scholars, following Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, who believe in a shared existen-

tial givenness; and, on the other hand, post-structural thinkers, especially those influenced by the French philosopher Derrida, who believe that the world and life have no final order or core and who, therefore, emphasize relativist interpretation and "deconstruction."

This edited collection speaks largely for the latter group (though, inexplicably, there are selections from Heidegger and the architect Dalibor Vesely that contradict the deconstructionist perspective). Editor Perrella describes his aim as follows: "The foundational/conservative Heideggerian influences in architectural theory which this journal seeks to displace may be found in the work of such theorists as Christian Norberg-Schulz, Kenneth Frampton, and Alberto Perez-Gomez, who are influenced by Heidegger. Each maintains that Heidegger offers an account of a return to an origin, and each argues for architectural practices informed by natural context, regionality, or personal authenticity" (p. 85).

Instead, emphasizing the "radical" turn that Derrida brings to Heidegger's thinking, Perrella calls for a continuous process of intellectual undermining: "In the construction of knowledge about what is present, the gap—if scrutinized—become, instead of foundational, an endless abyss" (p. 84).

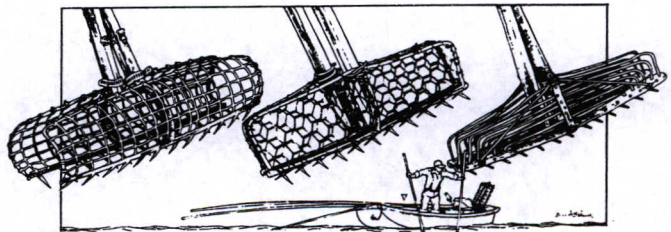
The potential contribution of the decon-

structivist approach is its unceasing aim to undercut and to question all taken-for-granted elements of an idea, ideal, way of life, art work and so forth. The great danger of deconstructionism is the frequent tendency to loose sight of the thing being interpreted and to fall back on an arbitrary, highly idiosyncratic, understanding of the interpreter.

Further, the deconstructivists often seem not to take their task of interpretation seriously and responsibly; meaning too often is seen to be meaningless. As the contributor Elliot Feingold approvingly makes the point, "language is nothing but metaphor: endless differentiating, substituting, supplementing, leaving traces and displacing itself....Heidegger retains a belief in truth, a truth in Being, whereas Derrida dissolves the notion of truth into the obliqueness of metaphor; everything is indirection; things are not unconcealed, they are oblique" (p. 83).

The frequent glibness and titillation of deconstructionist work is unintentionally illustrated by Perrella's efforts to provide examples of art, design, and criticism that supposedly "displace" the conservative Heideggerian vantage point. He gathers together graphic and written work from such unrelated figures as Andy Warhol, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Aldo Rossi, John Hejduk, Peter Eisenman, Mark Wigley, and Jeffrey Kipnis.

Barrel, keyport, and wooden heads of "tongs" used by Pineland fishermen to catch oysters and clams. Said one fisherman: "You can catch oysters with wooden heads, when you can't catch anything but mud with the other ones. You have to feel your tongs, and hold up on them, and you can pretty near feel the oyster goin' in" (Hufford, p. 70 & 71).



To the outsider, much of this work seems senseless, silly, impenetrable, or self-indulgent. Many of the examples are simply designed or written *badly*. On the other hand, this volume is useful in that it illustrates the state of confusion and superficiality underlying much architectural design and thinking today. The editors of *EAP* would welcome reviews of this volume, both pro and con.

Michael Benedikt, ed., 1988. *Center, vol. 4: Buildings and Reality*. New York: Rizzoli.

The 14 articles in this volume were originally presentations at an architectural symposium at the University of Texas at Austin in 1986. For environmental and architectural phenomenology, the collection contains two invaluable essays: Karsten Harries's "The Voices of Space," and Robert Mugerauer's "Derrida and Beyond."

Mugerauer overviews the basic premises of a Derridian deconstructionist perspective and then explores how architects Peter Eisenman, Wolfgang Prix and Helmut

Swiczinsky (Coop Himmelblau), Emilio Ambasz, and I. M. Pei reflect in various ways a "deconstruction of architecture itself" (p. 69).

Mugerauer gives no clear answer to a way beyond Derrida and architectural deconstruction. Rather, the author leaves us with a question--"is there yet a way in our time to recover a genuine belonging with reality and truth?"

Mugerauer's hope is in an architectural language that provides meaningful access to "motion and orientation, to the sense of darkness and light, of inside, outside and between. Because things do still speak to us, we can achieve an architectural vocabulary of doors, columns, roofs, and so on, which is non-arbitrary. In its power to transform space into place, building could provide a dwelling place where we could belong in community, in a specific-regional-landscape" (p. 75).

In suggesting guidance in creating such an environmental language that speaks just through being what it is, Mugerauer points

to themes in Harries's essay, "Voices of Space." His aim is exactly the kind of architectural language for which Mugerauer asks.

Harries illustrates this language through the themes of vertical/horizontal and inside/outside. He concludes that "Buildings speak to us because space speaks to us, where such speech is nothing other than the way in which our own being-in-the-world, in its essential spatiality speaks to us....Successful building lets us attend to [the voices of space] by representing and thereby making conspicuous the natural symbolism of verticals and horizontals, light and dark, inside and outside, to name a few phenomena" (p. 47).

After the presumption and confusion of most of the contributions of Perrella's *Form; Being; Absence*, these two essays revitalize the reader and offer substance, clarity, and-most important--hope.

Donald E. Davis, 1989. *Ecophilosophy: A Field Guide to the Literature*. San Pedro, Ca.: R. & E. Miles. ISBN 0-936810-18-1. \$8.95, softcover.

As Davis defines it, ecophilosophy "seeks the unqualified re-unification of humans with nature; a moral and political order where human civilization is brought into harmony with the natural world" (p. xix). Most often, this interdisciplinary subject has been called "deep ecology," and Davis provides lucid overviews of that literature plus other related work. There are 282 references plus two appendices listing relevant publications and organizations. At least for environment-behavior researchers, many of the references will be new. In coming issues, *EAP* will highlight references in the book that seem particularly relevant to a phenomenological approach to environment.

In fact, Davis is familiar with much of the direct phenomenological research on environment--what he calls "ecophenomenology" (p. 95). He writes: "As the lines for and against a human-centered environmental ethics were being drawn in the 1970s..., the ecophilosophical corpus saw in the 1980s the

introduction of more phenomenologically grounded interpretations of the nature/human relationship.... In many ways, [this research] has steered clear of the normative metaphysics so characteristic of the earlier ecophilosophical literature. Indeed, the best of these studies have provided readers with nature ontologies that are both philosophically sophisticated and empirically sound. Unfortunately, a great deal of this literature is still burdened by the political quietism pervading phenomenological discourse in general" (pp. xxi-xxii).

Is the last comment true? The editors would appreciate reader response.

Jim Cheney, 1989. "Postmodern Environmental Ethics: Ethics as Bioregional Narrative," in *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 11, pp. 117-134.

This article is important for phenomenological research on place and region.

Cheney argues that place is central to an individual and group's sense of self, community, and world. He calls for an "ethical vernacular"--a strikingly chosen phrase that refers to "a bioregional contextualization of self and community.... [L]andscapes which function as metaphors of self and community and figure into those mythical narratives which give voice to the emergence of self and community" (p. 134).

Though Cheney says that real-world examples of such an ethical vernacular and "bioregional narrative" are beyond the scope of his article, he does provide a convincing case against relativist postmodernism.

He writes: "... in the light of postmodernist deconstruction of modernist totalizing and foundationalist discourse, can we any longer make sense of the idea of privileged discourse, discourse which can lay claim to having access to the way things are? The dominant postmodernist view is that this is not possible, that language can be understood only as either a set of tools created for various human purposes or as the free creation of conscious persons or communities. This being so, it is argued, we should prac-

tice ontological abstinence in our beliefs about the relation between language and world. To the extent that the notion of objectivity enters into postmodernist discourse at all it tends to take the form that 'truth' is simply the result of *social negotiation*, agreement achieved by the participants in particular conversations" (pp. 118-119).

Clearly, this issue of relativist vs. invariant truths is a central issue in regard to this newsletter, since existential phenomenology looks toward various universal, underlying patterns of human life and experience in the belief that these patterns will help one to understand specific times and places. Reaction to Cheney's article or more general comments would be welcome.

Tim Davis, 1989. "Photography and Landscape Studies," *Landscape Journal*, vol. 8, no. 1 (spring), pp. 1-12.

Davis argues that, as positivist modes of environmental research increasingly recognize their empirical narrowness, the study of creative photography "may come to play a more important role in scholarly investigations of the cultural landscape" (p. 1).

He concludes that "creative photography's potential for combining poetry with phenomenological accuracy makes it an ideal medium for communicating the symbolic and experiential qualities of geographic places" (ibid.). This essay is important for phenomenological research dealing with non-verbal texts as a source for experiential description of environment and architecture.

One particularly striking passage: "Photographers seeks to encounter the significance of places by looking closely and accurately at observable phenomena, rather than by abstracting the landscape or deconstructing it into analytic categories. Like the phenomenologist, the photographer seeks to discover the significant details that reveal the essence of place.... By discovering and presenting 'the part which contains the whole', both photographers and phenomenologists deal simultaneously with the particular and the general qualities of existence" (p. 10).

David M. Fetterman, 1988. *Qualitative Approaches to Evaluation in Education: The Silent Scientific Revolution*. New York: Praeger.

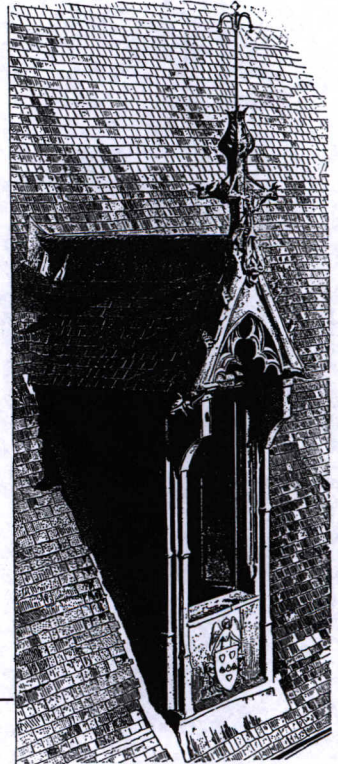
An edited collection of 14 essays that illustrate the range of qualitative approaches making an impact on educational evaluation. Though none of the essays are explicitly phenomenological or discuss environmental themes directly, the collection is useful in terms of conceptual, epistemological, and methodological discussion.

In his introductory essay, Fetterman writes that "A multitude of qualitative approaches exist. They may be scientifically based or artistically oriented. One approach may appear radically phenomenological; another, mildly positivistic in style, tone and formation. Epistemological and methodological

pluralism is a reality in evaluation. This volume explores this... diversity" (p. 3).

David Seamon & Robert Mugerauer, eds., 1989. *Dwelling, Place and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, New York: Columbia University Press. Softcover reprint, \$15.00.

The seventeen essays of this collection, originally published in 1985, explore such topics as the blind person's everyday environment, the landscape of sound, traditional groups' sense of place and sacred space, the nature of home and dwelling, and environmental design as place making. Contributors include, among others, architects, philosophers, geographers, and psychologists. The volume illustrates well the use of phenomenological approaches in "applied" contexts.



Windows on the World: A Class Exercise

Our childhood homes hold special feelings and memories for most of us. Recalling special places in the childhood home is an exercise that can sensitize prospective designers to attributes in the physical environment that have lasting importance and meaning. The following five examples, drawn from student exercises in a course I teach entitled "Contemporary Homes," illustrate the place of windows in connecting one's small world inside the home with the larger world beyond. I would like to thank the following interior design students at Kansas State University for permission to share their work: Jeri Ochs, Marjean Regehr, Annette Walahoski, and Michelle Wheat.

"My first memory of any environment is that of the house in which I spent my first four years of life. Being so young I remember very little, but what I do remember is a big plate-glass picture window that faced the street. The window was in the kitchen and the table was next to it so when eating we could look outside. What made that window so special was that we could hang our homemade Halloween decorations on it for everyone to see. The window set the mood and reminded me of what day was coming. I must say that even now Halloween is one of my favorite holidays."

"As for my favorite place to play or escape inside our house, my place was my room.... This room was separated from the rest of the house. The room was warmer in summer and colder in winter than the rest of the house, but it was my room. The windows faced west so I could watch the sunset when I wanted."

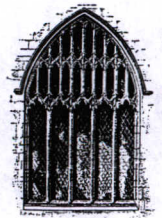
"The dining room was very important.... Since it was long and rather narrow, I loved to run through it. It always felt spacious because of its shape, its high ceiling, and the fact that it received much natural daylight both from its own windows and

those of adjoining rooms.... My room was bright and cheery as it faced the east. This allowed the sun to shine in my windows in the morning and wake me up. To this day I prefer a bedroom that faces east for this reason. Also, my room overlooked the entire farm, which was the best view in the house."

"Our house was really big and roomy, but everyone seemed to share everything and nobody seemed to mind. There were times though, when I wanted to be alone. Usually I went to my room and just lay on my bed or played with my dolls or my toy stove. My whole south wall was covered with windows, and I can remember staring out of them for long periods of time just gazing at the countryside. I always liked having a lot of windows in my room. I could see a long way out of them, and it seemed like I always knew what was going on and who was coming and going."

"Our whole family spent a lot of time in the living room, especially in the winter.... I loved the big windows because I could see what was going on outside. We lived on a busy street and there were always cars, people, and bikers just outside our front door.... I can remember many evenings standing between the window and closed draperies, waiting for company to arrive. I felt secluded and out of sight from my family. The draperies felt good brushing the back of my head, and I liked the feel of the cool air that seeped through the cracks. I can still see the headlights of countless cars driving by and I wondered where they all were going."

Margaret Boschetti



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EAP welcomes letters, reviews, conference information, and so forth. Please send correspondence and subscriptions to David Seamon, EAP, Architecture Department, Seaton 211, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Ks. 66506.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

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