



Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology

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This issue of *EAP* completes 34 years of publication and begins with items of interest and citations received. Next is a book note on architect **Miguel Guitart's** *Behind Architectural Filters* (2022), which focuses on the experiential relationships between buildings' exteriors and interiors.

This issue includes four essays. First, zoologist **Stephen Wood** continues his consideration of encountering the natural

world, a theme he explored in the winter/spring 2022 and 2023 *EAP* issues. Wood's focus is the phenomenon of *jizz*—the singular presence of a living being instantly recognizable without the involvement of conscious attention. Wood's focus is the jizz of birds and what such a mode of identification offers ornithology.

In a second essay, geographer **Edward Relph** considers aspects of a phenomenology of climate change by examining how

the phenomenon is understood and experienced via both everyday and extreme environmental situations and events. Relph points out that phenomenological studies of localities might be one important source helping to facilitate adaptations to climate change in particular places.

In the third essay this issue, philosopher **Robert Josef Kozljanič** overviews the study of *genius loci* (sense of place), giving particular attention to recent research by,

among others, **Gernot Böhme, Tonino Griffero, Edward Relph, Hermann Schmitz, David Seamon, and Tomáš Valena**. Kozljanič points out that all these researchers “take pre-theoretical lifeworld experiences seriously and use a new phenomenological approach in which the concept of lived space, felt body, and spatially manifest atmospheres is important or even crucial.”

The last essay this issue is artist and place researcher **Victoria King's** account of her lifelong search for veracity via intellectual and artistic striving. She recounts her Australian experiences with indigenous women of the Outback and their work in sand painting. She explains how, for traditional Aboriginal communities, “art, country, spirituality, and kinship relationships are all interconnected.” King gives particular attention to the paintings of **Emily Kngwarreye** (c. 1910–1996), an elderly woman artist from Utopia, an area of 16 small Aboriginal communities spread across 2,400 kilometers in Australia's red, arid interior.



Left: *Floating World*, Victoria King, oil on canvas, 40 x 40 cm. See King's essay, “A Place Called Utopia,” in this *EAP* issue, p. 25.

Items of interest

The 19th annual **International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments (IASTE)** will be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, January 5–9, 2024. The conference theme is “The Dynamism of Tradition” and relates to IASTE’s definition of tradition as “a dynamic project for the re-interpretation of the past in light of the present and often in the service of the future.”

One conference aim is to facilitate “dialogue on the process of understanding how traditions emerge in the current modern world and how they may have changed over a short period of time to deal with the rapid pace of globalization and information technology in the 21st century.” coordinator@iaste.org.

The **Architectural Humanities Research Association (AHRA)** sponsors research examining experiential and cultural aspects of buildings and architectural meaning. AHRA’s 20th-annual conference focuses on “Situated Ecologies of Care” and will be held at the UK’s Portsmouth School of Architecture, October 25–27, 2023. The group’s current newsletter and conference information are available at: <https://ahra-architecture.org/>.

Published monthly since 2002, the **Newsletter of Phenomenology** is a partner of the **Open Commons of Phenomenology** and presents information relating to phenomenological research. Its major themes of coverage are: (1) upcoming events and conferences; (2) new books; (3) recent journal publications; and (4) general news. Readers are welcome to submit relevant entries. <http://newsletter-phenomenology.open.org/archives>.

Lifeworld studies

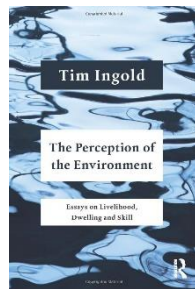
The December 2022 *Continental Philosophy Review* is a special issue devoted to “Varieties of the Lifeworld: Phenomenology and Aesthetic Experience.” Edited by **Iulian Apostolescu** and **Stefano Marino**, the eight articles include **Günter Figal’s** “Lifeworld art: Husserl’s *Crisis* book and beyond”; **Shaun Gallagher’s** “The unaf-

fordable and the sublime”; **Elodie Boublil’s** “Healing the lifeworld: On personal and collective individuation”; **Annika Schlitte’s** “Lines made by walking—the aesthetic experience of landscape”; and **David Seamon’s** “Moments of realization: Extending homeworld in British-African novelist Doris Lessing’s *Four-Gated City*.” This issue of *CPT* is open source and available at:

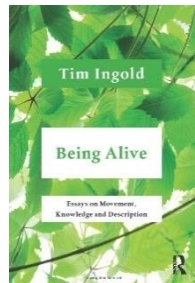
<https://link.springer.com/journal/11007/volumes-and-issues/55-4>.

Three books by Tim Ingold

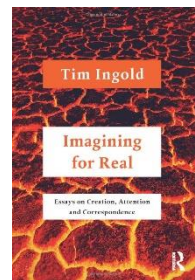
Routledge Publishing has reprinted two books by **Tim Ingold**, the British social anthropologist who has made important contributions to phenomenological thinking about places and environmental experience.



Originally published in 2000, *The Perception of the Environment* considers how human beings perceive and encounter their surroundings. The focus is how people inhabit and dwell in their environments as this dwelling has both biological and cultural determinants.



First published in 2011, *Being Alive* considers aspects of everyday human living, including the lived nature of making things and the role of weather in human life.

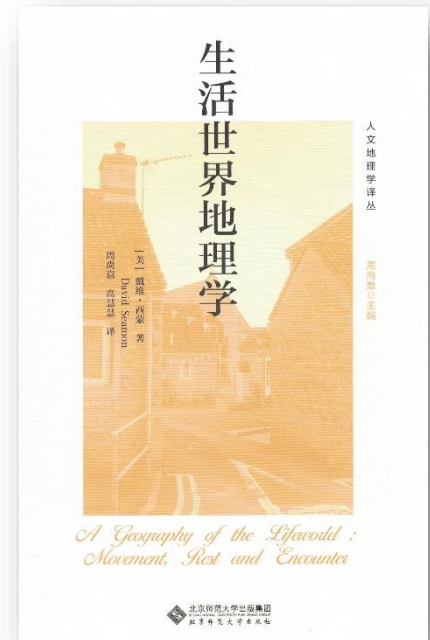


Published in 2022, *Imagining for Real* is related to these two reprints and considers how imagination plays a role in our perception of the world.

Routledge has published these three books as a set, which is described as an “extraordinary intellectual project of one of the world’s most renowned anthropologists.”

Chinese translation, *Geography of the Lifeworld*

David Seamon’s *A Geography of the Lifeworld* (1979, reprinted 2015) has been published in Chinese translation. Chinese geographer Dr. **Shangyi Zhou** initiated this project, and Chinese doctoral student **Huihui Gao** contributed to the translation. The book is published by Beijing Normal University Press. The ISBN is 978-7-303-27114-6.



Citations received

Julio Bermudez, 2023. Spirituality in Architectural Education. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press.

Chapters in this edited volume describe architectural-design studios dealing with various aspects of spirituality. Contributors include **Craig W. Hartman**, **Juhani Pallasmaa**, **Alberto Campo Baeza**, **Claudio Silvestrin**, **Eliana Bórmida**, **Michael J. Crosbie**, **Prem Chandavarkar**, **Rick Joy**, **Susan Jones**, and **Daniel Libeskind**.

Galen Cranz, 2020. *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; originally published 1982 and now open-access.

Out of print for several years, this sociologist's book is a seminal text in the fields of park history and urban studies. Cranz identifies four shifting conceptions of American park design: *Pleasure grounds* (1850–1900); *reform parks* (1900–1930); *recreational facilities* (1930–1965); and *open-space systems* (1965–2010).

In a new preface to the open-source edition, she reviews recent research on parks and identifies the latest conception of design and planning: *Sustainable parks* (2010–). Cranz identifies three key features of these parks: (1) resource self-sufficiency; (2) integration with the larger urban system to solve problems beyond the park's borders; (3) new modes of aesthetic expression also applicable to other public spaces. The open-access digital edition is available at <https://direct.mit.edu/books/oa-monograph/5052/The-Politics-of-Park-Design-A-History-of-Urban>.

Rana Foroohar, 2022. *Homecoming: The Path to Prosperity in a Post-Global World*. NY: Crown.

Place regeneration appears in many different venues recently, and this *Financial Times* business columnist highlights this topic economically by arguing that wealth must be shared more broadly via realizing that “economic well-being isn’t just about growth at the international or even national level, but rather about real people, human beings living in specific communities. People matter. Place matters. All places.”

In summarizing this shift to a regional and place-based economics, Foroohar envisions “a far greater number and variety of communities becoming economic hubs as both policy and business models push back against the existing trends of centralization and globalization.... The needs of

companies and consumers will be balanced with those of workers and citizens.... Decentralized technologies in the hands of more people will allow for new kinds of bottom-up, locally driven growth.” Below is Foroohar’s description of “Anywheres” and “Somewheres.”

“Anywheres” & “Somewheres”

[Anywheres] are the global technocrats, who include not only rich elites... but also the international class of technocratic policy makers, executives, think tankers, literary types, and all the other “meritocrats” who have climbed up the slippery pole of twenty-first-century success and are now knowledge workers who can live anywhere and be employed most anywhere.

Somewheres are the people for whom globalization has been hard. They are typically (though not always) less educated, more traditional, and far more place-bound, sometimes by choice, but often by force.

They are rooted where they live for myriad reasons, some having to do with a lack of nationally or internationally marketable skills or of enough money to move to where better jobs are, but also because of the presence of family communities and clans that have helped support an otherwise precarious life... or simply because they are more committed to their own cultural and community than your average upper-middle-class American college graduate who is ready to move wherever the next promotion takes her (pp. 196–97).

Charlie Hailey, 2021. *The Porch: Meditations on the Edge of Nature*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

This architect provides an “armchair exploration of past porches and those of the future, moving from ancient Greece to contemporary Sweden, from the White House roof to the Anthropocene home.” Includes

discussion of the porch in the lives of Rachel Carson, Wendell Berry, Eudora Welty, Zora Neale Hurston, John Dewey, Louis Kahn, and Paul Strand. As explained in the sidebar below, Hailey identifies four key qualities of life-enhancing porches—*tilt*, *air*, *screen*, and *blue*.

Essence and paradox

As an architect, I am fascinated with how porches are built, how they function, and what their built form means. Building a porch taps into the timeless, elemental lessons of archetypes like Marc-Antoine Laugier’s hut, Henry David Thoreau’s cabin, and Gottfried Semper’s origins of architecture in mound, hearth, enclosure, and roof. A porch must also negotiate equally fundamental edges of architecture, where experience tempers essence and building yields to nature.

I think there are four core elements to thinking about a porch, each carrying porch’s essence and paradox: *tilt*, *air*, *screen*, and *blue*. *Tilt* works from the basic premise that slope yields balance. *Air* mixes freshness with conditioning and public with private. *Screen* maintains openness with enclosure. *Blue* makes the invisible visible and finds intersections of the actual and the imagined.

These four elements demonstrate the fundamental nature of the porch to our humanity, as they also build a case for the porch as an indispensable site to feel, understand, and address climate and its changes. As a whole, they tell a story of dwelling and home, resilience and acclimation (p. 4).

John W. M. Krummel, 2019. Place and Horizon. In Peter D. Herschok and Roger T. Ames, eds., *Philosophies of Place: An Intercultural Conversation*, pp. 65-87. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Drawing on a range of thinkers including **Otto Bollnow** and **Martin Heidegger**, this philosopher aims to examine a “phenomenological understanding of place in relation to horizon and alterity.” He writes: “While [a horizon] unfolds space for us, we can never step beyond it to its other side. Yet the horizon necessarily belongs to the world. Without the horizon, nothing will cohere. But it is not a thing in the world. On the one hand, it opens the place of spatial unfolding for us and, on the other hand, it bounds it” (p. 65).

Drew Leder, 2023. *The Healing Body: Creative Responses to Illness, Aging, and Affliction*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern Univ. Press.

This philosopher and medical doctor reviews current research on the phenomenology of the body, of pain and suffering, of disability, and of aging. He draws on insights from continental philosophy as well as from Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism. The book is said to be a “uniquely creative and refreshingly innovative contribution to contemporary philosophy, demonstrating the importance of the philosophical method to the wider culture.”

Setha Low, 2023. *Why Public Space Matters*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

This anthropologist considers why urban public spaces are crucial to city life and provides a comprehensive review of public-space research, focusing on specific real-world examples ranging from New York City to Paris and Buenos Aires. A

staunch defense of the significance of public space in sustaining urban places. Includes a final chapter on “How to Study Public Space,” illustrating a study of New York City’s Tompkins Square Park.

Scott Peeples, 2020. *The Man of the Crowd: Edgar Allan Poe and the City*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.

American writer and poet **Edgar Allan Poe** (1809–1849) regularly changed residences, seeking work in American magazines and living in the cities that produced them. This Professor of English describes “Poe’s rootless life in the cities, neighborhoods, and rooms where he lived and worked, exploring how each new place left its enduring mark on the writer and his craft.” Peeples concludes that Poe was “a man whose outlook and career were shaped by the cities where he lived, longing for a stable home.”

Jenny Roe and Lyla McCay, 2021. *Restorative Cities: Urban Design for Mental Health and Wellbeing*. London: Bloomsbury.

These psychologists develop what they call a “restorative urbanism” that considers how urban design and planning contribute to mental health, wellness, and the quality of everyday life. They illustrate how “certain places foster recovery from mental fatigue, depression, stress, and anxiety.”

Chapters in the book explicate various dimensions of restorative cities identified by seven themes: inclusive, green (presence of nature), blue (i.e., incorporating water settings), sensory, neighborly, active (promoting agent-centered mobility), and playable (offering opportunities for creative activities, including play). The authors provide conceptual drawings at neighborhood and city scales for each of these seven themes as well as summary images.

M. Beth Schlemper, Karen D. Adams, Maria Lewicka, and others, 2023. Yi-Fu Tuan’s

Legacy: Impacts on *The Geographical Review*, Disciplines, Scholarship, and Teaching. *The Geographical Review*, spring on-line issue; <https://doi.org/10.1080/00167428.2023.2191267>.

This set of retrospective essays commemorates humanistic geographer **Yi-Fu Tuan** (1930–2022) via a “diverse group of scholars in geography, science education, and environmental psychology, who address Tuan’s influence on their professional and personal lives, research, and teaching. Re-occurring themes across all the individual essays include place, home, and human experience. In addition, each author stresses the broader implications of Tuan’s scholarship on peace, love, caring, and belonging.”

David Seamon, 2023. *Phenomenological Perspectives on Place, Lifeworlds, and Lived Emplacement: The Selected Writings of David Seamon*. London: Routledge.

This collection of 17 previously published articles and chapters discusses such topics as body-subject, the lived body, place ballets, environmental serendipity, home-worlds, and the pedagogy of place and placemaking. The volume begins with an introductory chapter, “Going Places,” that overviews Seamon’s academic trajectory and summarizes the book’s three-part outline of “the value of phenomenology for studying place” (four chapters); “understanding place phenomenologically” (five chapters); and “places, lived emplacement, and place presence” (eight chapters).

Ingrid Leman Stefanovic, ed., 2023. *Conversations on Ethical Leadership: Lessons Learned from University Governance*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press.

Highlighting ethical leadership strategies, contributors to this volume examine features of effective decision-making at all levels of an organization. Chapters address challenges faced by universities and apply those lessons to the broader community of the public and private sectors. The volume includes entries by architect **Thomas Barrie** and philosophers **Stefanovic**, **Robert Mugerauer**, and **Tricia Glazebrook**. The sidebar, below, highlights an excerpt from Stefanovic's "Concluding Remarks: Building a University's Sense of Place."

An institution's sense of place

As a philosopher by training, I believe that one of the great moments of modern thought occurs with the realization that human beings are not, as Descartes surmised, simply isolated subjects or solipsistic, thinking *things*, situated in a world of discrete material objects. On the contrary, our interpretation of the world is always fluid: in as much as we exist, we exist *some-where*, in *relation* to others, primordially situated within the context of some place geographically, culturally, temporally, politically, and indeed, ontologically....

Simply put, it is impossible to exist in the absence of place. That acknowledgement is more than just a trivial theoretical statement. Instead, it reflects the cardinal reality of our historically lived, embodied experience of the world and, I suggest, can significantly inform our understanding of what universities should be today and in the future.

University leaders would be wise to acknowledge that an institution's sense of place is difficult to articulate because it is often obscure and oneiric, nowhere but everywhere, compelling yet unspoken. The concept of place has been said to "resist theoretical reductionism," acknowledging the reality that, often, "the world cannot

be understood in solely causal terms" (Janz 2005, 89).

Consequently, as noted by eminent place theorist Jeff Malpas, "in many of the most basic respects, our dependence on place is something that always remains implicit or else can only be explicated with great difficulty" (1999, 177).

Certainly, as we seek to better clarify and facilitate a productive and meaningful sense of place within our universities, it becomes evident that there is no silver bullet here: "place" is as diverse a notion as the innumerable local places that define it. That said, the place literature is voluminous, and part I [of this volume] sets the stage by discussing what we mean when we refer to a sense of place that is both virtuous and meaningful. Part II then extends that conversation to show how important values need to be preserved if university leaders are to identify and productively shape a university's identity and a positive, hopeful, empathetic sense of place (from the manuscript copy).

Maren Wehrle, 2023. Can the "Real World" Please Stand up? The Struggle for Normality as a Claim to Reality. Philosophy and Social Criticism. Vol. 49 (2), pp. 151-163.

This philosopher offers a phenomenology of normality, asking the central question of how "the experience of something as normal gives us a hint as to whether something really is (and not only for our own experience but for everyone's)?" She explores this question "by applying a phenomenological approach to lived normality," drawing on Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. See the sidebar, right.

Reality necessarily transcends

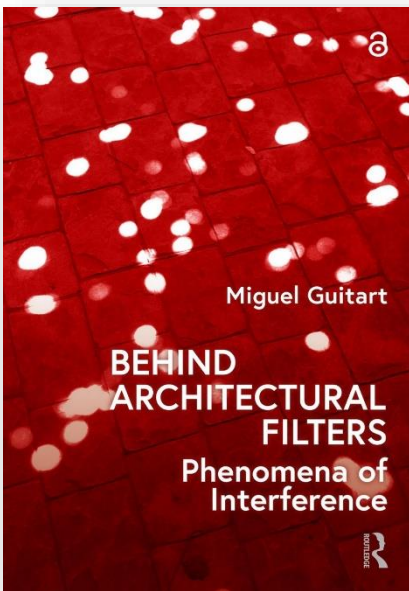
Normality is not used here as a mere descriptive category, nor does it refer to an objectively measured average. Rather, it refers to modes of experience in which the world and others ... appear as self-evident, familiar, and expected. It thus seems that with the loss of normality and the uncertainty accompanying this loss, the self-evidence of reality itself is put under scrutiny. Old habits and beliefs are no longer self-evident, but new ones have yet to be established. In this in-between state not only what should be, but also what actually is (or was) turns into a subject for negotiation or struggle (p. 152).

... in the long run, the real world will strike back, as it represents the horizon but also the ultimate material and physical limit to all experience and beliefs. Struggles against reality are not, in the end, sustainable. The external world or reality necessarily transcends each individual or group's perspective of it. The world or reality is thus not a fixed thing that can be defined a priori, but an open experiential horizon.

A plurality of perspectives is in this sense necessary to guard the truth: to prove the evidence of our appearances, we need constant processes of confirmation. We can only "trust" our experience with the help of others. Therefore, for the "real world" to stand up, we need perspectives that confirm, complement, and question our subjective take on the world (pp. 160–61).

Book note

Miguel Guitart, 2022. *Behind Architectural Filters: Phenomena of Interference*. London: Routledge.



This architect uses the concept of “architectural filter” to examine the experiential linkages between buildings’ “withins” and “withouts.” The focus is the degree of permeability that walls (and to a lesser degree, roofs and ceilings) facilitate between interior and exterior.

Guitart writes that “Architectural filters have always existed. They embody a timeless strategy in the conception of space that has consolidated its presence over time and across different qualities. The utilitarian and poetic qualities of these architectural mechanism have evolved through the filters’ adaptability and capacity to combine structure, function, and beauty” (p. 6).

Guitart’s book is a valuable complement to other phenomenological studies of

buildings, including Norwegian architectural theorist Thomas Thiis-Evensen’s *Archetypes in Architecture* (1987) and philosopher Karsten Harries’ *The Ethical Function of Architecture*.

Guitart illustrates his argument via a series of over 200 black-and-white photographs, most taken by the author. Chapter 3 is available as open source at the book’s webpage at www.routledge.com. Following, we excerpt a portion of Guitart’s concluding chapter.

An interpenetration

[A]rchitectural filters are spatial and temporal mechanisms mediating the relationship between the individual and the environment Filters relate to the essence of [human]kind through their capacity to go beyond the architectural container and create essential meaning. They have the capacity to incorporate time-proven traditional solutions, with opportunities for formal, organizational, and material innovation that have implications for both the present and the future...

In the evolution of the manipulation of the limit, architectural filters first emerged as solutions for purely functional needs. Only later did they become sophisticated mechanisms whose relational attributes came to address the interpenetration of light and vision between spaces. [The goal was] to mediate between two sides, typically an exterior medium that can be categorized as natural, and an interior medium that can be considered artificial, insofar as it is the consequence of human artifice or intervention. The connection between the new

architectural milieu and the existing natural surroundings is the departure point in the design of architectural filters....

Contemporary architecture explores the exchanges of energy that characterize a filtering boundary. Phenomenological space emerges when the physically constructed and the emotionally perceived do not coincide. The resulting architecture reaches beyond its own physical form and becomes a phenomenon. Architectural filters overcome architecture’s physical attributes and expand its capacity to generate sensory perceptions. The design of atmospheres in contemporary architecture incorporates the opportunity to create spaces that reinforce sensory experience. When shifting the perceptual focus from the material to the phenomenological, the resulting space embodies a series of sensations linked to ambient effects.

The conclusions extracted from the present text aspire to resonate with searches for universal and timeless qualities. The goal of this reflection aims to establish a set of positions leading to complementary pathways. The text targets the essence of architecture through phenomenological discussion. Today, like yesterday, and very much like tomorrow, we continue to need to provide solutions to spatial questions and problematics with very similar if not identical roots (p. 265, 267, 269).

Jizz: Science or Poetry?

Stephen Wood

Wood is an independent researcher in phenomenology and the environment. He has a PhD in systematic zoology from the University of Cambridge and has held fellowships in the Theoretical Physics Research Unit at London's Birkbeck College; and at the Nature Institute in Ghent, New York. The first and second parts of this essay were published in the 2022 and 2023 winter/spring issues of EAP. s.w.wood.88@cantab.net. © 2023 Stephen Wood. Captions for photographs, p. 12.

In this essay, I continue my examination of plant and animal encounters in place. In a previous essay, I described a spectrum of encounters with birds ranging from obliviousness to heightened contact (Wood 2023). I explained how, in the most intensely heightened encounters, I captured the bird's *jizz*, that unique quality of a living being that allows an identification in a flash of insight.

Here, I explore the theme of *jizz* in more detail. What does *jizz* offer the science of ornithology? Is *jizz* identification reliable? Is *jizz* with its poetic images and flashes of insight unsuited to an analytical, rational approach to ornithology?

Introducing jizz

In his *Bird Haunts and Nature Memories*, ornithologist T. A. Coward introduced the term *jizz* with the following romantic fable:

A West Coast Irishman was familiar with the wild creatures which dwelt on or visited his rocks and shores; at a glance, he could name them, usually correctly, but if asked how he knew them, would reply, "By their 'jizz'" (Coward 1922, p. 141).

For Coward, *jizz* was "something which instantly registers identity on the brain ... without pause for mental analysis" (Coward 1922, p. 142). Identification by *jizz* involved an intuitive grasp of the wholeness of the living creature and transcended logical analysis. It was not confined to birds:

How do we recognise the bank vole, seen for a second in the lane, the long lean rat which appears and vanishes like a grey streak, the pipistrelle flitting in the dusk round the barn? How do we know the daisy in the field, the sturdy oak? Is it by colour, size, length of tail, or shape of wing, by petal, form of leaf, or fruit? No; the small mammal and the plant alike have their jizz (Coward 1922, p. 143).



Among modern commentators, sociologist of science Rebecca Ellis finds Coward's account of *jizz* "uncritically romantic," and holds that it disguises "the more mundane, practical and prosaic dimensions" of identification (Ellis 2011, p. 777). Historian of science Helen MacDonald also highlights Coward's romanticism: "Not only was [*jizz*] superior to the analytical 'eyes of the systematist' but it was a folk-knowledge, springing from 'the fertile Celtic brain' of the west coast Irishman, a word perhaps 'never before written ... handed down from father to son for many generations' [Coward 1922, p. 141]" (MacDonald 2002, p. 71).

The new ornithology that emerged in the 1920s and 1930s worked to be analytical and rational. The aim was to support decision-making with quantitative data gathered on bird populations at a national scale. In 1928, Max Nicholson organized the first nationwide census of a bird species in the UK, asking amateur birdwatchers to record the presence of heron nests across the country (Nicholson 1928; see Guida 2019).

James Fisher led a similar survey of rook nests during the Second World War to analyze whether rooks raided food crops to feed their young (Fisher 1947; see Sage

and Vernon 1975). There was a question of shooting rooks to halt agricultural damage. Fisher's study showed that, although rooks were responsible for some damage to crops, the impact was small so there was no need to curb the population.

The question I ask here is this: Is Coward's *jizz* simply a vestige of Victorian romanticism, ready to be swept aside by the new ornithology? Or does it reveal a dimension of our experience of nature not captured by the dots on maps of modern ornithological surveys?

Phalaropes as an example

Phalaropes are a kind of small wading bird. Males and females differ in size and breeding plumage, though unusually for birds, the phalarope female is larger than the male and has brighter colors with flashes of red on the neck, wings, or underparts, depending on the species. Usual sex roles are also reversed, and the female courts the male while the male broods the eggs and rears the hatchlings.

Ornithologist H. J. Massingham was an admirer of T. A. Coward and particularly sensitive to the individual character of birds. Here is his description of phalaropes



in his *Birds of the Seashore* (Massingham 1931):

Pre-eminently water-birds, they swim as lightly as a dry, crinkled leaf, and always as though driven by contrary and capricious breezes, snapping sideways at gnats, flies, water-boatmen and other small surface fry, as their little caravels tack from side to side (p. 89).

... once in the air, the birds are as inconstant as Wagtails, frisking round at right angles or turning on their tracks just as you expect them to go straight ahead on their own momentum (p. 89).

Sometimes in order to stir an eddy for the gnats and flies to swing into, they dart round and round on the water as though fixed at the end of a spike revolving from a hub (p. 90).

This vivid account of phalaropes exemplifies Massingham's aim "to give as personal a description of each bird as possible, so that the curious may recognise it by its individual manner of living as well as by its form and plumage" (Massingham 1931, p. 16). That phalaropes swim "as lightly as a dry, crinkled leaf" is particularly evocative as is his description of how they swim in tight circles to draw aquatic invertebrates to the surface. Massingham's phrase, "Individual manner of living" is an accurate expression of Coward's jizz.

Nature writer William Beach Thomas reviewed Massingham's book and praised his knack of "... imparting precise information with gusto and distinction" (Thomas 1931, p. 434). He found that "The pleasure of watching a particular individual bird or birds in definite places informs almost every sentence, every section ...". Thomas appreciated Massingham's capturing and conveying the *encounter* with the living bird in its natural habitat. Thomas admired how the vividness of Massingham's account sprang from the intensity and authenticity of that encounter.

Naturalist Paul Krafel recalls seeing phalaropes while kayaking in Oregon's Warner Wetlands. He identifies the gesture that impressed Massingham—"turning on their tracks just as you expect them to go straight ahead":

As I keep moving upstream, the ponds and channels grow wider ... Many have small flocks of phalaropes. The phalaropes fly in tight groups that all bank at the same time creating a collective whoosh. Sometimes they all drop into the water with a startling, compact suddenness while other times they turn and disappear behind some point of

land, revealing the channel to the next pond (Krafel 2011, entry for June 28).

As a field naturalist, Krafel is drawn to the overall gesture, or jizz, of the phalaropes, rather than any specifics of their anatomy. His account reminds me of the same tight, whooshing turn I saw executed by a group of birds at California's Sycamore Cove. At the time, I could not identify them, but they left a strong impression. Reading Krafel's account, I realize now that these birds were phalaropes. A vivid image like Krafel's evokes the jizz of a species and make it identifiable to an otherwise uninitiated observer. The phalarope jizz was held in my memory, later activated and clarified by Krafel's word-picture.

Massingham acknowledges that phalaropes are scientifically distinguished by the coot-like lobing of the toe joints (their scientific name, *Phalaropus*, means "coot-foot") but insists that "they are such highly individual little birds in habit, appearance and colouring that a Phalarope is a Phalarope and nothing but a Phalarope" (Massingham 1931, p. 89).

Massingham underlines the phalarope's distinctive "manner of living," but Helen MacDonald disapproves. She writes that "Such pronouncements are of little practical value for the novice birdwatcher." She dismisses Massingham's species descriptions as "grandly Romantic" (MacDonald 2002, p. 71).

Compare Massingham's colorful evocation of the phalaropes with the following "objective" descriptions from the website of the Royal Society for the Protection of



Birds (RSPB) ([Red Necked Phalarope Bird Facts - The RSPB](#)):

Adult female, summer plumage

Feather colour: Black Brown Grey Orange Red White Yellow

Leg colour: Black

Beak: Black Long Thin

Natural habitats: Marine and intertidal Wetland

Both adult sexes, winter plumage

Feather colour: Black Brown Cream/buff Grey White Yellow

Leg colour: Black

Beak: Black Long Thin

Natural habitats: Marine and intertidal Wetland

Rather than indicating how the bird-watcher is likely to encounter a phalarope in the wild, the RSPB authors break the bird into a dry list of separate indicators. According to MacDonald, the novice “should learn to identify [a bird] by the painstaking methods of notes and textbooks *before* [naming] it on the wing” (MacDonald (2002, p. 73, citing Robertson, 1950, p. 193). In her view, a textbook list of characters is more useful to the novice birdwatcher than Massingham’s poetic description.

According to the RSPB’s website, the phalaropes’ lobed toes “enable them to swim strongly when on pools or out at sea.” We can see how this description would logically follow from the scientific definition of the phalaropes as “coot-toed.” But “strong swimmer” conveys a different impression from the bird’s bobbing about on the surface of the sea “like a crinkled leaf.” We expect the bird to vigorously plough its way through the waves.

I suggest that the RSPB’s aim is to convey intellectual knowledge, which is not necessarily useful for the novice who, venturing into the field, may find descriptions of jizz more helpful in that they better capture the novice’s *encounter* with the bird.

The trouble with jizz

In her study of plant naturalist communities in the UK, Rebecca Ellis considered the nature of jizz (Ellis 2011). She accompanied Angela, a specialist of mosses, on one of her field outings. Magnifying lens in hand, Angela bent forward to look

closely at mosses on tree branches, carefully separating the small fronds with a dissecting needle. The two women walked on, and suddenly Angela stopped, six feet from a branch. She immediately identified the moss species by its jizz: “She knew what the organism was in a flash and from a distance” (Ellis 2011, p. 775). Angela did not elaborate on which subtle clues of lighting, shape, color, or context informed her intuition: “She presented it as an inexpressible sense of the organism’s essence, embedded in and expressed through [a web] of ecological relationships” (Ellis 2011, p. 775).

In contrast to Angela’s way of study, another botanist interviewed by Ellis, Chris Preston, urged caution regarding jizz identification (Ellis 2011, pp. 776–77):

The trouble with jizz is that there is no negotiation, and I’m therefore suspicious. It is not helpful to say it just looks like it—it is just an assertion—that I recognize this, and this is it.

My favourite group, Potamogetons [pondweeds], is one where jizz as opposed to technical characters is of limited value.

I do allow myself to use jizz, but through correlation with hard characters. I then eventually realize that I don’t need hard characters, but if challenged, I will, for example, return to the small curly hairs on the underside of a leaf.

Preston’s choice of words in his first comment is interesting: “No negotiation ... not helpful ... just an assertion...” He associates jizz identification with the private judgement of the observer—a personal claim without communicable justification. Later, Ellis mentions that Preston describes an expert whose reliance on jizz to identify a species of saxifrage during a training course was successfully challenged by a novice participant: “a return to the field and an organism’s individual features subsequently overturned the expert’s identification” (Ellis 2011, p. 777).

Preston is uncomfortable with jizz identification because it purports to provide “*knowledge without recourse to inference*” (Ornstein 1983, p. 24). He prefers empirical features—his “hard characters”—that, through a clear *sequence* of inferential steps, bring him to an identification. With jizz, there is an intuition of the whole that comes *simultaneously* (cf. Ornstein 1983,

p. 26). The observer perceives the living creature all at once in its context of ecological relationships.

I draw on a situation from my own experience to emphasize that the sequential and simultaneous modes can complement rather than contradict each other. While walking, I saw a tiny bird in a bush. I immediately thought “wren” but spotted a gold streak over its eye. Looking among the very small birds in Richard Fitter’s guide, I recognized a bird with a wren-like silhouette (Fitter 1966, p. 32, pl. 1). The gold streak was a portion of a gold crown, an identifying feature of firecrests or kinglets. This gold streak was a decisive identifying feature. If challenged, I would highlight this feature to justify my identification.

I emphasize, however, that my first impression of “wren” provided vital clues as to size and shape, important features directing me to the correct section of Fitter’s guide. The two modes of observation—the sequential, based on “hard characters,” and the simultaneous, based on jizz—here reinforced each other.

Identification keys

One tool to establish “hard characters” is the identification key that Preston provides in his handbook to pondweeds (Preston 1995). Fellow botanist John Poland has prepared a freely-available pondweed identification key for the UK Freshwater Habitats Trust (Poland 2019). Table 1 (next page) summarizes the section for pondweeds with leaves greater in width than 6 millimeters.

In this table, indentation follows a sequence of steps in the identification process, whereby the observer selects the characterization that best fits the pondweed plant in question. Each characterization requires an analysis of the plant into parts. Each leaf is dissected into base, stalk, margin, midrib and so on. Following this sequence, the observer ends with an identification of the plant species.

On one hand, this observation method may seem different from jizz identification, where the organism is grasped in its totality in a moment. On the other hand, the two approaches may be closer than they first appear. To apply the key to the particular pondweed, one must have a “feel” for what the different terms mean—“crispy when dry,” “minutely toothed,” “shortly

Table 1. Group G—Leaves>6mm wide

- Leaves all sessile, very thin, translucent, crispy when dry
 - Leaves strongly clasping with auricles, margin minutely toothed *Perfoliate Pondweed Potamogeton perfoliatus*
 - Leaves weakly clasping or rounded at base, margin minutely toothed and crisped *Curled Pondweed Potamogeton crispus*
 - Leaves rounded (at base), margin entire, not strongly wavy *Long-stalked Pondweed Potamogeton praelongus*
 - Leaves taper at base
 - Leaf margin entire. Leaves culminate at base, narrowly oblong-elliptic+/-obtusely, flat, shiny-green or reddish, with 6-10 veins per side *Red Pondweed Potamogeton alpinus*
 - Leaf margin minutely toothed (at least when young); hybrid of *P. lucens* x *perfoliatus* *Potamogeton x salicifolius*
- Leaves mostly sessile but uppermost shortly stalked
 - Leaves tapered at base, margin minutely toothed *Various-leaved Pondweed Potamogeton gramineus*
- Leaves all shortly stalked (usually 5-15mm)
 - Leaves with minutely toothed margin, tapering at base *Shining Pondweed Potamogeton lucens*
 - Leaves with entire margin
 - Leaves usually with protruding midrib; hybrid of *P. lucens* x *natans* *Potamogeton x fluitans*
 - Leaves without protruding midrib. Calc fens *Fen Pondweed Potamogeton coloratus*

example, historical geographer Mark Toogood frames the emergence of modern, scientific ornithology as a shift away from so-called “aesthetic birdwatching” (Toogood 2011, p. 350):

In the 1920s and 1930s, amateur naturalism moved away from the “aesthetic” approach found in museum display and private collection ... towards work on living animals, their behaviour and ecology The few professional naturalists that there were at the start of the 1920s became increasingly concerned with survey and with uniform and standardised

stalked,” and so forth. At the same time, being able to successfully apply the sequence gives the observer a “feel” for the different species, which begin to stand out, one from another. Gradually, the observer gains a sense of the jizz of the different species. In this sense, the analytic and holistic modes of observation are complementary, working together to provide a more multivalent knowledge of the natural world.

Drawing on the work of psychologist Robert Ornstein (1977, 1983), philosopher Henri Bortoft argues that the analytical and holistic approaches represent different modes of human consciousness and two contrasting ways of being in the world (Bortoft 1996, p. 61). Bortoft explains how the analytic mode springs from our experience of seeing and handling solid bodies. To build a wall, for example, we assemble bricks one by one in piecemeal fashion. In contrast, the holistic mode arises from our appreciation of living beings, where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

In the analytic mode, language and logic are preeminent tools of human consciousness. In terms of practical value, the sequential, linear structure of this mode of being would seem to give it greater legitimacy. Because Western education emphasizes this logical, sequential mode, the intuitive, integrative mode is often not even recognized as a valid way of knowing:

Most of us have been educated and have developed sequential abilities ... at the expense of the fluid and simultaneous ... We do not educate intuition since it seems to lack a basis, and it is often confused with the negative connotation of the “irrational”—or with sloppy thinking ... (Ornstein 1983, pp. 30–31).

In short, the analytic mode is the sequential expression of the verbal-intellectual mind, whereas the holistic mode is the expression of the intuitive mind, grounded in “a simultaneous perception of the whole” (Bortoft 1996, p. 63).

Science or poetry?

As illustrated by the above examples, a list of an organism’s properties can be framed simply in terms of the size, shape, and color of various body parts. In contrast, jizz pays heed to the activity of the organism, its characteristic associations, and its manner of comportment. This way of seeing requires evocative language that highlights the feel of the activity for the observer, who is not placed before a static museum exhibit but before a living being going about its everyday business. A description that evokes this living being is best poetic in the sense that words encourage an intuition of the whole.

As we have seen, some commentators view such descriptions with suspicion, claiming to detect inappropriate aesthetic considerations or romantic sentiment. For

procedures of observation ... This was not straightforwardly a breaking away from previous practice but rather a building upon a “critical spirit” to approach the study of nature in an apparently serious way, unburdened by what self-styled “modern” naturalists saw as the ignorance and selfish concerns of latter-day Edwardian naturalists for specimens, lists and numbers of records for personal use.

Toogood’s word choice is revealing. The aesthetic approach is based on “ignorance and selfish concerns” and is limited to dead specimens kept for the private use of the collector. In contrast, the scientific approach is “serious,” founded on a “critical spirit” that assumes “uniform and standardized procedures of observation” and provides data on living animals for public use. In Toogood’s account, the scientific approach is clearly destined to triumph over the aesthetic and to usher in a modern era of evidence-based observation.

For Helen MacDonald, the interwar period saw a “battlefield of identification” fought between aesthetic and scientific birdwatchers. She frames the aesthetic approach as “merely seeing,” an “unconscious, organic vision” expressing “an organic connection with nature” (MacDonald 2002, p. 63, 73). The scientific approach, in contrast, establishes the modern observer, who possesses “a discriminating ... gaze ... built upon scientific discourse, with the end result a learned, intellectual familiarity, a *legitimate* knowledge” (MacDonald 2002, p. 73).

Interestingly, when we examine the ornithological writings of Max Nicholson and James Fisher, we find a more balanced view than we would be led to expect by modern commentators like Toogood and MacDonald. For these early architects of the new ornithology, “aesthetic bird-watchers such as W. H. Hudson ... collect memories” that owe their value to a “transcendent impression of beauty” (Nicholson 1931, p. 59). They like the shape of birds, “their colours, their songs, the places where they live ... Many of them paint birds or write prose or poetry about them” (Fisher 1940, pp. 13–14).

To these positive depictions of the aesthetic approach, Nicholson and Fisher added warnings of the limitations of a dry scientific approach. Fisher described researchers who, “like several of the schoolmasters, are grimly scientific” about birds, and “talk for hours on the territory theory, the classification of the swallows, or changes in the bird population of British woodland during historical times” (Fisher 1940, p. 14).

Nicholson urged birdwatchers to boldly adopt the new tools of scientific birdwatching but to respect the “vital tradition of the older school” and to keep birdwatching “free from the jargon and pretence too liable to accompany a more developed technique” (Nicholson, 1931, pp. 17–18).

For Nicholson and Fisher, there was no battlefield of identification. Rather, accurate identification was vital to the outdoor naturalist’s enjoyment, whether he or she was of a scientific or aesthetic persuasion (Fisher 1940 p. 47, 49; Nicholson 1931, p. 59).

Toogood and MacDonald see the aesthetic approach to birdwatching in negative terms not found in Nicholson and Fisher: “not serious”; “unconscious”; “mere seeing”; based on “ignorance” and “selfish concerns.” Much has been made of Nicholson’s statement that “It is a frequent delusion that the bird-watcher is a man who rambles about the country-side until chance puts something in his way, like the common idea of a poet looking for inspiration” (Nicholson 1931, p. 47).

Citing social historian David Allen’s “wayward sampler of nature” of the 1920s (Allen 1994, p. 223), MacDonald envisions Nicholson’s aesthetic birdwatcher rambling “about the country-side ... like a poet looking for inspiration” (MacDonald,

2002, p. 54). This caricature of Nicholson has become the truth for MacDonald: the poet wandering aimlessly through nature, looking with a glazed eye of rapture in the hope of revelation. This person would indeed be a selfish and ignorant artist, whose art would reflect only themselves.

Philosopher and novelist Iris Murdoch points out that an “ability to forget self, to be realistic, to perceive justly” is the crux of good art (Murdoch 2014, p. 90). A poet or painter attracted by the beauty of the birds at a particular spot is challenged to respond with “unsentimental, detached, unselfish, objective attention” (Murdoch 2014, p. 66, also pp. 90–91). The calling of the artist is to be a selfless witness to the truth, to show “how real things can be looked at and loved without being seized and used, without being appropriated into the greedy organism of the self” (Murdoch 2014, p. 66).

In ancient Greek, the meaning of aesthetic was “of the senses.” In the mode of detached, objective perception that Murdoch emphasizes, the observer pays attention to the evidence of the senses, no longer perceiving what he or she expects to perceive. In this manner of heightened awareness, the observer becomes open to a simultaneous perception of the whole, and of the form, order, and beauty that the whole imparts. This sensuous-intuitive mind aims to perceive beings in their living wholeness and challenges the schematic, piecemeal observation of the verbal-intellectual mind (Bortoft 2012, p. 53).

Toogood and MacDonald’s criticisms show a lack of interest for the value of the sensuous-intuitive mode of understanding, recognizing only the fruits of the verbal-intellectual approach. As Ornstein explained, “‘Hemianopia’ is a blindness to half the visual world, due to lesions in one half of the brain ... Our contemporary education yields a similar disorder: we may have developed one half of our ability to organize external reality to an unparalleled extent yet remain ‘blind’ ... to the other” (Ornstein 1983, p. 31).

Birds by character

As chairman of the RSPB’s Rarities Committee, Rob Hume was responsible for assessing claimed sightings of birds rarely seen in Britain. One would be justified in assuming that he is an authority on bird identification and expect his approach to

be the atomism of the RSPB’s official website. But his own contribution to bird identification, *Birds by Character: The Fieldguide to Jizz Identification* (1990), has surprisingly holistic entries for phalaropes. For example (p. 84):

Red-necked Phalarope

Neat, light-weight, with very fine bill, tiny head. Slighter than Grey. Swims buoyantly, erratically over water. Flight light, airy, erratic. Usually alone.

Grey Phalarope

Dumpy, with short, thickish bill, square head, stout body and short legs. Swims buoyantly, foreparts high and tail low, often turning sharply, even spinning while pecking at the surface. Flight low, confident; wings rather long and broad. Singly or in small, compact parties

Portions of Massingham’s account, highlighted earlier (such as the way phalaropes swim like a dry, crinkled leaf) correspond to Hume’s description of the Red-necked Phalarope, which he says “swims buoyantly, erratically.” Other descriptive portions correspond to Hume’s Grey Phalarope—for example, the spinning movement on the water and the flying in small compact parties.

Even if we fault one or the other of these accounts for its accuracy, both descriptions evoke a vivid, alive quality. Both prepare the reader to encounter phalaropes in the field, to value and to savor their singular character. Both descriptions incite the reader’s curiosity and desire to see.

In their different manners of knowing, jizz and “hard characters” illustrate the contrasting sensuous-intuitive and verbal-intellectual approaches to nature. Whether realized as an immediate whole or part by part, the bird *comes to presence* for the birdwatcher as the particular bird it is. Jizz identification acknowledges that the bird’s wholeness is primary, whereas a hard-character analysis sees the bird, via piecemeal features, as a re-presentation of the bird’s wholeness—a verbal-intellectual reconstruction (Bortoft 2012, p. 60, after McGilchrist 2009, p. 179). Such representations are reductive and anti-climactic as compared to “the bird as a whole, as a living, exciting, absorbing creature” (Hume 1990, p. 9).

The senses and intuition are the birdwatcher’s tools. Rather than to be rejected

by the novice, they should be encouraged and developed. In his introduction, Hume (1990, p. 9) recommends jizz identification to “young birdwatchers, indeed to anyone nervous of cluttering the mind.” He specifically rejects MacDonald’s prescription to avoid evocations of bird qualities. “Relax your mind’s eye until it receives general character freely and easily,” Hume (1990, p. 9) recommends. Do not separate the bird into specific indicators too early, an action that too readily provokes “tension and anxiety” (Hume 1990, p. 9). Allow the bird its full presence first, as clearly and distinctly as possible, before noting visible field marks. Yes, Hume urges the birdwatcher to take notes in the field and to review them later (Hume 1990, p. 11). For Hume, the sensuous-intuitive and the verbal-intellectual modes of birdwatching are fully compatible and complementary.

If one hopes to encounter birds from a typical identification guide (where birds are presented in systematic order beginning with loons and grebes and ending with songbirds), he or she will mostly be disappointed. Though these guides list descriptive features of a particular bird, they give little indication of *how* to encounter that bird. If one starts with its re-presentation via a list of separate indicators, one has already missed an encounter with the bird. Precise identification comes with a more precise encounter—a moment of awareness in which holistic and analytic understanding work together.

Main takeaways

I conclude by offering the following generalizations about jizz:

- Jizz points to the primacy of wholeness and is appropriate to the holistic mode of consciousness (but may seem arbitrary and irrelevant to the analytic mode).
- Jizz is an intuition that involves a simultaneous perception of the whole.
- Jizz is difficult to describe in simple language and is best served by poetic images.
- Jizz forms a trustworthy basis for identification to the extent that it can be successfully evoked by these poetic images.

- Jizz works best in tandem with conventional methods of identification, supporting and supported by those methods.
- Jizz points to the complementarity of the sensuous-intuitive and the verbal-intellectual approaches to science and knowledge.

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Image captions

- p. 7: Red-necked Phalarope, summer plumage, male behind, female in front. *Source: PanuRuangjan*.
- p. 8: Grey Phalarope (UK name) or Red Phalarope (US name), winter plumage. *Source: MikeLane45*.
- p. 8: Grey Phalarope (UK name) or Red Phalarope (US name), female, summer plumage. *Source: Alexander Hellquist*.

Toward a Phenomenology of Climate Change

Edward Relph

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In 2021, I directly experienced two extreme weather events attributed, at least in part, to climate change. One was the “heat dome” of late June, when temperatures in my part of the Pacific Northwest rose above 40°C, and the temperature in the small town of Lytton in British Columbia reached 49.6°C, which exceeded the previous record for anywhere in Canada by almost 5°C. The other event involved two “atmospheric rivers”—long bands of very intense warm rainfall—that tracked in from the Pacific Ocean over six days in November, broke the regional rainfall record for the month by 13 centimeters, and caused devastating floods in British Columbia’s Fraser Valley.

As I tried to make sense of what had happened, I began to wonder how phenomenology could clarify experiences of climate change.

Below: The outdoor-indoor thermometer at my house, June 2021. 43°C is 110°F; 36°C is 98°F.



Experiencing climate change

It is not immediately clear that climate change is a phenomenon that lends itself to a phenomenological approach. The very idea of climate is an abstraction. [According to NOAA](#): “Weather is what you experience when you step outside on any given day Climate is the average of the

weather patterns in a location over a longer period of time, usually 30 years or more.”

Strictly speaking, climate change is a quantitatively-based scientific theory about environmental processes caused by human activity. It is often summarized in averages, most notably that the average global temperature has increased by 1.2°C since pre-industrial times, which is actually an average of averages from data recorded over many decades at thousands of weather stations around the world. This is just the sort of abstract knowledge that Edmund Husserl aimed to redress when he proposed phenomenology as “a return to the things themselves.”

Yet I and others who experienced some combination of the debilitating heat, drenching rain, wildfires and floods in 2021 knew immediately that this situation was so far beyond both past experiences and reasonable future expectations that it had to be a consequence of climate change. Climatologists, who are cautious about identifying causes (because there have always been instances of exceptional weather), produced an [official attribution study](#) a few days later that merely confirmed what we already knew.

And when the Secretary General of the United Nations saw the devastating floods that affected a third of Pakistan in 2022, he needed no attribution study to immediately declare it a “[climate catastrophe](#)”. Climate change may be an abstract theory about a gradual and almost imperceptible increase in average temperatures but, in its manifestations, it is a real and immediate lifeworld phenomenon in which places are destroyed, trees catch fire, people suffer and die, and the neat distinction between weather and climate doesn't work.

David Seamon (2000, pp. 158–59) writes that a legitimate phenomenological topic is “Any object, event, situation or experience that a person can see, hear, touch, smell, taste, feel, intuit, know, understand,

or live through ...” Climate change is not an object nor exactly an event, though it is most obviously manifest through extreme weather events. But it is certainly a situation that in diverse ways has become an aspect of everyday life everywhere. For example:

- A continual stream of news depicts record-breaking floods, wildfires, and droughts;
- Seasonal temperatures edge upward, and weather patterns shift in unfamiliar ways;
- Governments and businesses implement policies and practices to mitigate carbon emissions and move toward net zero;
- Citizens organize protests that highlight the inadequacy of climate policies;
- Wind farms and solar panels mark visible testaments of a shift away from fossil fuels;
- Crops fail because of drought, communities are destroyed by floods, and people are forced to migrate;
- Climate considerations enter daily life, affecting where people choose to live, whether to drive or walk, how to cool homes, what products to use, what foods to eat, and so forth.

In short, what was initially a theory has evolved into a widespread sense of climate change. This awareness, rather like a sense of place, has become a companion of everyday life, mostly in the background but coming forward whenever some environmental disaster or international conference makes headlines, and especially, as in my case, when we experience local weather that has no precedent. How can phenomenology clarify this sense of climate change?

A phenomenological perspective

I understand phenomenological method as a flexible way to describe some aspect of the lifeworld as it is experienced, while setting aside assumptions about why it is as it is. My aim here, to borrow some of Seamon's terms, is to explore aspects of how the phenomenon of climate change is known, understood, and lived through.

Philosopher Don Ihde (2019) noted that, in some phenomenological studies, there is an element of what he has referred to as a “first-person reduction,” which reveals individual experiences but mostly avoids material and social contexts. He proposed a modified approach that he calls “post-phenomenology,” to redress those omissions.

I see no need for this neologism, but Ihde's suggestion is helpful here because it accommodates the material reality that most of our knowledge about climate change is dependent on scientific reports, online sources, television news, and social media.

Except for the relatively small minority who have encountered extreme weather events firsthand (and to a large extent even for them), an understanding of climate change is based on mostly received, intersubjectively shared knowledge about how the climates and weather of the world are shifting and what that shift bodes for the future.

Below: A display in Les Galleries Lafayette in Paris for a Zone of Low Carbon Shopping, June 2022.



Climate change and lifeworld

Climate change as a consequence of human activities was first recognized in 1981 when some atmospheric physicists at

NASA (most notably James Hansen, who subsequently made a presentation about it to a U.S. Senate committee) published a paper in the journal *Science* on the “Climate Impact of Increasing Carbon Dioxide” (Hansen et al. 1981). This research demonstrated that the global average temperature had been rising since the beginning of the 20th century, which was consistent with measurements that indicated an equivalent increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide caused by the use of fossil fuels.

Depending on the rate of economic growth, it was projected that global average temperatures would rise between 2.5°C and 4.5°C by 2100, something “of almost unprecedented magnitude” in both geological and human history, not seen since the age of dinosaurs. The consequence would be intense droughts, shifts in productive agricultural regions, and rising sea levels.

In 1988, climate scientists persuaded the World Meteorological Association, an affiliate with the United Nations, to create the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to summarize all relevant research on global warming, and the subsequent report confirmed that human activities were indeed inadvertently the cause.

The UN reacted by organizing a Conference of the Parties (COPs) in 1995 to bring together representatives of the roughly 190 states under its aegis to discuss causes, consequences, and possible mitigation. At a subsequent meeting in Kyoto in 1997, participating nations committed to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

In less than 20 years, climate change had morphed from an obscure research topic into something requiring immediate international actions. There was some media coverage, but climate change was still a concern remote from everyday life, a matter for experts to consider.

While the evidence that the global average temperature has increased by 1.2°C since the beginning of the industrial revolution may be hugely important from a scientific perspective, from the perspective of personal experience of local temperature changes, this shift is inconsequential.

Nevertheless, after Kyoto, some governments and businesses gradually began to implement practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Some responses, such as LED lighting, more efficient appliances, solar panels and hybrid vehicles had some presence in everyday life, but most, such as revised building codes and carbon capture in industry, were largely invisible.

This top-down process of scientific reports, international conferences, and incremental measures to reduce carbon emissions, all somewhat detached from everyday life, continued for the first decade of the new century. But for two reasons, things began to change, at first in the background and then increasingly in the foreground.

First, and most important, the theory of climate change began to become a manifest reality. Every year since 1998 has been one of the warmest on record, and weather records around the world have been repeatedly broken. And as extreme weather events intensified and destroyed places, scientific models have, since about 2012, been able to confirm that their probable cause is climate warming.

Second, the translation of the science, warnings, and news about climate change into popular awareness has been facilitated by the coincidental global expansion of personal electronic communications. The worldwide web was invented in 1989, just as the First Assessment Report of the IPCC was written. Search engines came a few years later, and there are now over six billion users of smart phones worldwide.

Electronic media do not easily convey the rational logic and complex arguments of the written Accessibility Reports of the IPCC or the consequences of the inexorable, almost imperceptible rise in global average temperature. These media favor simple explanations, emotional responses, and strong opinions. These reactions are precisely what images of extreme weather disasters provide.

In short, electronic media turn the careful, qualified arguments of climatologists into stories of personal suffering and survival. Even though they also give voice to climate-change skeptics, their instantaneous world-wide reach has ensured that both the global scale and the human, local consequences of global warming have become intersubjectively shared and a part of everyday life almost everywhere.

Phenomenological possibilities

Phenomenological approaches have the potential to clarify the diverse ways that climate change is experienced, whether as a looming concern about the future, or directly through extreme weather and shifts in the character of seasons as temperatures slowly rise.

For example, phenomenological studies can provide insights about the range of ways climate change is viewed, from grief provoked by possible consequences, to agnosticism and denial that it is even happening. Many tourists on cruise ships to Alaska enjoy the dramatic calving of glaciers simply as a natural spectacle, but some look at it with a sense of doom as they witness something before it disappears forever (Kizzia 2022).

Phenomenology can provide a way to understand the experiences of those who survive extreme weather, those who despair and move away to somewhere safer, or those who choose to resist and to rebuild in locations clearly threatened by increasing floods, hurricanes, or wildfires. For example, one can ask if root shock that results from apparently natural causes, albeit exacerbated by human activities, differs from root shock provoked by political or economic causes?

In almost every aspect of climate-change experiences, place, and sense of place are important because weather is locally variable. Floods, droughts, storm surges, decreasing snowpacks, and the slow decline of tree species are all consequences of climate warming, but these events have very different manifestations and are further differentiated by the character of the specific places where these events are likely to occur.

Adaptations must respond to the situations of a specific place and local knowledge, including the knowledge of indigenous communities. This place knowledge plays a critical role in how adaptations might happen. The sensitivity to place and locality that phenomenology provides should be able to facilitate adaptations to climate change.

A particularly promising area for phenomenological enquiry relates to the “plural temporalities” of past, present, and future implicit in most considerations of climate change and that underly variations in understanding how serious, urgent, and

worrying climate change is (Murphy and Williams 2021).

Climatologists have the longest view. A diagram in the Sixth Assessment Report (2021, Cross Chapter Box PALEO 2 pp. 1–43) shows global temperatures from 70,000 before present to 2100, with the caption: “Humankind is embarking on a trajectory beyond the global temperatures experienced since at least the advent of agriculture.”

This temporal span of millennia suggests a future of unconceivable environmental catastrophes and a world unfit for humans. Climatologists usually bracket this climate threat in their research, but it can affect their personal lives. A survey of climate scientists, published in *Nature*, found that global warming has caused many researchers to reconsider major life decisions, such as where to live and whether to have children. This survey found that more than 60 percent of respondents experienced anxiety, grief, or other distress because of personal and professional concerns (Tollefson 2021).

Most discussions of climate change consider a time span from the pre-industrial era (about 1750) to 2100, the period when emissions from fossil fuels have accelerated and will have to be slowed. This time frame makes climate change appear somehow more comprehensible and manageable. The year 2100 lies within the possible lifetimes of those born since the turn of the century who have lived entirely in a rapidly warming world. Student protests initiated by Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg indicate that many young people share the anxiety of climate scientists about a disastrous climate future, unless immediate transformative actions are taken to reduce emissions.

Joëlle Gergis (2022), a climate scientist who contributed to the last IPCC report, writes that the reality of climate change forces people to grapple with a range of complex emotions. Psychoanalyst Susan Kassouf (2022) writes about the need to address the “traumatized sensibility” of what life might be like on a hotter planet in which catastrophes become commonplace and even annihilation becomes thinkable. Climate change involves embodied experiences even when its effects are not directly felt through unprecedented extreme weather.

A similar concern seems not to be the case for many business leaders and politicians who probably grew up before climate change was discovered in the 1980s and must find practical ways to respond to the long-term concerns of climate scientists. For these individuals, the costs of acting now to deal with a problem whose really serious consequences are mostly in the future must be balanced against immediate competing claims such as pandemics, affordable housing, and health care.

A target date of 2050 for net-zero, greenhouse-gas emissions seems reasonable to allow for transition. But for small businesses and households with limited means, the temporal span is much shorter. Even though climate change may be a reason for personal anxiety, expenditures on measures to deal with it cannot compete with more immediate priorities. Looking ahead even five years is challenging (Murphy and Williams 2021).

A new Copernican revolution?

French philosopher Bruno Latour (2021) suggests that the climate emergency is a powerful demonstration of the limits of human agency and constitutes a sort of reverse Copernican revolution in which the Earth has effectively become the center of the human universe.

For the 19th and most of the 20th centuries, nature was to be dominated and exploited for its abundant resources with little concern for long-term consequences. Some of those habits of thought and practice remain with us, but Latour suggests that, to survive the climate crisis, we will need to align ourselves with nature, understand its limits, and side with insects and creatures threatened with extinction, with trees and forests, with ecosystems.

It is clear that we cannot avoid direct or indirect experiences of climate change. Each of us has as much responsibility for the state of the Earth and its atmosphere as for our own health and wellbeing. This is a responsibility, Latour wrote, “that weighs on you, body and soul.” It is an intensifying responsibility and warrants phenomenological investigation.

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Toward a Phenomenology of Nature-made and Human-made *Genius Loci*

Robert Josef Kozljanič

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The Latin term “*genius loci*” (pl. “*genii locorum*”) literally means “spirit of place.”

According to the ancient Romans, all individual human beings had their own unique genius. Similarly, *certain* places had their own genius: in other words, a local spirit. It was believed that this genius constituted the character of a person or a place [1]. This spirit was equally regarded as protective or tutelary and, thus, sometimes called and honored as the “*tutela*” or “*tutela loci*” [2].

A Roman wall-painting from Herculaneum illustrates in a strikingly graphic way how the spirit of place was conceived and what it signified. In the image [above right], we see a small circular altar, around which a serpent winds its way upward. Its tail touches the earth, and its head stretches over the altar’s top. The serpent—unambiguously identified by the inscription to its right, “*GENIVS HVIVS LOCI MONTIS*,” as a manifestation of “the genius of this part of the mountain”—is eating the offering of food placed on the altar [3].

To the left of the painting, a boy approaches the altar. In his right hand, he holds a branch. On his head, he wears a garland. He could be a shepherd boy who, ritually dressed, comes to this part of the mountain to make a sacrifice or offering to the genius for his flock’s welfare. This conjecture is supported by verses from Calpurnius: In spring the shepherd should first sacrifice—“Invoke with salted meal the gods, / The guardian genius of the spot / The Lars and Faunus”—then let the flock go to pasture [4].



Genius loci arising from nature

Characteristic nature-dominated places tend to maintain their spirit through themselves or through the expressive-atmospheric qualities and properties *in situ*. Examples of such nature-dominated places include springs, hills, creeks, rocks, coves, groves, caves, and river places. Nymphs are also important spirits of places, in antiquity and throughout art history: for example, the often-lovely spirits of trees, springs, mountains, and bays [image below].

“Genius loci” thus means a place that has a special, characteristic spirit. A place has such a spirit either through itself, as a kind of innate spirit (“*ingenium loci*”), or through what people have inscribed in it, whether materially or immaterially [5]. But whether innate or inscribed, decisive is that this spirit has developed naturally and/or historically. Equally important, the *genius loci* is not only a spirit that has developed, but continues to develop. For every genius—including that of a place—is a “spirit of becoming” [6]. This processual aspect is also suggested by the etymology of the word: “The origin of the name from the root *gen* in *gignere* is obvious and was not misunderstood by the ancients” [7]. *Gignere* means to beget, to bring forth, to give birth to.

The art-historical topos of the *locus amoenus* traces back to such nymphic places. Famous is the *locus amoenus* described by Longus (2nd century AD) in his novel, “Daphnis and Chloe,” with its classical triad of spring, tree, and rock. Even the muses have originally been nymphs themselves—singing and dancing mountain nymphs (Greek: *oreades*). Hippocrene, their sacred spring at Mount Helicon, where they appeared to Hesiod (cf. Hes. theog. 1-10), is still the symbol of poetic initiation and inspiration [8]. The place and the atmosphere of Hippocrene can still





be seen and sensed today and have the same classic triad: spring, tree, rock [image above]. This triad has mythological, iconographic ideal-typical, and even archetypal significance [9].

Locus amoenus and genius loci

Locus amoenus and *genius loci* appear repeatedly in art history as commonplaces—often with a tendency toward the aforementioned triad of spring, tree, and rock. Here are five examples [10]:

- The inscription, “*HVIVS NYMPHA LOCI ...*” on the painting, “Sleeping Nymph,” by Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) [11].
- The painting, “The Nymph of the Spring” (after 1537), by Lucas Cranach the elder (1472–1553) with inscription “*FONTIS NYMPHA SACRI SOMNI: / NVM NE RVMPE QVIESCO*” (“I am the



nymph of the sacred spring. / Do not disturb my sleep. I am resting”] [[image below].

- The famous demand in Alexander Pope’s (1688–1744) “Epistle to [...] Burlington”, significant for the history of the English landscape garden: “Consult the Genius of the Place in all” [12].
- The “Serpent Stone,” erected in honor of Goethe in 1787 in the English landscape garden on the Ilm (Weimar) with the inscription “*Genio huius loci*”—“To the spirit of this place”.
- The painting, “A Naiad or Hylas with a Nymph” (1893), by John William Waterhouse (1849–1917).

A description by Seneca (1st century AD) demonstrates that the atmosphere of a *genius loci* site can be not only graceful, beautiful, and lovely but also sublime, ee-

rie, oppressive, overwhelming, and above all numinous [image above right]. This description is found in the 41st Letter to Lucilius:

If ever you have come upon a grove that is full of ancient trees which have grown to an unusual height,



shutting out a view of the sky by a veil of pleached and intertwining branches, then the loftiness of the forest, the mysteriousness of the place [secretum loci], and your marvel at the thick unbroken shade in the midst of the open landscape, will prove to you the presence of the numinous [numinis]. Or if a cave, made by the deep crumbling of the rocks, holds up a mountain on its arch, a place not built with hands but hollowed out into such spaciousness by forces of nature, your soul will be deeply moved by a certain intimation of the existence of the divine [religionis suspicione percutiet]. We worship the sources of mighty rivers; we erect altars at places where great streams burst suddenly from hidden sources; we adore springs of hot water as divine, and consecrate certain pools because of their dark waters or their immeasurable depth” [13].

Human-made genius loci

Unlike natural sites, characteristic cultural sites obtain their spirit primarily through social references, human imprints, and immaterial inscriptions—for example, through cultural codifications and interpretations; historical traditions and stereotypes; collective memories and narratives; social functions and psychic projections; and, last but not least, through architectural design and fabrication. While natural *genius loci* sites largely speak for themselves, at least atmospherically and physiognomically, cultural sites require fuller explanation and instruction.

Numerous imperial testimonials provide direct evidence of the domestic significance of the *genius loci*, or to the *genius* of the home [14]. Many inscriptions bear witness to a village or civic cult: to the *genius* of a village, a district, the place for the assembly, the food stores or the granary, the

customs office, the watch station, the theater, the threshing floor, the meat market, the school, or the baths [15]. A genius of the port is known from Ostia among others; or a genius of the city from *Lugdunum* (Lyon) [image below]. Even in a military context, the genius is not without its significance—as the *genius exercitus* [16].

The ancient Romans attributed a genius loci above all to these characteristic natural and cultural sites. As can be seen, these are clearly definable and delimitable small-scale places and not entire landscapes that extend to the horizon—and certainly not larger geographical units or even climate zones [17].



Genius loci and polydaimonism

This genius loci was considered, according to the polytheistic worldview, a numen or daimon—a daimonic deity. Usually, these local daimons were worshipped cultically. People prayed and spoke to them, sang and danced, consecrated something and sacrificed to them so that local life might be protected and promoted. Examples of such genius-loci-like beings include mountain and river deities, spring and tree nymphs, hearth and store gods (lares and penates), forest gods and wilderness goddesses, local heroes and deified people, ancestor gods and spirits of the dead (manes), genii of the army and theater, deities of the harbor or city. The classical anthropomorphic representation of the genii was standing with toga and cornucopia. In the case of spring nymphs and river gods, they tended to be reclining with an overturned urn or vase flowing with water. Theriomorphically, the local genii were often depicted as

snakes and river gods or sometimes as bulls. Tree nymphs were sometimes depicted in tree form, and mountain gods in mountain form [image below].



All these local deities belong to the so-called lower mythology. This designation indicates not only the proximity of these religious ideas to popular belief, but also their great age. Belief in local protective deities is one of the oldest religious traditions in human culture. It is found worldwide in archaic (e.g., shamanic) cultures and can be traced back to prehistoric times [18]. It can also be found in neolithic-matricentric contexts [19].

Anthropologists and ethnographers today also frequently come across these local spirits among indigenous peoples [20]. These local deities are based on numinous-atmospheric and visionary experiences of the place. As native peoples credibly affirm, these deities can be bodily felt, mentally imagined, and visionarily experienced as numinous or daimonic powers. One of the most profound interpreters of the primordial mythical worldview, the psychologist and philosopher Ludwig Klages (1872–1956), therefore speaks of visionary appearing “archetypes of reality” (“*Bilder der Wirklichkeit*”—“primal images of reality”) and a closely related “polydaimonism”: “The true daimon is the daimon of a place, of an area, of an element, changing with their appearances, accepting the sacrifices of its devotees” [21].

Schmitz's New Phenomenology

In the last 20 years, the phenomenon of genius loci has been more accurately described. Gernot Böhme, Tonino Griffero, Robert Josef Kozljanič, Juhani Pallasmaa,

Edward Relph, David Seamon and Tomáš Valena should be mentioned here. These authors have one thing in common: they take pre-theoretical lifeworld experiences seriously and use a new phenomenological approach in which the concept of lived space, felt body, and spatially manifest atmospheres is important or even crucial.

In doing so, they re-actualize and revise older phenomenological and life-philosophical theories by Ludwig Klages, Karlfried von Dürckheim, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Otto Friedrich Bollnow, Yi-Fu Tuan, Christian Norberg-Schulz—but above all Hermann Schmitz (1928–2021). Founder of what he calls “New Phenomenology,” Schmitz criticizes leading philosophers and scientists for cutting off human thinking from the most important parts of spontaneous life experience through exaggerated-abstract constructions out of touch with everyday life. In contrast, Schmitz shows that genuine life experiences not necessarily require or presuppose abstract super-concepts nor singled-out *hard facts* (Schmitz: “objective facts”) but, first of all, holistic, meaningful *situations*.

According to Schmitz, these situations are the original objects of perception—the original phenomena [22]. They appear as bodily-felt, *interwoven ambiance-ensembles* with internally diffuse but rich structure [23]. Although they occur only in a subjective state of affective involvement, they are more than subjective: they are intersubjective *gentle facts* (Schmitz: “subjective facts”) concerning reality. It is the task of the phenomenologist to examine, distinguish, and explicate these initially diffuse ensembles. According to Schmitz, poetry is a “gentle explication of situations” [24]. The phenomenologist should also gently verbalize and explicate situations—but, as far as possible, systematically and unmetaphorically [25].

Schmitz was able to prove in a conceptually differentiated way that genius loci sites are internally meaningful, diffuse, and manifold *situations*. He identifies two main situation types:

1. Impressive-present situations; suddenly and significantly appearing in an overall impression of felt presence.
2. Segmented-complex situations; appearing fragmented and

uncomplete in one or few segments and therefore requiring further knowledgeable additions and contextualisation.

Situations are impressive-present “when they suddenly come to the fore in their integrated meaning (like dangerous situations that have to be grasped holistically and answered aptly at a stroke in order not to fall victim to the danger)” [26]. Earlier, I explained that places of natural genius loci largely speak for themselves, whereas cultural sites require fuller explanation and understanding. Drawing on Schmitz’s contrasting modes of situation, we can now clarify why this fuller examination is required: because natural sites correspond more to impressive situations, and cultural sites more to segmented ones.

A specific feature of these subjectively experienceable and intersubjectively communicable situations is that they are atmospherically charged and only become tangible and articulate in their spatially extended “flowing” atmospheres. Schmitz said of the Rhine River’s Loreley and other siren-like spirits of place that they draw their “power of suggestion from the nimbus of a powerful atmosphere,” from a “highly emotive” mood [27] [image below].

These atmospheres are thus situationally-intersubjectively accessible and subjectively-bodily perceptible, especially in a state of affective involvement. Only then do they show themselves as spatially given, i.e., actually lying in the landscape and not (as is often assumed) psychically projected or even socio-culturally constructed. Schmitz usually emphasizes that these atmospheres are quasi-climatic, fragrance-like, and spatially flowing phenomena. This also applies to what Schmitz calls

“local divine atmospheres” and, thus, especially to all numinous genius loci sites [28].

Place and common presence

The ambiguous term “sense of place”—used by phenomenologists such as Edward Relph and David Seamon—comes quite close to Schmitz’s concept of situationally accessible and bodily perceptible atmospheres [29]. Seamon speaks of “atmospheric qualities like sense of place” and says that one task of phenomenological research is to “clarify the lived subtlety of sense of place” [30]. “Sense of place” could be paraphrased as “felt meaning of a place” and also relates to “the sensuous ability to feel this meaning.”

With reference to Relph, Seamon distinguishes between “genius loci” and “sense of place” (in a narrower meaning) [31]. The former is described as “the singular qualities of a particular landscape or environment that infuse it with a unique ambience and character,” while the latter is “the synaesthetic and largely unself-conscious facility of human beings to recognize, feel, and sense the uniqueness of a particular” place [32].

In this phrasing, “genius loci” represents the intersubjectively perceived-object side, while “sense of place” relates to the bodily felt-subject side. If the layperson or phenomenologist hasn’t developed and cultivated a sense of place, he or she won’t be able to detect and analyse any genius loci; or, using Seamon’s terminology, there will be no awareness of “common presence.” Seamon’s concept of “common presence” is similar to Schmitz’s concept of common impressive situations but is less formal and closer to lived experience. Seamon argues that the relative togetherness of entities in space—material and human qualities as

well—sustains an environmental “common presence” that emerges as a sensible quality shared by these local entities: The common presence of a place refers to “its degree of ‘life’ and its environmental character” [33].

It is obvious that this “common presence” cannot be understood only theoretically but must be looked for through phenomenological “field research”—in other words, through “thick participation” and “thick description” [34]. This point has been seen repeatedly, but seldom clearly enough [35]. In particular, Jürgen Hasse has set new standards with his “micrologies of spatial experience.” He recorded his impressions in meticulous on-site protocols and reflected on them neo-phenomenologically. “The great degree of differentiation” illustrated by his micrologies “owes itself exclusively to the careful explication of atmospheric experience in the actual situation of being-with” [36]. In his micrologies, Hasse referred primarily to ordinary, everyday places—not genius loci sites. For studying sense of place, his method of distanced participation would need to be deepened via thick participation.

Anchored atmospheres & auratic places

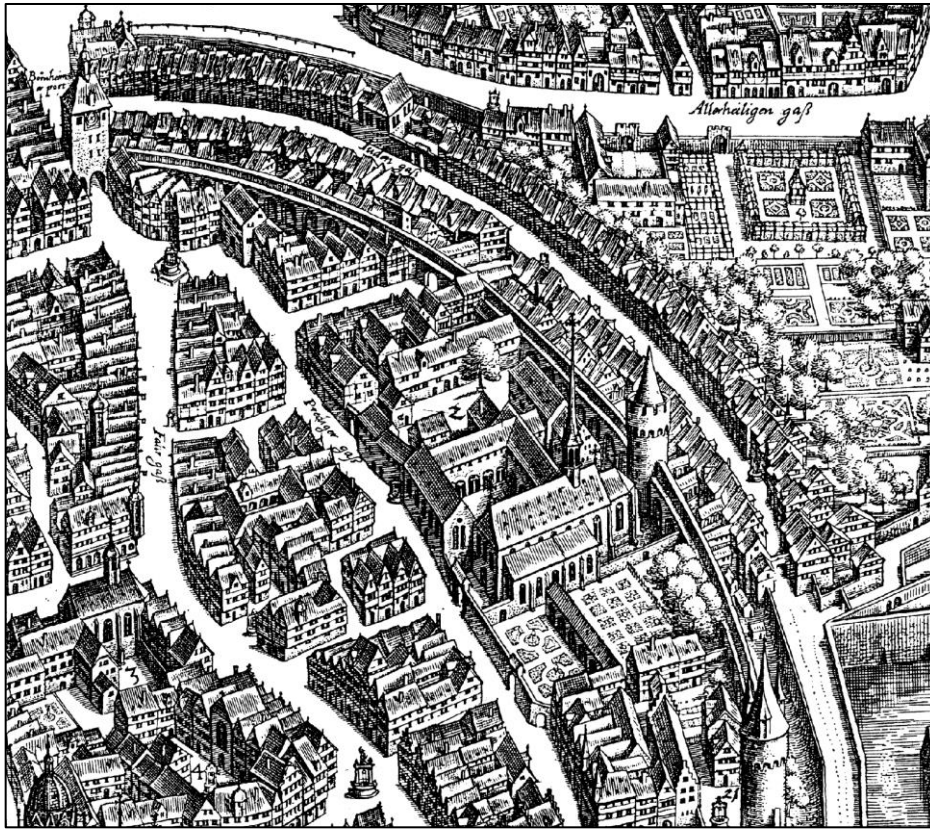
Robert Josef Kozljanič was the first thinker to clearly distinguish between place, landscape, and climate zone. He demonstrated that Christian Norberg-Schulz’s genius loci types are landscape or climate types and not place types. Even so, Norberg-Schulz’s phenomenology and typology remains a first and important (but incomplete) attempt at a phenomenology of place.

In his work, Kozljanič argues that places are delimitable, small-scale locations (usually smaller than a football field) whereas landscapes are panoramatically over-viewable, larger-scale regions (that can extend to the horizon). In turn, climate zones are huge geographical units that reach much farther than the eye can see (unless one looks on from outer space) [37].

Kozljanič demonstrates that atmospheres are not only quasi-climatic, fragrance-like, and spatially flowing “diffusivities.” In concretizing Schmitz, Kozljanič emphasizes that atmospheres are also condensed in a place and anchored in specific things and shapes. They can be experienced empathically, perceived physiognomically, and communicated intersubjectively as “thingly” phenomena within affective-expressive encounter-situations [38].

These “thingly” phenomena and their shape are of crucial importance. If they are





removed or technically dominated or superstructured, the atmosphere and character of the place will seriously be damaged. This happened to the Rhine's scenic Loreley Valley, which has almost completely lost its threatening and mysterious atmosphere due to construction works: a railway line and tunnel in 1862, then quay and road, blasting of the river stones in the 1930s, and construction of an open-air Nazi theatre in 1935–39.

A modern equivalent of the Roman term “numen” is “aura,” coined by Walter Benjamin in his essay, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1935): Every original and ingenious work of art has or can have a special “aura” that can be lost through reproduction and instrumentalization. Kozljanič argues that the same can be said of original and ingenious places. He differentiates five essential components:

1. The uniqueness of the object.
2. The sensuous presence of the original.
3. The aesthetic and contemplative distance of the viewer.

4. The enchantment of the contemplator by a mesmerizing or “ecstatic” thing [39].
5. The multi-layered testimony-character of a memorial-like object.

Kozljanič was able to confirm and specify these five components through an investigation of lifeworld experiences surrounding the conflict over the preservation of the ruins of the Frankfurt Jewish ghetto [40] [image above].

Atmospheric affordances

Italian philosopher Tonino Griffero provides one of the most recent and forward-looking contributions to a phenomenology of genius loci. He too revises and concretises Schmitz's concept of atmospheres. Central to Griffero's argument is the term “affordances,” which he adopts from American psychologist James J. Gibson: “The *affordances* of the environment are what it *offers* the animal, what it *provides* or *furnishes*, either for good or ill.... I mean by it something that refers to both the environment and the animal in a way that no existing term does. It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment” [41].

In his use of affordances, Griffero places aesthetic-pathic suggestions alongside the pragmatic-active options for action. This extension rounds off the ethological aspects of “affordance,” deepens it, and gives it enormous phenomenological relevance. “Affordance” now means stimulating options and “mesmerizing” significances radiating from people-place-interactions, people-place-correlations, and people-place empathies—for example, kinetic suggestions or psychic image-initiations, correspondence relationships or resonance possibilities, bodily-activating triggers or bodily-pathic resonances.

These modes of affordances arise from situations and their effects and whether they are embedded features, functional dispositions, or expressive atmospheres. Whatever the particular experiential expression, Griffero's focus is on “pathic aesthetics.” His primary concern is “pathic affordances, responsible for our spontaneous-intuitive evaluations.” His innovative idea is that:

atmospheres function as (amodal) affordances, i. e. as ecological invitations or meanings that are ontologically rooted in things and quasi-things, namely as demands that are not only pragmatic-behavioural and visual. While the environment can invite a certain action or even urge a person to do something, to an atmospheric affordance indeed one does not necessarily react with a given behaviour.... [O]ne may also react to atmospheric qualia with an (also aesthetic) distance, in the sense that we can feel the atmosphere of a chair, for example, both by sitting on it and by perceiving it from a distance [42].

Genius loci sites are thus marked by auratic and particularly “bubbly” expressive-atmospheric affordances [43]: “My hypothesis is therefore that a place has its own *genius* only if (when and where) it radiates an intense and authoritative specific atmosphere” [44].

Interpretive layers and levels

It is obvious that a mono-perspectival approach cannot do justice to the phenomenon of genius loci, neither lifeworld-wise nor methodologically. For example, Kozljanič already in 2004 consciously

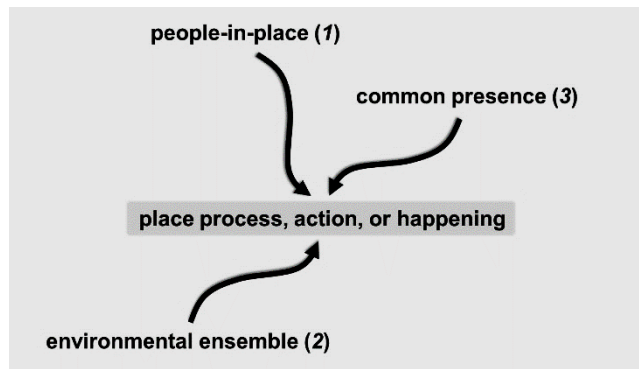
worked with a layer-historical method; he creatively followed Nicolai Hartmann's ontology of layers (or levels), revised in terms of cultural history. These different historical layers correspond to specific modes of access (archaic-mythical, Christian-allegorical, modern-secular, rationalist-technical) and to specific human-place relationships (integrative-adaptive, preserving-transformative, superstructure-transformative, superstructure-levelling). Griffero draws on a similar approach:

When interacting with a place, even the same one, we can in fact (a) abandon ourselves in an ecstatic-cultic way to it [with Kozljanič: archaic-mythical access]; or (b) intervene through material or ideal superstructures, as with the Christian reinterpretation and architectural re-functionalization of previously pagan sacred places [with Kozljanič: christian-allegorical or modern-secular access]; finally (c) we can flatten [the place], making it perfectly suited to host new architectural projects (almost) totally unrelated to the character of the place [with Kozljanič: radicalized modern access or rationalist-technical access]. Only in the first case do we have a full experience of the genius loci" [45].

I would add, however, that today the archaic-mythical approach is very often ideologically super-structured and civilisation-process-related overlaid. Usually, we can't just jump in. Rather, we must remove the upper layers first, move through them, and deepen our experience. What we need is a kind of felt and mental archaeology of our being-in-the-world and our being-in-place.

A multi-perspectival approach

The person who has so far worked most stringently with a multi-perspectival procedure, both theoretically and practically, is David Seamon. He has argued that genius loci can best be explicated via a triadic procedure grounded in pre-scientific life-world experiences. He draws on a creative, phenomenological continuation of British philosopher J. G. Bennett's method of "systematics."



Seamon pointed out that at least three aspects of any place are necessary: one topographical, one sociographical and one atmospheric [46]. He identified these three intertwined place aspects as *environmental ensemble*, *people-in-place*, and *common presence*: "The key word is togetherness, whereby the environmental and human elements of place are together (or not) in a mode of belonging (or not) that supports (or undermines) the life and wholeness of the place" [47] [image above].

Tomáš Valena brought forward a second important key word: relatedness: "Man has a primal need to relate the objects and phenomena of his world to each other." Through a reciprocal, multi-layered dialogue between people, building and place, "site-bound" relationships are created [48].

Living, experiencing, remembering

In 2011, Hasse and Kozljanič pointed to three important modes of place inquiry: Living, experiencing, remembering. In relation to lived space and *living*, bodily experience is primarily expressive-atmospheric and often rooted in impressive-present situations. In turn, place *experiencing*, particularly as it involves landscapes, is often shaped by the sensuous-aesthetic—in other words, by temporal categories of life experience and by aesthetic forms of perception that have become historical.

Yet again, *remembering* relates to mental-cultural, associative meanings and narrated stories sedimented in socio-cultural memory. It is through remembering that significant places of memory become accessible. These mnemotopes are less anchored in impressive situations and only partially in segmented situations [49]. One can speak of sedimented-complex situations that can only be located via a cultural-historical-semantic layer interpretation

that goes beyond a purely phenomenological approach. Just as the archaeologist digs deeper in the earth to uncover layer after layer, the cultural researcher can dig deeper into social and cultural memory, layer by layer [50].

Finally, one must remember that history is based on stories. Because of a still powerful and power-obsessed patriarchal tradition, the emphasis has mostly been his-stories. Stories of Western victors and

bellicists. Stories of a predatory capitalism. Stories of hegemonic masculinity. These stories need deconstruction and supplementation with her-stories. And we must remember that all stories are multi-layered.

Parallel to studies of layers and structures are studies of relational structures that emanate from or lead to the place. Both modes of study are equally important. One goes into depth, the other into breadth.

How these contrasting perspectives and approaches can be integrated into an overarching theory without loss of differentiation is still unclear today. Seamon's multi-perspective methodology may be one direction. His conceptual presentation of place does not end with the triadic structure of environmental ensemble, people-in-place, and common presence. Rather, the approach is open and expandable, pointing to tetradic, pentadic, and hexadic dimension of place and place experience.

Notes

1. See R. J. Kozljanič: *Der Geist eines Ortes, Kulturgeschichte und Phänomenologie des Genius Loci*, vol. 1, Munich, Albunea, 2004, pp. 28–78.
2. See, for example, Petronius, *Satyricon*, §57, 1.2, in *Petronius; Seneca, "Apocolocyntosis"*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, p. 119; or the inscription in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, bibliographical details for which are available at: <https://cil.bbaw.de/haupt-navigation/das-cil/baende> (accessed Jan. 5, 2023); this document is henceforth abbreviated as CIL here; CIL, vol. 6.1, no. 216 p. 40; vol. 13.1, no. 440, p. 58.
3. See T. Birt, "Genius," in W. H. Roscher et al. (eds.), *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, 6 vols, Leipzig: Teubner, 1886–1937, vol. 1.2, cols. 1613–25; col. 1624,

- includes a reproduction of the picture from Herculaneum.
4. Calpurnius Siculus, 5, 26; see Calpurnius Siculus, *The Eclogues*, London: George Bell and Sons, 1890, p. 95.
 5. Cf. Ovid, met. 3, 157–162, also: trist. 5, 10, 18; Pont. 2, 1, 52; 4, 7, 22.
 6. See Birt, “Genius,” col. 1614; and: R. J. Kozljanič: *Der Geist eines Ortes*, I. c., vol. 1, p. 50, 67.
 7. W. F. Otto, „Genius,” in G. Wissowa et al. (eds), *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 1st edn, 20 vols, Stuttgart: Metzler and Alfred Druckenmüller, 1894–1963, vol. 7.1, cols 1155–70 (here: col. 1156). According to the OED, the Latin *genius* derives from the base of *gignere*, “to beget,” and in turn the Greek *gignesthai*, “to be born” or “to come into being.”
 8. Cf. E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (1948), Princeton, Princeton University Press 2013, pp. 183–202 (“The Ideal Landscape”), pp. 228–46 (“The Muses”), 474f (“The Poet’s Divine Frenzy”).
 9. To the best of my knowledge, the first person to point out this decisive triad was the poet Heinrich Heine in his writing “Elementary Spirits” (“Elementargeister,” 1837). Cf. R. J. Kozljanič: *Der Geist eines Ortes, Kulturgeschichte und Phänomenologie des Genius Loci*, vol. 2, Munich, Albunea, 2004, p. 38f.
 10. Further examples can be found in J. D. Hunt, *Genius Loci. An Essay on the Meanings of Place*, London, Reaktion Book, 2022.
 11. See Otto Kurz, “Huius Nympha Loci: A Pseudo-Classical Inscription and a Drawing by Dürer,” in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 16, No. 3/4 (1953), pp. 171–77.
 12. A. Pope, “Of Taste. An Epistle to Right Honourable Richard Earl of Burlington,” London, Gilliver, 1731, S. 7. Cf. R. J. Kozljanič: *Der Geist eines Ortes*, vol. 2, I. c., pp. 207–38.
 13. Sen. epist. 4, 41, 3; my translation, based on: Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, NY, 1925 pp. 273–75.
 14. For example, *genio domi suae ... aram* (CIL, vol. 8.1, no. 2597, p. 307); [*Io*] *vi o. m. et [He]rculi et [Sil]vano et [Ge]nio [do]mus* (CIL, vol. 13.2, no. 8016, p. 539); cited in Otto, “Genius,” col. 1167.
 15. See, for example, the references to *genius vici* (CIL, vol. 8.1, nos 2604 and 6352, pp. 308 and 591) or *pagi* (CIL, vol. 5.1, no. 4909, p. 515); *genius curiae* (CIL, vol. 8.1, no. 1548, p. 189); *genius conservator horreorum* (CIL, vol. 6, no. 236, p. 46) or *tutela horreorum* (CIL, vol. 2, no. 2991, p. 406); *genius portorii* (CIL, vol. 3.1, nos 751–52, p. 142); *genius area frumentariae augustus* (CIL, vol. 8.1, no. 6339, p. 590); *genius macelli* (CIL, vol. 2, no. 2413, p. 339); *scholae* (CIL, vol. 8.1, no. 2601, p. 308); *thermarum* (CIL, vol. 8.1, no. 8926, p. 761); cited in Birt, “Genius,” cols 1621–22.
 16. I. Romeo, “Genius,” in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (LIMC), vol. VIII (suppl.), Zürich, Artemis & Winkler, 1997, pp. 599–607 (here: p. 603 no. 35, p. 604 no. 42, p. 603 no. 28).
 17. A *genius britanniae* or a *genius populi romani* are exceptions that prove the rule.
 18. Prominent here is the guardian goddesses of animals and caves; see H. P. Duerr, *Dreamtime—Concerning the Boundary Between Wilderness and Civilization*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1985, § 2 u. 3. On Siberian shamanism, see H. Findeisen, H. Gehrts, *Die Schamanen*, Munich, Diederichs, 1983, pp. 28–30.
 19. M. Gimbutas, *The Civilization of the Goddess*, NY, HarperCollins, 1991, p. 251 (“Guardians of Wild Nature,” Figs. 7–45).
 20. Cf. David Bruno and Meredith Wilson (eds.): *Inscribed Landscapes: Marking and Making Place*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002, Chap. 4; Tim Ingold, “Hunting and Gathering as Ways of Perceiving the Environment,” in *Redefining Nature*, Ellen Roy and Katsuyoshi Fukui, London: Routledge, 2020, pp. 117–56; E. Mader, *Die Macht des Jaguars: Natur und Weltbild der Shuar und Achuar in Amazonien*, in A. Gingrich et al. (eds.), *Metamorphosen der Natur: Sozialanthropologische Untersuchungen zum Verhältnis von Weltbild und natürlicher Umwelt*, Wien-Köln-Weimar, Böhlau, 2002, pp. 183–222.
 21. P. Bishop, *Ludwig Klages and the Philosophy of Life*, London: Routledge, 2018, p. 101f. L. Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, Bonn, Bouvier, 1981, p. 1264. (First publication Leipzig, 1929–1932).
 22. Cf. M. Großheim, “Zu den Situationen selbst! Ein Vorschlag zur Reform der Phänomenologie” [“To the Situations Themselves! Proposal for the Reformation of Phenomenology”], in *Synthesis Philosophica* 2/2018, 303–25.
 23. With regard to the term “ambiance”, see J.-P. Thibaud, *Ambiance, International Lexicon of Aesthetics*; <https://lexicon.mimesisjournals.com/archive/2022/spring/Ambiance.pdf> (accessed January 5, 2023).
 24. H. Schmitz, *Der unerschöpfliche Gegenstand*, 2nd edn., Bonn, Bouvier, 1995, p. 461f; see Alexander Pope’s famous translation of a Latin verse: “Nymph of the grot, these springs I keep, / And to the murmurs of these waters sleep; / Ah, spare my slumbers, gently tread the cave! / And drink in silence, or in silence lave!” (1725). A beautiful metaphor indicating that one should tread (and treat) a *genius loci* site gently!
 25. See H. Schmitz, *New Phenomenology: A Brief Introduction*, Milan, Mimesis, 2019; and: H. Schmitz, “The ‘New Phenomenology,’” in *Phenomenology World-Wide*, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, ed., Dordrecht, Kluwer, 2002, pp. 491–94.
 26. H. Schmitz, *Was ist Neue Phänomenologie?* Rostock, Ingo Koch, 2003, p. 91.
 27. H. Schmitz, *System der Philosophie*, Vols. 3, 4, *Das Göttliche und der Raum*, Bonn, Bouvier, 1977, p. 150.
 28. H. Schmitz, *System der Philosophie*, Vols. 3, 4, pp. 128–34. With good reason, Schmitz uses (p. 130) the same Seneca quotation in this context that I used above (namely Sen. epist. 4, 41, 3).
 29. See D. Seamon, “Sense of Place,” in D. Richardson, et al., eds., *The International Encyclopedia of Geography*, John Wiley & Sons, 2022. Accessed January 16, 2023, <file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/2022-seamon-sense-of-place-geography-encyclopedia-aag-wiley-1-1.pdf>.
 30. D. Seamon, “Sense of Place,” p. 1.
 31. E. Relph, “A Pragmatic Sense of Place,” *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology*, 20/3 (2009), pp. 24–31.
 32. D. Seamon, “Sense of Place,” p. 1.
 33. D. Seamon, *Life Takes Place. Phenomenology, Lifeworlds, and Place Making*, London, Routledge, 2018, pp. 87–90.

34. See: G. Spitteler, *Dichte Teilnahme und darüber hinaus* [Thick Participation and Beyond], *Sociologus* 64/2014, pp. 207–30; C. Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, NY, Basic Books, 1973, pp. 3–30.
35. Cf. C. Tilley, *The Materiality of Stone: Explorations in Landscape Phenomenology*, Oxford, Berg, 2004, pp. 27f.
36. J. Hasse, *Die Aura des Einfachen. Mikrokologien des räumlichen Erlebens*, vol. 1, Munich, Alber, 2017, p. 170.
37. See C. Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, New York, Rizzoli, 1980; R. J. Kozljanič, *Der Geist eines Ortes*, vol. 2, pp. 258 and 309–20; T. Griffero, *Places, Affordances, Atmospheres. A Pathic Aesthetics*, London, Routledge, 2020, p. 140f.
38. See R. J. Kozljanič, “Genius Loci and the Numen of a Place: A Mytho-Phenomenological Approach to the Archaic,” in *The Archaic: The Past in the Present*, P. Bishop, ed., London, Routledge 2012, pp. 69–92, here pp. 82–87; also: R. J. Kozljanič, *Der Geist eines Ortes*, vol. 2, pp. 330–35.
39. See the phrase “ecstasy of things” in relation to the term “aura” in G. Böhme, *Atmosphäre, Essays zur neuen Ästhetik*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1995, pp. 25–34 and 166–172; see also G. Böhme, *Architektur und Atmosphäre*, 2nd edn., Munich, Fink 2013, pp. 149–150.
40. R. J. Kozljanič, *Walter Benjamins Begriff der Aura und die Aura eines Ortes—am Beispiel der Judengasse Frankfurt*, in *Symbolon, Jahrbuch für Symbolforschung*, Neue Folge, Bd. 19, H. Jung, ed., Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 2014, pp. 193–217.
41. J. J. Gibson, *The Theory of Affordances: The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1979. p. 127; see T. Griffero, *Places, Affordances, Atmospheres. A Pathic Aesthetics*, London, Routledge, 2020, p. 81.
42. T. Griffero: *Places, Affordances, Atmospheres*, p. 101.
43. Cf. P. Sloterdijk, *Bubbles: Spheres Volume I: Microspherology*, Los Angeles, Semiotext(e), 2011 (orig. ed. 1998).
44. T. Griffero: *Places, Affordances, Atmospheres*, p. 145. Cf. T. Griffero, *Quasi-Things. The Paradigma of Atmospheres*, Albany, NY, State Univ. of New York Press, 2017, pp. 29–38; and: M. Tedeschini, *La differenza del genio. Problema teorico, soluzione estetica, Sensibilia*, 9) [special issue on genius loci], Milano, Mimesis, 2017, pp. 351–65.
45. T. Griffero: *Places, Affordances, Atmospheres*, p. 144.
46. J. G. Bennett, *Elementary Systematics*, Santa Fe, NM, Bennett Books, 1993.
47. D. Seamon, *Life Takes Place*, p. 90.
48. T. Valena, *Zu einer Phänomenologie des Genius Loci*, in *Genius Loci*, L. Mallien et al., eds., Drachen, Klein Jasedow, 2009, pp. 148–206, p. 148.
49. J. Hasse and R. J. Kozljanič, *Einleitung*, in *Jahrbuch für Lebensphilosophie*, 5, 2010–2011, J. Hasse and R. J. Kozljanič, eds., Munich, Albunea, 2011, p. 9–21.
50. Cf. R. J. Kozljanič, *Landschaft als physiognomisch-atmosphärisches und geistig-kulturelles Phänomen*, in *Jahrbuch für Lebensphilosophie*, 5, 2010–2011, pp. 157–76; cf. R. J. Kozljanič, *Geschichten der Bethen—Vom heutigen Bethen-Kult über den christlichen Drei-Jungfrauen-Kult zum mythischen Matronen-Kult und zurück*, in *Hagia Chora*, 36, 2011, pp. 46–51.

Images

- p. 17: Roman wall-painting from Herculaneum.
- p. 17: Reclining nymph with an overturned urn. Fountain fragment from Rome, 2nd century. Vienna Museum of Art History.
- p. 18: Hippocrene at Mount Helicon.
- p. 18: Reclining spring nymph by Lucas Cranach, 1530–1535.
- p. 18: Detail from the numinous Corycian Cave near Delphi.
- p. 19: Genius from Lugdunum (Lyon). In front of the genius on the left a sacrificing Roman colony founder. Terracotta medallion, 1st century.
- p. 19: Nymphae Querquetulanae. Tree nymphs from a sacred oak grove near Rome. Silver denarius, 43 BCE.
- p. 20: Lurlei or Loreley. Postcard, ca 1900.
- p. 21: Jewish Ghetto Frankfurt. Engraving by M. Merian. Detail, ca 1628. The ghetto is the curved, narrow street outside the city walls.
- p. 22: three impulses generating place; from Seamon 2018, p. 85; used with permission.

A Place Called Utopia

Victoria King

King is an artist, writer, and poet whose work is concerned with issues of place and displacement. She lived for many years in America and Australia, and now once again lives in England. Her artwork can be seen at: www.victoria-king.com. Text and images © 2023 Victoria King. ykblackstone@gmail.com. Image captions, p. 31.



A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing [1].

—Oscar Wilde

A boriginal Australians have the oldest, continuous land-based culture in the world, estimated at 65,000 years. Their identities are based on connections to kinfolk and “country,” specific places for which they are custodians. In 1788, British colonization systematically and catastrophically disrupted their lives through brute force, massacres, and disease. The government placed the majority of those who survived on harsh stations and reserves. Christian missions forbade them to speak their native languages. The traumas they experienced left physical and emotional scars and profoundly affected their descendants.

Traditional Aboriginal people perceive time and place in a non-linear way that includes past, present, and future. Dream-time creation stories tell of mythological beings who created every land formation, plant, and animal. The ancient stories map that vast island and are still sung and danced in secret/sacred ceremonies. Children receive Dreamings from both parents: the father’s Dreaming is handed down

from his paternal lineage, while the mother gives a Dreaming based on the place of the child’s conception.

B ut I am not an indigenous woman; their stories are not mine. My white skin and American accent reflect the cultural wilderness in which I grew up. My question is more fundamental. *Who am I?* As a child, I was painfully shy, a silent, acutely observant witness to natural beauty and unnatural cruelty. A child deprived of love and touch becomes emotionally malnourished, literally starved of affection. As an adult, she will attract relationships that mirror the original abuse as she desperately tries to prove she is worthy of love.

Scientists now recognize that our cellular life as an egg inside our mother’s womb began in the womb of our grandmother [2]. Behavioral epigeneticists have shown that our ancestors’ traumas leave molecular scars on our DNA which pass down to future generations [3]. Our forebears’ experiences may not be known to us, but we inherit not only physical characteristics but psychological and behavioral tendencies and traumas.

Silence, suppressed rage, and unrelenting despair permeated the houses in which I grew up, as well as those of my maternal and paternal grandparents. The past was a

leaden drape dangerous to draw back. The few ancestral stories told were always dramatic and involved death—moral tales about what would happen if I weren’t sensible. Like most children, I tuned out the same way my own son would decades later.

After my parents died, I began researching my family history with the incentive of my granddaughter’s birth. I discovered that I am an imbroglio of the genetic imprint of countless generations of English, Irish, Scottish, German, and Scandinavian ancestors who were farmers, blacksmiths, schoolteachers, railway conductors, dukes, duchesses, and Harald the Black, a man for whom a large ninth century stone menhir still stands on the Scottish island of Islay.

These victims and victimizers participated in religious wars and slavery, crossed mountains, rivers, and oceans in search of utopias and better lives. Their hopes, dreams, anxieties, illnesses, and premature deaths are within my DNA. I became a seeker of truth, an inordinately shy but outspoken advocate of justice, an intrepid, agoraphobic traveller, a suicidal lover of life.

From an early age, I was obsessed with a search for meaning that took me far from my Kentucky home to

Europe and India to study esoteric teachings with Christian and Hindu mystics, Sufis, and Buddhist lamas. Whether it was through insufficient devotion or lack of religious fervor, within a relatively short time, I inevitably had reservations and doubts.

What was incontrovertible was that no matter how much I prayed or meditated, my emotional pain remained. Only my passions for nature and art were unwavering. The beauty of the natural world dramatically, albeit temporarily, alleviated my suffering and gave me joy.

As an artist, I pursued the elusive quarry of the sublime in a life leaden with situational depression. Moments of respite came when I relinquished control and celebrated unexpected juxtapositions of colors. Painting was my voice, and I gave every appearance of being a confident, successful artist. Yet losing myself in color had never been infallible despite spending long hours each day in my studio and travelling far to see inspirational works of art. Hope remained an extremely limited commodity, but I had mastered the art of endurance in childhood.

The phrase “sense of place” is now ubiquitous in western culture, as is the presumption that having a deep connection to where we live comes easily. Too often, however, we underestimate the power of place in our lives. Indigenous cultures do not make that mistake. At 17, I was cavalier about moving farther and farther from home and didn’t look closely at my failure to thrive in far-away places. I yearned to feel at home in the three countries I’ve lived, yet the reality has been otherwise.

Freud and Heidegger recognized that displacement was endemic to the human condition and elicited feelings of unbearable emptiness as well as a sense of the *unheimlich*. Philosophers and writers recognize the importance of returning to places of significance in our lives through journeys, memory, and imagination. Storytelling, be it autobiographical or biographical, can hold integrity as a form of personal and collective revelation as well as being a political irritant. In the 1980s, feminists sought an *écriture féminine* as they explored and reconstructed lost and suppressed records of female experience, placing emphasis upon the inclusion of non-literary and historical data such as diaries,

memoirs, and social and medical histories to facilitate greater understanding.

My story begins where I was born in a small Kentucky town near the Ohio River, a geographical border between states that during the Civil War divided north from south, a wide turbulent river that slaves once crossed to find freedom. During the 1960s, I crossed that river to Cincinnati to participate in civil rights marches and Viet Nam War protests. I read existentialist and Buddhist texts, and studied privately with Paul Chidlaw, an elderly Abstract Expressionist artist who once lived in Paris and Morocco.

In 1972, I came to England and studied integrative spiritual philosophies with J. G. Bennett in a dilapidated stately home in a tiny Cotswold village until his death three years later. I moved to the north of England when my son was born and went to art college in Manchester. A profusely flowering “secret” garden that I created became the sole inspiration for my paintings. I planted colors that resonated in my solar plexus.

I eclectically decorated our house in the shabby chic style of Bloomsbury artists, collected tribal art, and made annual pilgrimages to see early Renaissance frescoes in Tuscany and Umbria. I became a senior university lecturer and regularly exhibited my paintings. My son’s father and I lived frugally by necessity, but our life was rich and full.

Yet stories are partial histories and appearances are often deceiving. In my art studio, I obsessively painted my garden’s flowering colors without a larger perspective. My hunger for beauty offset feeling displaced, trapped in circumstances I felt unable to change. Northern light was gloomy and grey. Bone-chilling rain seemed to drizzle incessantly on the grim, soot-covered architecture of the Industrial Revolution. Sky was barely visible above endless rows of austere, dull, red brick houses, and streetlights muted the visibility of stars. There were no long vistas, and the growing season was short. Beyond my

garden were reminders of where I was and did not want to be—in a northern English suburb where I stayed for the sake of my son.

In 1993, while my son spent the summer with his grandfather in Kentucky, I went to the south of France to attend a three-month Buddhist retreat given by a Tibetan lama. It was an impulsive decision that I made after reading his inspirational book on living and dying [4]. Yet in the mountains of Languedoc amidst idyllic, ancient beech forests, I lost rather than found perspective. At the age of 42, like an infatuated teenager, I fell in love with a retreat facilitator. At the end of December, I went to Australia to join him for a holiday and on the jet-setting lama’s two-week retreat.

Three days after I arrived, he asked me to marry him, but the 25-year relationship that followed was like a slow train wreck. During the retreat, I vowed never again to join a spiritual group after discovering that our charismatic teacher was a sexual predator, something my new partner had long known [5]. He called me his “life partner” but, despite my desperate unhappiness being so far from my son, he refused to move to England.

Thinking that he would change his mind, I focused on my art practice and new three-acre garden in the Blue Mountains, annual trips to see my son, and my growing interest in Aboriginal art. The paintings of Emily Kngwarreye (c. 1910–1996), an elderly Anmatyerre woman artist from Utopia, particularly fascinated me. Utopia is comprised of 16 small Aboriginal communities spread across 2,400 kilometers in the arid, red center of Australia. In the 1920s, two European brothers forcibly took the land from its indigenous owners and called it Utopia because of the abundance of rabbits, a welcome, familiar food source, but



an environmentally disastrous introduced animal. It took the Anmatyerre and Al-yawarre people over 50 years to get their land back.

In their writing on “close vision-haptic space,” Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari describe how indigenous people are in a deep relationship with the ground: “on” it, not “in front of” it [6]. Heidegger realized that our elemental relationship with place goes beyond philosophy and is concerned with our very being. Merleau-Ponty embraced concepts of mutuality and participation. He contended that our perception and exchanges in the world occur through the simple yet profound fact that our bodies are in contact with the ground. He recognized the importance of the intricate relationship between our body and perception of the world, calling it “the knowing touch” [7].

Touch is our most intimate and essential sense, engaging our whole body through properties of our skin. As well as being an active sense, touch is also passive: *to touch is to be touched*. Merleau-Ponty wrote: “The presence of the world is precisely the presence of its flesh to my flesh” [8]. David Abram expanded further: “We are organs of this world, flesh of its flesh, and the world is perceiving itself through us” [9]. He suggests that this simple yet profound recognition could be the foundation for an environmental ethic through attentiveness—a “carnal, sensorial empathy” [10].

Since the 1970s, a growing number of ecologists, geographers, philosophers, architects, artists, sociologists, feminists, anthropologists, theologians, and ethicists have taken the theme of place seriously and exposed the dangers of post-modern, post-capitalist societies that construct the world as a series of manipulable sites within empty space.

A worldview that privileges ceaseless property development and the exploitation of natural resources is at extreme odds with that of indigenous people whose connections to the land are central to their very being. The political and ethical dimensions of this difference have haunted Australia since the first British fleet arrived in 1788; it was in their interests to wrongly declare the continent *Terra Nullius*.

Seeing the land as infinite, without particularity, or only having real estate poten-

tial with no intrinsic significance as opposed to indigenous ways of seeing and experiencing the land as sacred reveals a fundamental difference of perception that continues to undermine mutual understanding.

My father bought cheap rental properties for extra income all his adult life, but I have never bought a house as an investment. When my son was born, I created a life-enhancing home for him as well as for myself to make up for the lack of one during my childhood. In English art colleges, I taught students to “see” what was in front of them, not realizing just how important and *fragile* were my connections to family and home. In Joni Mitchell’s words: “You don’t know what you’ve got ‘til it’s gone” [11].

When I was barely 18, the loss of my albeit dysfunctional home when my father disowned me, my move to England at the age of 21 to find meaning in my life, and to Australia at the age of 42 all had truly detrimental effects upon me and others. The erasures that increasingly occurred on my paintings were symptomatic of my unhappiness and homesickness.

Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote that “The expression of a change of aspect is the expression of a new perception and at the same time of the perception being unchanged” [12]. He explored the implications of a new vision that appeared in the field of vision, one that was half visual and half thought, an “echo of a thought in sight” [13].

In the 1960s, modernist art critic Clement Greenberg maintained that abstract art demands and creates certain spatial relationships between a viewer and an art object. He believed that paintings had become objects of the same spatial order as our bodies: “It [a painting] has lost its ‘inside’ and become almost all ‘outside’, all plane surface” [14].

This interpretation of a surface “skin” resonates with Merleau-Ponty’s writings on the phenomenology of perception: “In whatever civilization it is born, from whatever beliefs, motives, or thoughts, no matter what ceremonies surround it—and even when it appears devoted to something else—from Lascaux to our time, pure or impure, figurative or not, painting celebrates no other enigma but that of visibility” [15].



Modernism has only recently become the focus for accusations of essentialism in its attention to *how* we see rather than *what* we see, that is, difference and specificity. Such a celebration of vision does not allow for cultural difference or artists’ intentions. Deleuze and Guattari recognized that art galleries are by their nature “striated” spaces, places of commodification that provide a particular kind of space where viewers come into close contact with artworks while at the same time being *distanced* from them.

Striated spaces relate to distant vision and the optical spaces where people view artworks, whereas artists create within the “smooth,” haptic space of close vision [16]. Since the Renaissance, there has been an autonomy and secularization of art that has made it conducive to external valuation.

Yet in Australia, I discovered that what seemed straightforward in American and European galleries was far more complex when applied to Aboriginal art. When Aboriginal paintings are displayed *out of context* on the walls of a gallery, home, boardroom, or government department far from the place of their creation, the artists' long struggles for Land Rights and their past *and* present suffering become invisible.

For traditional Aboriginal people, art, country, spirituality, and kinship relationships are all interconnected, and they pass their ancient oral culture and embodied, experiential knowledge to new generations. At Utopia, women collect and grind natural ochres for *awelye* ceremonies, then paint the dots and lines specific to each girl and woman's Dreaming on their bodies as the stories are sung. Bare feet then dance upon the sensuous, sandy ground for which they are custodians. Ground and body are one.

Sand is a perfect medium for expression and contiguous with bodily experience: Aboriginal people walk long distances on it to hunt and gather bush tucker, sit, sleep, cook, and eat meals upon it, draw maps in it, and now paint canvases upon it. Emily Kame Kngwarreye sat cross-legged in the middle of large, unstretched canvases laid flat on the soft sand at Utopia to paint her linear body painting designs and dotted celebrations of her Yam Dreaming. Her name, Kame, means "yam." She was a custodian and "boss lady" for her country of Alhalkere, land stolen from her people which is still a non-indigenous cattle station adjacent to Utopia.

She began painting with acrylics on canvas during the last eight years of her life and rose to meteoric fame for her bold, brightly colored paintings, yet she continued to live in a "humpy" made of three sheets of corrugated iron. While post-modern theorists see cultural difference as potentially challenging universalistic, Eurocentric, and ethnocentric aesthetics, old visions remain intact in Aboriginal art galleries. Like art critics at the time, I once compared Kngwarreye's paintings to those of Impressionist and Abstract Expressionist artists whose work had influenced my own. But it was her Dreamings and embodied connection to Alhalkere that solely determined her dynamic brushstrokes.



Aboriginal paintings are, in effect, documents of Land Rights, something rarely effectively disclosed by art galleries. As the late Western Desert artist Charlie Tjungurrayi said, "If I don't paint this story some white fella might come and steal my country" [17].

Creating artworks has provided much-needed financial agency for many Aboriginal people since 1971, when a schoolteacher gave acrylic paints and small boards to a small group of despondent Aboriginal men at the bleak government settlement of Papunya [18]. It was a place of profound unhappiness where the effects of displacement, trans-generational trauma, and loss were everywhere evident. The men first painted the designs of their secret/sacred ceremonies, but quickly covered them with dots when they realized that women and uninitiated boys would see them.

The fact that the appreciation of indigenous artworks does *not* extend into meaningful action has not gone unnoticed by the artists. Distanced from the reality of indigenous people's lives, the paintings' shimmering surfaces mesmerize us, and the dots and lines remain our blind spots. Cultural difference and suffering disappear in a celebration of surface beauty. Artworks are re-contextualized into interior spaces where they become symbols rather than indexes: generalized

notions of the spiritual and icons of Australia that do not reflect that country's shameful past and present history.

In addition to the injustice of land being stolen from its indigenous owners, and the massacres and rape of Aboriginal women that followed, the government carried out a White Australia policy from 1850 to 1973 and forcibly removed half-caste children from Aboriginal families. Records were often not kept, and many of the Stolen Generation were never able to find their families again. Utopia artist Barbara Weir was nine years old and collecting water for her Auntie Emily Kngwarreye when officials took her and placed her in a brutal children's home 1,500 kilometers away in Darwin. Her mother believed she was dead, and the community did Sorry Business death rituals.

Barbara finally found her family 12 years later, and her capacity to speak English combined with her fierce determination for justice made her instrumental in Utopia having the first successful Land Rights claim in 1978.

When I met her in 1998 at an Aboriginal art gallery in Adelaide, I recognized how traumatized she still was and offered to help her in any way that I could. Some weeks later, she phoned and asked me to record the story of her life. I immediately agreed but told her that I'd just been diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Shortly after my six months of chemotherapy ended, we began a five-year collaboration at Utopia in which I transcribed her stories and those of 12 other Anmatyerre and Alyawarre women artists in her extended family.

My hair had not yet regrown when I arrived at Utopia, but I did not feel out of place, for many of the women had recently shaved their heads for Sorry Business. I found myself on a very steep learning curve about cultural difference and quickly realized that my culturally ocular-centric, aesthetic gaze had limited my perception and directly affected how I viewed the world. While walking with the women, I felt ignorant and often blind; the land disclosed so much more to them than it ever would to me. Being at Utopia disrupted my perceptions of time, the land, art, and of myself.

The women's stories were heart-breaking, as were the third-world conditions in which they lived and



the racism and exploitation they endured. Being with them profoundly affected me [19]. Through their kindness and patience, I slowly came to better understand their culture and paintings.

In that place where time and space seemed infinite, I also saw more clearly the negative effects of my own displacements, and that my ineffectual attempts to immerse myself in art, nature, spirituality, and love were simply desperate attempts to survive. Trauma anaesthetizes, permeates, and restricts lives; activities become dissociative, obsessive, monotonous, and repetitive. I began to wonder if the obsessive dotting that Aboriginal people made on their canvases could reflect not only their Dreamings, but the trans-generational trauma they suffered.

Paul Carter recognized that “In transferring the iconic signs from the performative context of the ceremony—where singing, ground-marking and body painting combine to evoke complex abstract concepts—to the permanence of the painting board [or

canvas], the marks risk growing disembodied” [20]. I became ashamed of my white skin and so unhappy being so far from my son in England that in my studio I could barely make a mark upon my canvases without erasing it. Western artists frequently “borrow” the styles of past and present artists of all cultures, but it is against Aboriginal Law to paint another person’s Dreaming. My respect for the people of Utopia made it essential for me to find an appropriate gesture in an appropriated, contested land and not let the appearance of their paintings influence my own.

All around the world, past and present injustices and genocidal policies toward indigenous people meet with inaction and denial. The legacy of those actions is visible in shocking health statistics, high mortality rates, lower-than-average life spans, and high levels of unemployment. Aboriginal art has the power to speak to contentious issues, but its capacity to bear

cultural witness is too frequently undermined.

In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag reflected on the consequences of inuring ourselves to the reality of suffering: “Our failure is one of imagination, of empathy” [21]. A deeper understanding of indigenous cultures’ past and present oppression allows us an important opportunity to counter a cult of forgetting. Australian Aboriginal paintings contain an uncanny echo that shudders within a gap of disturbance. They carry a plea to the beholder to see and *act* with more than visual perception. Knowledge, empathy, ethical perception, and action are all required, otherwise they will continue to be *objects of desire* in a field of optical pleasure. These hybrid paintings have a crucial message for all people of the importance of environmental custodianship and the fundamental relationship between kinfolk and “country.”

In 2005, after a major 25-year retrospective of my artwork, I was canoeing along the coast of Bruny Island, Tasmania, and came across a for-sale sign nailed to a tree in front of an isolated, humble wooden house that had sublime water and mountain views. My son had married and bought his first house, and I had just sold the large English home where he had grown up. I had money in my pocket, so to speak, and impulsively shook hands on the





purchase of “Blackstone,” much to the shock of my partner.

I intended it to be a holiday house, but within a year, we moved there full-time. I collected water-polished black stones, shells, feathers, and driftwood along the shoreline, and put water bowls for wildlife outside my studio shed where on still days I could hear dolphins passing. I wrote and illustrated books of my poetry and celebrated the birdlife in paintings and sculptures.

Yet there were *many* challenges. There was toxic small-mindedness and environmental corruption on the island, and Blackstone’s isolation frequently made it feel like a pressure cooker. We relied on wind



and solar power, composting toilets, and rainwater, bought food fortnightly on the mainland, and I grew vegetables that wildlife adored.

Blackstone’s 55 acres had long ago been clear-felled for sheep grazing. With volunteer help, we planted 4,000 endemic trees and understory plants to restore the land and fulfil my dream of creating a wildlife sanctuary. Yet when I found out the tragic history of that awe-inspiring place, my perception changed. We discovered the remains of the Sod Hut, the place where George Augustus Robinson met the Nuenone tribe in 1829 and began his so-called “Friendly Mission” that led to the genocide of nearly all Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

My sculptures became more shamanic, and my bird paintings morphed into traumatized “Angels of History” [22]. I painted with pigments I made from native plants and wood ash, the latter being in plentiful supply after the neighboring grazier tried to burn us out when I complained about his shooting wallabies on our land.

After the birth of my only grandchild in 2009, my desire to spend more time in England became overwhelming. My mother died that same year, and with her inheritance I bought a house in a 400-acre country park near my son so that we could spend six months in each place. I thought that it was a perfect and “fair” solution. Being less than a minute walk from three lakes filled with waterbirds and frequent trips to Europe made the transition easy for both my partner and me.

I created another profusely flowering secret garden, had a roof raised to make a large art studio, and color returned to my painting [image, front page]. I felt content. But in 2018, at Blackstone, the train finally crashed. I returned alone to live in England, grieving for the loss of a place and wildlife that I loved, and furious because my partner unexpectedly ended our 25-year marriage.

Slowly, with the help of my family, garden, art practice, and journal, I began putting myself back together, hopefully now with more discernment. The north of England will never be a utopia, but in the center of Australia, I discovered the relationship of kinfolk and country.

Notes

1. O. Wilde, 1891. *The Soul of Man Under*

Capitalism, *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*. 2007. Vol. 4, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

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3. M. Wolynn, 2017. *It Didn’t Start with You*. NY: Penguin.
4. S. Rinpoche, 1992. *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. London: Rider.
5. When I arrived in Australia, I discovered that Sogyal Rinpoche (1947–2019) had a long history of sexual predation, settled rape cases out of court, was violent, misused charitable funds, and watched pornography with senior students who condoned his hypocritical actions as “cultural difference” see <http://howdidit happen.org/history-abuse-allegations-rigpa/>.
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7. M. Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 315. *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
9. D. Abram, 1996, p. 68. *The Spell of the Sensuous*. NY: Pantheon.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
11. J. Mitchell, 1970. Big Yellow Taxi, from her album, *Ladies of the Canyon*.
12. L. Wittgenstein, 1921. *Philosophical Investigations*; quoted in J. Elderfield, 2001 pp. 11–12. A Change of Aspect, in *Bridget Riley: Reconnaissance*. NY: Dia Center for the Arts.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
14. C. Greenberg, 1986, p. 19. *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism, Vol. 3, Affirmations and Refusals: 1950–1956*, J. O’Brian, ed., Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
15. M. Merleau-Ponty, 1964, pp. 165–66. Eye and Mind, in *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Arts, History, and Politics*. Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press.
16. Deleuze and Guattari, p. 493 [see note 6].
17. www.nma.gov.au/audio/uncategorised/mutukayi-motor-cars-and-punya-painting/transcripts/mutukayi-

[motor-cars-and-papunya-painting.](#)

18. Acrylic painting was first introduced at Papunya in 1971 by Geoffrey Bardon, a schoolteacher who recognized the people's disempowerment and grief at being displaced from their ancestral lands. Acrylics were introduced to the people of Utopia in 1988 by a Sydney art dealer.

19. Psychologist and Holocaust survivor Dori Laub recognized that "The listener to trauma comes to be a participant and co-owner of the traumatic event: through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma in himself." See D. Laub, 1991 p. 7, No One Bears Witness to the Witness, in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. S. Felman, and D. Laub, eds., NY: Routledge.

20. P. Carte, 2000, p. 255. The Enigma of a Homeland Place: Mobilising the Papunya Tula Painting Movement, in *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius*, H. Perkins and H. Fink, eds., Sydney: AGNSW. Italics are mine.
21. S. Sontag, 2003, p. 7. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. London: Hamish Hamilton.
22. www.victoria-king.com/angel-of-history.

Image Captions [all photographs by Victoria King]

- p. 1: *Floating World*, Victoria King, oil on canvas, 40 x 40 cm.
- p. 25: *My Mother's Country*, Barbara Weir, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 38 cm.

- p. 26: Barbara Weir and her mother Minnie Pwerle collecting bush tucker.
- p. 27: *Yam Flowers* by Emily Kngwarreye, acrylic on canvas, 133 x 63 cm.
- p. 28: Anna Petyarre Price drawing the lines of her Yam Dreaming *awelye* in the sand.
- p. 29: Gloria Petyarre painting her *Grass Dreaming*.
- p. 29: Gloria Petyarre, Violet Petyarre, and Glory Ngale hunting perentie lizards at Utopia.
- p. 29: Minnie Pwerle, mother of Barbara Weir, painting her Bush Melon Dreaming *awelye*.
- p. 30: Driftwood shorebird, Victoria King.
- p. 30: *Angel of History II*, Victoria King, natural pigments on board, 99 x 66 cm.

Questions relating to environmental and architectural phenomenology (from *EAP*, 2014 [vol. 25, no. 3, p. 4])

Questions relating to phenomenology and related interpretive approaches and methods:

- What is phenomenology and what does it offer to whom?
- What is the state of phenomenological research today? What are your hopes and concerns regarding phenomenology?
- Does phenomenology continue to have relevance in examining human experience in relation to world?
- Are there various conceptual and methodological modes of phenomenology and, if so, how can they be categorized and described?
- Has phenomenological research been superseded by other conceptual approaches—e.g., post-structuralism, social-constructionism, critical theory, relationalist and non-representational perspectives, the various conceptual “turns,” and so forth?
- Can phenomenology contribute to making a better world? If so, what are the most crucial phenomena and topics to be explored phenomenologically?
- Can phenomenological research offer practical results in terms of design, planning, policy, and advocacy?
- How might phenomenological insights be broadcast in non-typical academic ways—e.g., through artistic expression, theatrical presentation, digital evocation, virtual realities, and so forth?
- What are the most important aims for future phenomenological research?
- Do the various post-structural and social-constructionist criticisms of phenomenology—that it is essentialist, masculinist, authoritative, voluntarist, ignorant of power structures, and so forth—point toward its demise?

Questions relating to the natural world and environmental and ecological concerns:

- Can there be a phenomenology of nature and the natural world?
- What can phenomenology offer the intensifying environmental and ecological crises we face today?
- Can phenomenology contribute to more sustainable actions and worlds?
- Can one speak of a sustainable lifeworld?
- What is a phenomenology of a *lived* environmental ethic and who are the key contributors?
- Do the “sacred” and the “holy” have a role in caring for the natural world? For places? For lifeworlds broadly?
- Can phenomenology contribute to environmental education? If so, in what ways?

- Can there be a phenomenology of the two laws of thermodynamics, especially the second law claiming that all activities, left to their own devices, tend toward greater disorder and fewer possibilities? Are there ways whereby phenomenological understanding of lifeworld might help to reduce the accelerating disordering of natural and human worlds?

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

- Why has the theme of place become an important phenomenological topic?
- Can a phenomenological understanding of place contribute to better place making?
- Can phenomenology contribute to a generative understanding of place and place making?
- What roles do bodily regularity and habitual inertia play in the constitution of place and place experience?
- What are the lived relationships between place, sustainability, and a responsive environmental ethic?
- How are phenomenological accounts to respond to post-structural interpretations of space and place as rhizomic and a “mesh-work of paths” (Ingold)?
- Can phenomenological accounts incorporate a “progressive sense of place” argued for by critical theorists like Doreen Massey?
- Can phenomenological explications of space and place account for human differences—gender, sexuality, less-abledness, social class, cultural background, and so forth?
- Can phenomenology contribute to the politics and ideology of place?
- Can a phenomenological understanding of lived embodiment and habitual inertia be drawn upon to facilitate robust places and to generate mutual support and awareness among places, especially places that are considerably different (e.g., different ethnic neighborhoods or regions)?
- Can phenomenology contribute to mobility, the nature of “flows,” rhizomic spaces, the places of mobility, non-spaces and their relationship to mobility and movement?

Questions relating to architecture and environmental design and policy:

- Can there be a phenomenology of architecture and architectural experience and meaning?
- Can phenomenology contribute to better architectural design?
- How do qualities of the designable world—spatiality, materiality, lived aesthetics, environmental embodiment etc.—contribute to lifeworlds?

- What are the most pertinent environmental and architectural features contributing to a lifeworld’s being one way rather than another?
- What role will cyberspace and digital technologies have in 21st-century lifeworlds? How will they play a role in shaping designed environments, particularly architecture?
- What impact will digital advances and virtual realities have on physical embodiment, architectural design, and real-world places? Will virtual reality eventually be able to simulate “real reality” entirely? If so, how does such a development transform the nature of lifeworld, natural attitude, place, and architecture?
- Can virtual worlds become so “real” that they are lived as “real” worlds?

Other potential questions:

- What is the lived relationship between people and the worlds in which they find themselves?
- Can lifeworlds be made to happen self-consciously? If so, how? Through what individual efforts? Through what group efforts?
- Can a phenomenological education in life-world, place, and environmental embodiment assist citizens and professionals in better understanding the workings and needs of real-world places and thereby contribute to their envisioning and making?
- Is it possible to speak of human-rights-in-place or place justice? If so, would such a possibility move attention and supportive efforts toward improving the places in which people and other living beings find themselves, rather than focusing only on the rights and needs of individuals and groups without consideration of their place context?

Questions relating to Covid-19:

- Will demands of Covid-19 have a lasting impact on physical places and bodily sociality?
- Can social media and virtual realities effectively replace face-to-face presence and physical places?
- Will human beings return to physical place and firsthand intercorporeality once the pandemic ends?
- Can human life really survive if people lose their direct lived relationships with other human beings and an entrenched physical involvement in real-world places?
- Does the crisis of Covid-19 demonstrate the central phenomenological principle that human beings-are-inured-in place? If that inurement collapses, is human life at risk?



Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology

Published digitally twice a year, **EAP** is a forum and clearing house for research and design that incorporate a qualitative approach to environmental and architectural experience, actions, and meanings.

One key concern of **EAP** is design, education, policy, and advocacy supporting and strengthening natural and built places that sustain human and environmental wellbeing. Realizing that a clear conceptual stance is integral to informed research and design, the editor emphasizes phenomenological approaches but also gives attention to related styles of qualitative research. **EAP** welcomes essays, letters, reviews, conference information, and so forth. Forward submissions to the editor.

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Exemplary Themes

- The nature of environmental and architectural experience;
- Sense of place, including place identity and place attachment;
- Architectural and landscape meaning;
- The environmental, architectural, spatial, and material dimensions of lifeworlds;
- Changing conceptions of space, place, and nature;
- Home, dwelling, journey, and mobility;
- Environmental encounter and its relation to environmental responsibility and action;
- Environmental and architectural atmospheres and ambiances;
- Environmental design as place making;
- Sacred space, landscape, and architecture;
- The role of everyday things—furnishings, tools, clothing, interior design, landscape features, and so forth—in supporting people's sense of environmental wellbeing;
- The progressive impact of virtual reality on human life and how it might transform the lived nature of "real" places, buildings, and lifeworlds;
- The practice of a *lived* environmental ethic.

For additional themes and topics, see the preceding page, which outlines a series of relevant questions originally published in the 25th-anniversary issue of **EAP** in 2014 (vol. 25, no. 3, p. 4).

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