



# Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter

Vol. 5, No. 2

Spring 1994

This issue of *EAP* highlights membership news, two essays on place, and two book reviews. The first book, *A Phenomenology of the Etheric World*, is a set of articles that applies a Goethean phenomenology to elements of the natural world. The second book, *Living Water*, presents the life and work of Viktor Schauberger, a little-known but innovative naturalist and inventor whose radical way of studying nature was implicitly phenomenological.

The two essays in this issue are by geographer Cary de Wit and psychologist Louise Million. De Wit summarizes research that attempts to identify the experienced qualities of place and landscape that give the Kansan High Plains their special geographical ambiance. Million presents excerpts from interviews that she conducted with two rural Canadian families forced to give up their homes and land when a dam was built on the Oldman River of southern Alberta.

As of March 14, 1994, we have received 125 renewals--109 from the U.S. and 16, non-U.S. These renewals, including \$378 in donations, have provided \$1203, enough to assure *EAP*'s continuation in 1994. We thank all readers, especially those who made donations.

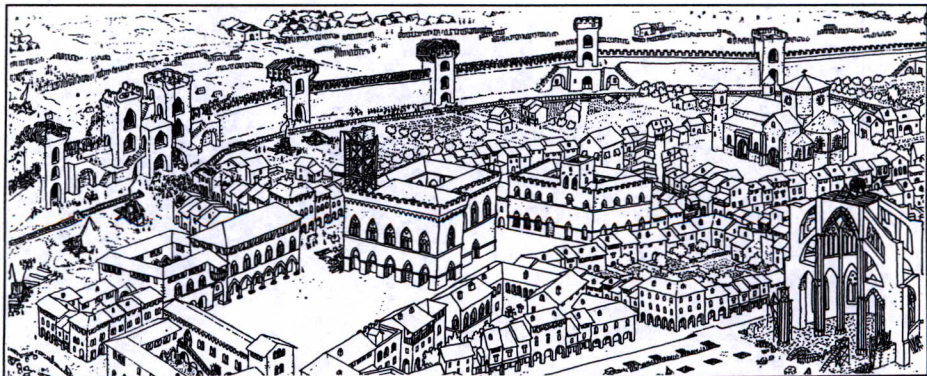
Though *EAP* is financially solvent, we could do with more subscribers. Most readers seem to learn of the newsletter through word of mouth or through notices in other publications. Please recommend *EAP* to individuals whom you think might be interested. Also, let us know about publications that might run a blurb on *EAP*. We will send them information.

## EAP DIRECTORY AVAILABLE

Thanks to the fine efforts of *EAP* member **Herb Childress** and his wife **Judi**, our first membership directory is now available and lists everyone who has subscribed to the newsletter since 1992. Also, for everyone who included information on their renewal form-survey, Herb has constructed a short bio-sketch.

The *EAP* editors are most grateful to Herb and Judi for producing a useful and *handsome* document (the cover pages were made by scanning a number of the handwritten responses to the question asking about "three favorite places"). To cover costs, we are charging \$5 per copy and hope many readers will wish to order. Send your request and a check made out to Herb to: Herb Childress, 1706A E. Bellevue Place, Milwaukee, WI 53211 (414-229-4014).

*A bird's-eye view of mid-13th century Barmi, a fictional Mediterranean city. Compare with drawing on p. 3.*



## CITATIONS RECEIVED

Robert D. Habiger, 1993. *Designing the Post-Vatican II Worship Space. Modern Liturgy* (Nov.), pp. 8-11.

This architect argues that post-Vatican II church designs have not worked well largely because they continue to be based on a "temple archetype," or two-room worship space that separates clergy and laity. Rather, the need is a "meeting place archetype," or one-room worship space, shared by liturgical celebration and participants together (see drawing, right). The author examines the design needs of the one-room space through three themes: *environment, encounter, and mystery*.

Edward S. Casey, 1993. *Getting Back into Place*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press. ISBN 0-253-20837-8.

This philosopher works to "articulate an exact and engaged analysis of place more fully, and to trace out its philosophical consequences." His aim is to "accord place a position of renewed respect by specifying its power to direct and stabilize us, to memorialize and identify us, to tell us who and what we are in terms of *where we are* (as well as *where we are not*)."

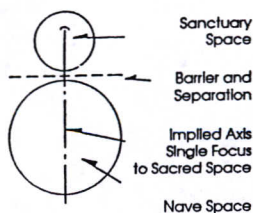
Elliot W. Eisner 1993. *The Emergence of New Paradigms for Educational Research. Art Education* (Nov.), pp. 50-55.

This professor of education and art examines a set of new research approaches that he calls "qualitative research methodology," by which he means "methods in which the researcher is the research instrument, methods that are non-interventionist, that are field-focused, that are interpretive in character, that use voice and aesthetically crafted narrative to convey meaning" (p. 50). Having reviewed examples of this research, he then asks its potential place and value for art education.

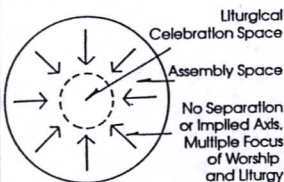
David Rothenberg, 1993. *Hand's End: Technology and the Limits of Nature*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press. ISBN 0520-08054-8.

This philosopher interprets technology "as the fundamental way in which we experience and define nature—the tool as humanity extended." Throughout history, "our view of the natural world has changed continually according to the new ways society has

## TEMPLE ARCHETYPE Two-Room Space



## MEETING HOUSE ARCHETYPE One-Room Space



invented to use it.... As we extend the hand in different ways, we perceive what we can touch anew. It changes, and so do we."

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

The annual meeting of the **Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences** will be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the **Society for Phenomenology and Existential Phenomenology**, Sept 30-Oct 3, 1994, in Seattle, Washington. Contact: Prof. Keith Doubt, Division of Social Science, Northeast Missouri State University, Kirksville, MO 63501 (816-785-4636).

**Eucumene**, a new "journal of the environment, culture, meaning" publishes "scholarly research and informed commentaries on various aspects of the cultural appropriation of nature, landscape and environment. It welcomes contributions from the growing numbers of scholars and practitioners in the arts, humanities, and environmental sciences who are interested in the ways that people imagine, interpret and transform the physical and social worlds." The journal also includes book reviews. U.S. Editor: Prof. James Duncan, Geography Dept., Syracuse Univ., Syracuse, NY 13244.

**The Scientific and Medical Network**, headquartered in England, seeks "to deepen understanding in science, medicine, and education by fostering rational and intuitive insights." The group's interests are broader than name or statement of purpose indicate; *Network*, the group's quarterly journal, sometimes includes articles, book reviews, and reports dealing with architectural and environmental concerns as well as with interpretive ways of knowing. Contact: David Lorimer, Lesser Halings, Tilehouse Lane, Denham, Uxbridge UB95DG, England.

**Kiwaki Press** is a small, growing publishing house devoted to "non-fiction books for general and academic audiences that affirm the real connections among our bodies, our communities, and our ecosys-



tems, and that provide practical strategies for healing and renewal on those levels." The press is seeking book-length manuscripts. Contact: Greg Cumberland, Publisher, Kivaki Press, 585 East 31st Street, Durango, CO 81301 (303-385-1767).

**Talking Leaves** is a bioregionally based journal that emphasizes environmental activism arising from a deeply felt emotional connection to the living earth. Past issues have focused on such themes as art and ecology, women and nature, and personal activism. The journal is published by the Deep Ecology Education Project (DEEP). A one-year subscription of eight issues is \$18. Contact: DEEP, 1430 Willamette St., #367, Eugene, OR 97401 (503-342-2974).

At the "Tuning of the World" conference last August (see *EAP*, 3, 3), some 100 people formed the **World Forum for Acoustic Ecology** (WFAE), an international coalition "concerned with the state of the world soundscape as an ecological entity." Acoustic Ecology is the study of the relationship between living beings and their sonic environment. WFAE's aims include improving the acoustic quality of places and preserving "acoustically balanced soundscapes." The group publishes the quarterly *Soundscape Newsletter*. Contact: WFAE, Simon Fraser Univ, Communication Dept., Burnaby, BC, V5A 1S6 Canada.

Below: Mid-15th century Barmí: "Commercial Expansion"

## NOTEWORTHY READINGS

Xavier Hernandez & Pilar Comes, 1990. *Barmí: A Mediterranean City Through the Ages*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990. ISBN 0-395-54227-8.

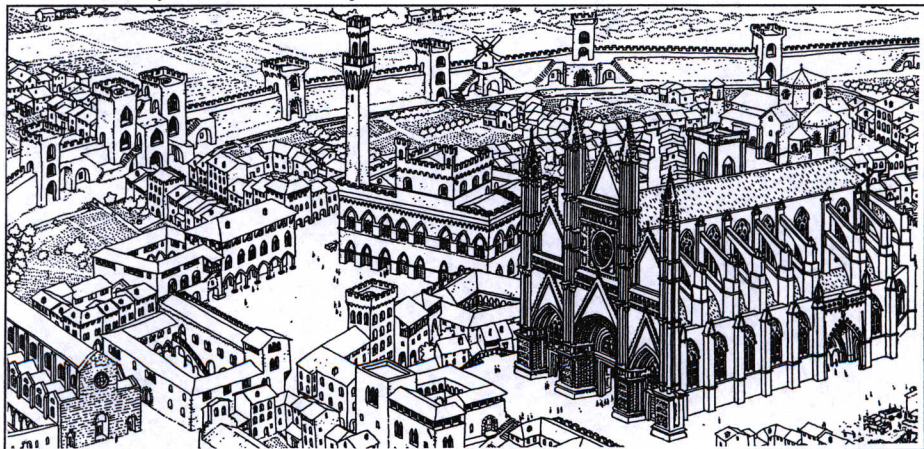
First published in Spanish and illustrated by Jordi Ballonga, this book presents bird's-eye views of a fictional city of southern Europe, starting in the 4th century B.C. ("Farmers and Herders") and continuing, in thirteen depictions, to the late 20th century ("Between Past and Future"). On p. 1 and below, we include a portion of two of the aerial drawings.

The authors claim that, though never extant, Barmí could be any pre-Roman settlement that grew to become a major 20th-century city between Italy's Tiber River to the mouth of Spain's Ebro River.

The book's written text is minimal and elementary, but what is fascinating is the stimulating black-and-white drawings as they show the city's changing from period to period. These two-page views alternate with explanatory diagrams, drawings, and brief discussion.

The book should be of considerable appeal to high-school students, though its images could also be a useful tool around which to focus undergraduate discussion on how changes in the physical environment contribute to a changing sense of place.

The same authors and illustrator have also produced *Lebek: A City of Northern Europe Through the Ages* (Houghton Mifflin, 1991).



## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

**Simo Alitalo** is a Finnish radio producer, audio artist, and film-sound teacher. His research includes sound-scape studies, environmental and architectural sound-scape design, new media and environment/space, and the philosophy of space. Address: Hakapellonk. 6D 156, SF-20540 Turku, Finland.

**Chris Ford** is a social psychologist who recently completed her PhD at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, in the program of Curriculum and Educational Foundations. Her doctorate is entitled "Creative Fidelity: The Study of Compassionate Consciousness in a Technological World." The study considers current ethical, intellectual, and spiritual questions through an existential-phenomenological perspective on consciousness. Address: 219 Carroll St., Apt. 4, Brooklyn, NY 11231.

**Linda Kruger** is a PhD student in the sociology of natural resources, focusing on the meaning of places and forests. She studies factors that affect acceptability of forest management practices and is also interested in how people cope with change and "the effects of global changes on place." Address: US Forestry Service--PNW Research Station, 4043 Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105.

**Renée LeStrange** is a PhD candidate in depth psychology at Pacific Graduate Institute in Los Angeles. Interested in Jungian psychology and the self-world relationship, her doctoral work focuses on "the phenomenology of place attachment, interviewing multiple subjects on their experiences of ties to places." She hopes to "bring the dialogue of the importance of place into depth psychology." She is also interested in the relationship between sacred space and urban public places. Address: 532 N. Rossmore Ave., No. 110, Los Angeles, CA 90004.

**Paola Coppola Pignatelli** is an Italian architect who teaches in the Department of Architecture and Urban Design at the University of Rome. She sends word of her new book, *Identita Come Processo [Identity as Process: Spatial Culture and the Architectural Project]* (Officina editions, Rome, 1992). This book uses a phenomenological approach to study the modern

## "NO MORE ROOTED IN THEIR WORLD": JUNG LETTER PUBLISHED

*The following, first appearing in the New York Times (Nov. 19, 1993, p. A33) is a previously unpublished letter, dated Nov. 12, 1959, from psychologist C. G. Jung to the prominent Chicago social worker Ruth Topping, who had requested that he clarify what he meant when he had spoken of "religious outlook" in a Chicago newspaper. "Among all my patients in the second half of life," he had noted, "every one of them fell ill because he had lost what the living religions of every age have given their followers, and none of them has been really healed, who did not regain his religious outlook."*

### ZURICH

When you study the mental history of the world, you see that people since times immemorial had a general teaching or doctrine about the wholeness of the world. Originally and down to our days, they were considered to be holy traditions taught to the young people as a preparation for their future life. This has been the case in primitive tribes as well as in highly differentiated civilizations. The teaching had always a "philosophical" and "ethical" aspect.

In our civilization this spiritual background has gone astray. Our Christian doctrine has lost its grip to an appalling extent, chiefly because people don't understand it any more. Thus one of the most important instinctive activities of our mind has lost its object.

As these views deal with the world as a whole, they create also a wholeness of the individual, so much so, that for instance a primitive tribe loses its vitality, when it is deprived of its specific religious outlook. People are no more rooted in their world and lose their orientation. They just drift. That is very much our condition, too. The need for a meaning of their lives remains unanswered, because the rational, biological goals are unable to express the irrational wholeness of human life. Thus life loses its meaning. That is the problem of the "religious outlook" in a nutshell.

The problem itself cannot be settled by a few slogans. It demands concentrated attention, much mental work and, above all, patience, the rarest thing in our restless and crazy time.

city and urban design. Address: Vicolo dei Serpenti #14, Rome, Italy 00184.



Jochen Bockemuhl, editor, 1985. *Toward a Phenomenology of the Etheric World: Investigations into the Life of Nature and Man*, Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press. ISBN 0-88010-115-6.

From its inception in the thought of founder Edmund Husserl, phenomenology has sought to go beyond the empirical bounds of sense perception and the positivist roots of science. The aim is to describe the primordial, taken-for-granted transcendental foundations of lived experience.

In this vein, Jochen Bockemuhl's *Toward a Phenomenology of the Etheric World* presents the "etheric context" of the "text" of the physical world—the context presupposed but rarely addressed consciously by deductive methods of positivist science.

### THE ETHERIC WORLD

What is meant by a "phenomenology of the etheric world"? Grounded in a Goethean approach to phenomenology, the term is traced back to the "spiritual science" of Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner, for whom the etheric, grounded in experience rather than in abstraction, was nevertheless the object of a sort of "supersensible" perception. Contributor Wolfgang Schad alludes to the etheric world as "the activity of life" recognized unconsciously, "for psychologically speaking, vital processes always run their course in a state of unconsciousness" (p. 171).

The etheric body, for example, is seen to be the functional totality and ground for the discovery of the physical body. The etheric is that which fashions the transcendental forms of a living subjectivity into a totality. In the words of contributor Poppelbaum, it is a "totality which cannot itself be perceived with the physical senses because it is the source out of which the sense-perceptible forms first arise" (p. 220). Steiner himself originally had explained:

The streaming movements of the etheric body maintain the form and condition of all the organs of the physical body. Underlying the physical heart is an 'etheric heart,' underlying the physical brain is an 'etheric brain'... Whereas in the physical body separate organs are present, in the etheric body, everything is in living, interpenetrating flow (p. 218).

Building on Steiner's work, the contributors expand his original meaning, each introducing new aspects of the etheric concept. Most of the authors reiterate the

notion that the etheric is not an abstraction but, instead, permeates our being and sense world in ways of which typically we are not explicitly conscious.

In his "Introduction," Bockemuhl explains that "on the one hand, it will be noticed that so-called 'facts' do not consist of pure sense percepts, they also contain the inner activity whereby we become aware of them. This activity corresponds to a mode of 'illumination'" by virtue of which the world becomes visible to us in a particular way" (p. xi).

These essays indicate that the "etheric" signifies an activity whereby thought, sense perception, and the world we inhabit are all inextricably intertwined.

### PUTTING NATURE FIRST

There are several central themes that emerge throughout this book. Bockemuhl, for one, provides some insight into concrete examples of how the phenomenology of the etheric provides a *different mode of observing* the world. In the positivist approach to science, truth is sought in laws and in hypotheses which are tested and proven in facts.

The problem is that the more thorough such knowledge of laws and the more comprehensively tested and proven, the less there is a need to direct oneself to the actual percept itself. "A quick glance," writes Bockemuhl, "is enough to establish and classify what is seen ('Aha! A maple...!')" (p. 2).

Not only do our theories predispose our perceiving the world in a certain way, but this perspective *distances* us from the objects in our world. The maple tree becomes one of many others classified the same way; it fails to reveal itself as a unique individual.

It becomes evident how this attitude helps to sustain western exploitative attitudes towards nature. The wonder or grace of the natural world is replaced by an impersonal objectification of the value of species and the quantification of natural "resources." As Schad explains,

organisms live because they have an etheric organization, and thus can be grasped only by a thinking that employs its own etheric organization. Where the etheric organization is not employed as an instrument, the living object is missed entirely. The

destruction of the environment on a global scale today results from the inability of physical-chemical thinking to make comprehensible the everlasting interaction... of biological equilibria (p. 188).

## COMMENTARY

While focusing on the relation between human beings and the natural environment, this collection holds some promise for insight into the meaning of the built environment as well. For example, contributor Christof Lindenau suggests that, by grounding ourselves in a fuller understanding of the essence of the etheric world in nature and its relationship to human thought, "we should be able to proceed to evolve practical impulses, beginning with architecture and working right on into the formation of our entire cultural environment" (p. 216).

That this book advances critical reflection upon the limitations of positivist approaches to natural science is clear. This is not to say, however, that the volume is without problems. From a strict, philosophical perspective, several issues remain unresolved.

One problem is that the relationship of the etheric to the phenomenon of time is often described in such dispassionate, reified terms as "growth process," "sustenance," and "reproduction" (205ff); one senses thereby that the genuine ontological meaning of temporality is, unfortunately, bypassed.

Another difficulty is that metaphysically loaded concepts such as "soul" and "mind" are utilized without explanation or justification. Some references equate the "etheric" with the "cognitive" (e.g., p.

69), yet one would hope that the breadth of thought provided by Husserlean or Heideggerian phenomenologies should have moved the authors beyond the merely cognitive to the intuitive, to the pre-reflective, to the ontological.

Most importantly, it remains unclear what is accomplished by the use of the very label "etheric": do not Heidegger's own reflections on the significance of the "ontological" contribute just as much, if not more, to the holistic, phenomenological description of the human being's relationship to the world?

This being said, one must nevertheless concede that Bockemuhl's collection remains a provocative inquiry into the foundations of environmental thought, as it serves equally as a reminder of the need to comprehend the holistic meaning of environmental perception beyond mere physical sensation.

The book invokes a phenomenological rethinking of the essence of a different mode of observing natural and built environments--"more a receiving than a grasping" (p. 187); it recognizes the temporal dimension of environmental thinking; it extends our understanding of the synergism of environmental comprehension and the archetypal experience of the illumination of the visible world.

Finally, the book helps to shed further light and to inspire originative thinking on the taken-for-granted context of the text of the physical world. This, in itself, is no small achievement.

--Ingrid Leman Stefanovic

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## BOOK REVIEW

Olof Alexandersson, 1990. *Living Water: Viktor Schauberg and the Secrets of Natural Energy*. Bath, England: Gateway Books. \$9.95. ISBN 0-946551-57-X.

A major aim of *EAP* is to inform readers of work that sees the world in new ways and transcribes that understanding into design, planning, and policy. One such effort is the work of Austrian naturalist and hydrologist Viktor Schauberg (1885-1958), who developed a radical new vision of nature, energy, and technology.

In *Living Water*, described as the first book-length discussion of Schauberg's work in English, Swedish conservationist Olof Alexandersson overviews the hydrologist's life and gives a preliminary sense of how revolutionary Schauberg's innovative theories and ingenious machinery designs might be.

## SHAUBERGER'S WATER STUDIES

Schauberg grew up in a Bavarian family whose livelihood for generations had been "the husbandry of the forests and their wildlife" (p. 18). His father was a master woodsman and forest warden, and this became the young boy's career aim. Perhaps most important for Schauberg, his father and forebears deeply loved nature and gave it continuous attention. "They relied," he wrote, "upon what they saw with their own eyes and what they felt intuitively" (p. 19).

Though his father wanted his son to attend university, the young man had a practical bent and went instead to forestry school, graduating to become a



state forest warden. He eventually came to oversee a remote Bavarian district where the forest was largely pristine. Here, he became fascinated with water as it moved in the streams and springs under his jurisdiction. He set himself to discover water's "laws and characteristics and the connection between its temperature and its motion" (ibid.).

One of the first unusual ideas that he sought to clarify was the belief, based both on direct observation and what he had learned from traditional wisdom handed down in his family, that water responded to shade and coolness. As a boy, he had learned of this idea from his father and uncles, who had shown him how a stream could carry the greatest loads of timber on cold, clear nights. These relatives also claimed that water, directed through irrigation canals at night, yielded "a significantly greater harvest than that of the neighboring meadows and fields" (p. 19).

As he carried out his warden duties, Schauberger studied water's response to cold and shade. He noticed, for example, how the richest, most beautiful forest vegetation regularly grew by the fresh-water springs. He noticed how water weeds could point upstream and that the more strongly they did, the closer the temperature of the water to four degrees centigrade--the point of water's maximum density.

He also observed how untouched streams formed winding curves surrounded on both sides by shaded banks of trees and understory. Even in the most violent flooding these streams never overflowed or destroyed their banks. "The water," he conjectured, "wants to flow in this way and builds up these shaded banks to protect itself from direct sunlight" (p. 20).

He also listened to the accounts of the farmers and hunters living in his forest district. His thinking was particularly affected by one story that involved a remote mountain spring which, for generations, had been covered with a stone hut. One day hunters tore the small building down, thinking that exposing the spring to sun and light would produce more water. Instead, the spring dried up. The stone hut was rebuilt and, shortly, the spring began to flow again.

One of Schauberger's greatest puzzlements was the movement of fish in the forest streams. He noticed, for example, how trout and salmon, during spawning, swam upstream toward the cold spring sources of the flow. He wondered how trout could jump waterfalls

with seemingly little effort. He also observed how trout could lie motionless for long periods in the strongest current but then, if suddenly frightened, dart *against* the flow "instead of allowing themselves to be carried downstream...", which would seem to be more natural" (p. 21).

He could find no scientific explanation for such behavior but did recognize that the water of the spring-fed streams was colder upstream than farther down. To test whether there might be a relationship between temperature and the trouts' behavior, he devised various experiments--for example, he had his workmen pour heated water upstream from a length of rapids along which a large trout liked to lie. Shortly, the trout became greatly agitated:

It flexed its tail, and was only with considerable effort able to maintain its position with vigorous movement of its fins. Soon its efforts were to no avail, and it was swept downstream out of sight, only much later to return to its old position (p. 21).

From observations and experiments like these, Schauberger came to wonder if fish did not exploit some hitherto unknown source of energy in water. He also came to believe that this energy was related to low temperature and natural flow. These conclusions moved his professional efforts toward two concerns that would shape the rest of his life: First, a search for a new theory of motion; second, an effort to change the practices and technologies of Western resource management, especially the treatment of water, soil, and forests.

## TWO KINDS OF MOTION

Schauberger's studies convinced him that "water in its natural state shows us how it wishes to flow, and we should follow its wishes" (p. 35). In time, this interest in the movement of water directed his research and design efforts toward broader questions about motion. "What," he asked, "is motion? Are there different types of motion? Might there exist a form of motion as yet unknown to science?" (p. 23)

Through research sponsored, first, by the Austrian government and, later, by corporate enterprise, Schauberger developed a radical theory that argued for two kinds of motion within nature: one, which breaks down; the other, which builds up and refines:

The form of movement which creates, develops, purifies, and grows is the hyperbolic spiral which externally is centripetal and internally moves towards the center. We find it everywhere in Nature where growth or movement is taking place, in the spiralling of the nebulae in space, in the movement of our planetary system, in the natural flow of water, blood, and sap.

On the other hand, the destructive and dissolving form of movement is centrifugal in Nature—it forces the moving medium from the center outwards towards the periphery in straight lines. The particles of the medium appear to be forced out from the center. The medium is first weakened, then it dissolves....

Nature uses this action to disintegrate complexes which have lost their vivacity or have died. From the broken-down fragments, new coordinated forms, new identities can be created as a result of this concentrating form of movement. The centripetal, hyperbolic movement, on the other hand, is synonymous with rising temperature, heat, extension, expansion, explosion.

In nature, there is a continuous switch from one movement to the other; but if development is to occur, then the movement of growth must predominate (p. 77).

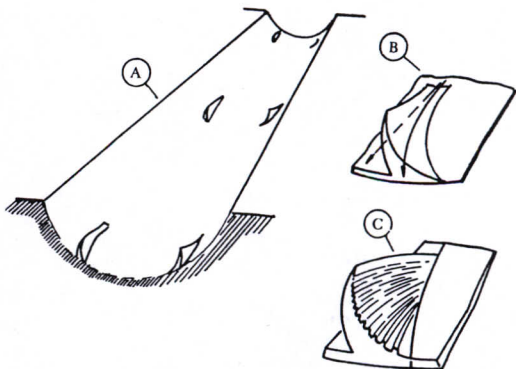
Schauberger believed that, in nature, these two kinds of energies work in cooperation. He would eventually conclude that water's ability to carry greater loads at maximum density and the salmon's ability to hold its position in the rapid stream relied on the constructive, centrifugal kind of energy, which modern science had not yet identified because its manifestations cannot be accounted for in the classical models of physics.

Unfortunately, so Schauburger claimed, the theoretical errors of modern science also had great practical implications, since a major result is a modern technology based on the destructive, centrifugal movement alone—a situation that ultimately raises havoc with the natural environment. For example, he pointed out that most internal combustion engines of the time were only fifty percent efficient; such poor performance, he believed, was because these engines used "the wrong sort of motion" (p.76). He wrote:

Our machines and processes channel such agents as air, water and other liquids and gases into the type of motion which Nature only uses to decompose and dissolve matter. Nature uses another form of motion for rebuilding. When our technology only uses the decomposing motion, it becomes a dead technology, a destructive one, dangerously affecting all of Nature (p. 14).

## PIPES AND PLOWS

As his work with water proceeded, Schauburger became more and more interested in understanding nature's constructive form of movement, which he came to call *cycloid spiral motion*. From the 1930s onward, he sought to translate his growing under-



*A watercourse (A) in which curved surfaces have been placed (B; close-up, C, with curving flutes) to propel water into a spiral motion toward the middle of the flow channel.*

standing into practical designs and procedures, developing new machines and resource practices that appear to have potential to revolutionize farming, horticulture, forestry, and water management.

One early design, patented in 1934, was a new kind of pipe that would allow water to move in a spiral motion and thereby maintain its freshness and vitality. The interior walls of this "double spiral pipe" had curving edges of copper that would guide the water into a vortex motion. In experiments, Schauburger demonstrated that this pipe improved the quality of the water moving through it and reduced surface resistance thus taking less energy to move the water.

In 1935, after heavy flooding of the Rhine River (which had been dredged, straightened, and walled), Schauburger drew on his new pipe design to suggest a way to increase the carrying capacity of the river and thereby lower its level as much as six meters.

Though rejected by government authorities as unfeasible, Schauburger's plan was to build in the river a series of regular curved flutes (see drawing, above) that would propel the water into a spiral "scooping action in the middle of the river rather than near the banks" and thereby deepen the middle of the channel and allow the water to move more freely.

Much later, in the 1950s, Schauburger would draw on the spiral idea yet again, seeking to develop a plow that would imitate "the burrowing action of the mole." He believed that conventional plow designs led to a centripetal motion that damaged the soil, whereas a spiral blade would "work the soil with



almost no resistance, rendering it free from the pressure and friction and subsequent heating that accompany use of the normal plow" (p.105; see drawing, right).

### A NEW WAY TO CARE FOR WATER

Beyond designs like these that he believed would harness a new form of natural energy, Schauberger also developed new ways to care for the natural environment. Because of his early experiences with forests, his main concern was a resource management that would imitate the natural relationship among water, soil, and trees. "First understand Nature," he wrote, "then copy it" (p. 34).

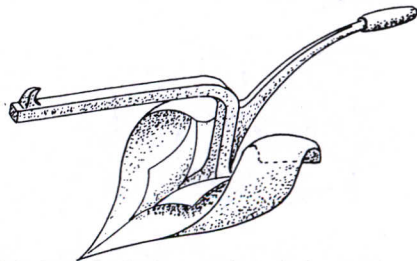
Practically, his approach to caring for nature centered on water and included the following elements:

1. Water must be allowed to flow and mature in its own natural environment which includes a naturally-grown forest containing a great variety of species. Both single crop forestry and clear felling must cease.
2. Watercourses, from small streams to mature river, should have banks grown with trees and bushes to give natural shade.
3. Water installations like dams, power stations, must be sensitive to water's needs and not alter its nature forms of motion.
4. Pipes and other transport devices should be designed to preserve and enhance water's freshness and vitality.

### PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES

Alexandersson's book on Schauberger has its share of problems and leaves the reader with many unanswered questions. Unfortunately, the book is entirely supportive of the hydrologist's work, and there is no critical effort to point out weaknesses, confusions, or failures. For example, Schauberger's personal history as presented by Alexandersson suggests that the scientist was flawed in many ways: he was highly secretive, mistrustful, and seemed to begin many more research projects than he ever finished. There is also Alexandersson's sensationalist and unproven (at least from the information provided in the book) claim that Schauberger's work and life were eventually destroyed by a group of Texan businessmen who feared the negative affect that Schauberger's research and inventions would have on conventional resource procurement and management.

In spite of the book's many weaknesses, it is a useful introduction to a body of work that is highly



original and intriguing, particularly in regard to the kinds of environmental problems we face today.

For environmental phenomenology, Schauberger's work appears to have considerable significance, both methodologically and practically. Perhaps most obvious is his implicitly phenomenological way of working: patiently studying water in motion and trying to see, in a kindly, respectful way, what happens. Particularly striking is how many of his insights agree with the conclusions of the one other major phenomenological study of water--hydrologist Theodor Schwenk's *Sensitive Chaos* (London, 1965), especially the two mens' emphasis on the importance of vortex movement.

Schauberger's work is also instructive for environmental phenomenology because of his efforts to transcribe his understandings into practice, through the belief that "the task of technology is not to correct nature, but to imitate it" (p. 34). One is reminded of philosopher Martin Heidegger, who argued that, through a new way of understanding and being, people might develop a different attitude toward technology by which it would keep its place as a helpful tool rather than dominate life.

Heidegger insisted, however, that this new style of technology would not come through conventional scientific or technological practices. Rather, the central need was to see the natural and human worlds in new ways that would respect the integrity of the thing being looked at. In this way might arise new ways of theory and praxis that would facilitate a technology for dwelling, belonging, and place.

One could well argue that Schauberger's work is one such possibility for such radically new theory and praxis. Though he was ignored and even ostracized in his lifetime, perhaps his work will yet serve as an example of knowledge and practice arising from a thoughtful and empathetic seeing and understanding.

--David Seamon

# SENSE OF PLACE ON THE HIGH PLAINS

Cary de Wit

*Cary de Wit is a doctoral student in Geography at the University of Kansas. The following essay is based on a master's thesis, which he recently completed in the same program. His aim, which he will extend in his dissertation work, is to identify the experienced qualities that contribute to the Kansan High Plains (the western portion of the state) their special geographical and place ambiance. Address: Geography Department, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045.*

The Kansas High Plains are often considered nondescript and empty, but life there involves a unique sense of place. This essay summarizes a larger study (de Wit 1992) that identified several of the special lived qualities that mark this region's uniqueness.

My interpretation uses both interviews with high plain residents and my personal experiences and impressions of the region. My aim is to create a description more scholarly and condensed than popular depictions but more intersubjective and impressionistic than usual academic studies.

## ATTACHMENT, OPENNESS, AND WEATHER

My research suggests that the vast majority of High Plains residents regard the area favorably and would not choose to live elsewhere. Many people express a profound attachment to the High Plains landscape. As important aspects of their experience, they mention sunsets, quiet, solitude, and long-distance views. The landscape inspires feelings of freedom and peacefulness, creates an affinity for solitude and emptiness, and causes a propensity to think on a large scale. Ranchers and farmers tend to conceive of the landscape more in economic than aesthetic terms.

Most natives have a strong and sometimes unconscious attachment to the openness of the landscape and feel closed in by mountains or trees. On the other hand, emigrants from more crowded places sometimes feel "vulnerable" or "exposed" on the High Plains. Return migrants have the greatest awareness and appreciation for the landscape.

The climate also has profound effects on High Plains life. Weather is severe and changeable. It commands respect and caution, especially in winter, and induces humility by its destructive power to crops. Dust storms rivaling those of the 1930s still occur. Blizzards are common in winter, and hail can destroy a year's worth of farming in seconds. The low humidity usually guarantees cool summer nights, which many residents claim make up for all the less pleasant climatic factors.

Weather also noticeably affects people's moods, partly because it bears so heavily on economic

vitality. Wind or drought can result in fatigue, irritability, or depression, while rain at the right time can induce euphoria.

## AUTOMOBILES AND SELF-RELIANCE

Plentiful space has significant effects on day-to-day life. Automobiles and long-distance driving are major aspects of life on the High Plains because places of work, and sources of services, supplies, and entertainment are often far apart. Two- to four-hour drives are commonplace. Roads are flat, straight and mostly empty, encouraging high speeds. Even in towns that are only a few blocks long, residents will usually drive to destinations rather than walk.

Some essential aspects of the cultural sense of place are a lingering frontier mentality and a frontierlike look and feel to the towns and landscape. In regard to cultural and psychological characteristics, both outsiders and insiders spoke of toughness and adaptability, a gambling mentality, self-reliance, resourcefulness, humility, and a slow pace of life.

The relative scarcity and isolation of people lies behind many aspects of High Plains culture: insularity, friendliness, fierce regional loyalty, and much geographical and spatial awareness. There is also widespread contempt for eastern Kansas, state government, the East Coast, and urban life in general.

In most of the interviews with High Plains residents, there was a quality of lament in the way they described the economic decline of the region and what they perceived as the passing of a way of life.

## A SAMPLING FROM THE INTERVIEWS

An eastern Kansan who recently moved to the High Plains:

There's something different out here, something hard to put a finger on. There's something about the combination of the people, the landscape, the way of life, the sunshine and the feel of the air that makes it different.

I've lived in the desert, by the ocean, and in the mountains. You develop an eye for all those things. I don't love the flatland too much, but you develop an eye for it, too. Its beauty is in the different shades and different crops it takes on



during the year.

A High Plains native who lived a year in New Mexican town surrounded by mountains:

The landscape there was tough on me, I guess because I was raised so many years here on the flat. You can step out the door here and see in every direction.... In [the new Mexican town] I felt hemmed-in. The mountains made me feel claustrophobic. I was really relieved to get back on the flat.

A native expressing distaste for forests:

Sometimes I go down to eastern Oklahoma to visit relatives. Five days is all I can take. Five days of trees, then I'm trying to get back as fast as I can. In some places, the dang things arch over the street!

A farmer with urban origins describing the uniqueness of the High Plains:

There's something artistic about living out here, about appreciating the straight roads, the look of a plowed field.... Knowing that at the end of a field you'll turn the tractor exactly the same way every time.

A wheat farmer describing the sense of freedom that the open spaces provide:

I like the flat and open. I think it adds to the sense of freedom out here. I think people are very aware of the space out here. It's a very important part of our geography.... When I go to a city, I don't have that feeling.

Another resident describing how this sense of freedom works on new arrivals:

I've seen the effect this place has on people. They start to act a little freer and feel less constrained, like they can move around. [He squared his shoulders and made a gesture of expansion with his arms.] It's almost like they get bigger.

Comments on weather and climate:

Weather is a part of life out there. It begins every conversation. It's intimately tied with the mood of the people.

The climate can set the mood of the people. On a hot day with the wheat burning up, everyone's down in the mouth. If there's a little shower, everyone's happy-go-lucky. When the wind blows thirty miles per hour for three or four days, that gets depressing. My wife is a school teacher. She says she can see the effect of weather on the kids.

There's more intensity to the weather here. If the wind blows, it really blows. You feel the weather—if it's stormy or windy, you feel it, even indoors.

Anybody who complains about humidity ought to be here for a hot, dry wind when it's over a hundred degrees. You just want to crawl in a hole. Nobody likes the wind. Working outside, the wind can beat you to death as much as anything.

Expressions of humility for nature:

If you want to see power, farm in western Kansas. See what it's like to have a year's work destroyed in fifteen seconds.

My first reaction to a hail storm that destroyed a crop was not an economic one; it was one of submission. I felt put in my place. I feel comfortable with that place now.

In 1974, I almost lost it. I was all set to harvest when hail wiped out everything. I realized then that I wasn't in control of everything, and that you can lose a whole crop and fall on your face and it's not the end of the world.

Farmers describing the freedom of their lifestyle:

Farming is a relaxed sort of life. You can take off for school activities or to talk to someone. The work is hard and the hours are long, but your life is your own.

I feel there's a lot of freedom in farming. You have a total sense of the flow of life. You're not tied to time and minutes. What times your cycle is crops and seasons.... There's more of a continuous flow to the work, you don't look at the clock.

Farming is a good life. I can shut off my tractor when I want and go to my kid's ball game for a couple of hours.... I don't think it's a high stress profession. I can't say I've ever been hurt by taking off for sports or community things.

The hours are long, but it's not a hurry. You just got to keep steady. Some of those people who hurry make bad decisions.

A cattleman describing the High Plains demands:

We live out here, and our work is our life. You don't take a day off because you're sick, or the weather's bad. Your living depends on your work. In the past year we haven't missed a single day feeding the cattle.... But it's not like working for a company. I work twelve to fourteen hours a day, six, seven days a week, but it's part of my life. I'm not doing the work for someone else.

#### REFERENCE

de Wit, C. W. 1992. *Sense of Place on the Kansas High Plains*, master's thesis, Geography Department, University of Kansas, Lawrence.

## "IT WAS HOME": REFLECTIONS ON LOSING PLACE

Louise Million

*The following are portions of interviews conducted by psychologist Louise Million with two rural families who were forced to leave their lands and homes in 1989 when the Oldman River Dam was constructed in southern Alberta. The first family interviewed, the Verigins, had owned their own farm in the area to be dammed since 1938. Mr. Verigin's great-grandfather, grandfather, and father had been members of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, commonly called Doukhobors, who had settled in the Oldman River area in the early 1900s. Although the Verigins were retired and did not live on the farm at the time of the dam announcement in 1984, they had hoped to keep the farm "in the family."*

*The second couple interviewed, Ron and Karen Buchanan, had taken over the daily operation of the family ranch from Ron's parents a few years before the dam announcement was made. Ron and Karen were the third generation to own and work the "Glenburn Ranch." Forced to relocate, the couple found a homestead near Fort St. John, British Columbia, where Karen's mother lives and where it is "more like pioneer country." It was here, some 600 miles north of Oldman River, that Million interviewed them.*

*The complete interviews, as well as several others, were the descriptive base for Million's phenomenological dissertation, "It Was Home": A Phenomenology of Place and Involuntary Displacement as Illustrated by the Forced Dislocation of Five Southern Alberta Families in the Oldman River Dam Flood Area (San Francisco: Saybrook Institute, 1992; see EAP, 3, 3, 8-9). The complete interviews can be found in appendix 5 of that work. Address: 10707 60 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 4S7 Canada.*

### THE VERIGINS

**Mr. Verigin:** I think of the Native people who say, "These are our lands." I don't blame them. Their people lived with this place and it goes back for generations. It matters that you live with it. Also perhaps some of their land was lost legally, but not rightly, to my way of feeling, and that's the way I feel about my land. There is no justification to lose our lands...

Yes, I still think about the farm, very much. All my history, my background, my roots are there. Everything that happened is down along the river. I still go down there often, even if the land has been sold. I go there even now when there's nothing left standing. I try to clean it up.

It's sad to see it now. They cut down all the trees. Just the stumps left now. The caterpillar tractors moving things around--breaking ground. They burned everything... Even to this day, I go there, move the stones--trying to make it look good again.

**Mrs. Verigin:** He still feels the emptiness, you know...

**Mr. Verigin:** But the saddest part was when the place was sold. The understanding we had was that you could not touch anything in the buildings once they were sold. But other people--vandals--went in there and destroyed everything!

I do not think it was only our house. I understand the stone house below us--the old Esterbrook house which Reners owned--vandals were in there and destroyed beautiful windows, tore the walls inside, and the staircases, balconies... Everything was destroyed.

Our house was just ordinary with plain windows like most older homes; little nine-by-nine or eight-by-eight inch panes. Every one was knocked out. The walls and doors were kicked in. It was very, very sad to go to the farm and see all this.

It would have been better if the Government went in and moved the buildings over, or burned them, and leveled it all off. But to see it all vandalized. I just stood there, the doors flapping around. I'd go and close the doors. And the next time you'd come everything's open again. And all those broken windows... I even found some rocks in the house. It is hard to see. It's a kind of torture.

I talked to the people in charge of the demolishing and the cleaning up: "I'd sure appreciate it if you'd clean it up, or burn it down, or do whatever you're going to do, but don't let this happen."

They said, "We can understand your point." And it took a while, about six to nine months, but they did.

And the trees... All those trees that were in the bottom, they cut them down, and dragged them up on the hill. You saw them there, just left lying in a pile. Why not clean it up? To somebody else they don't mean anything--just a tree. Just leave it laying there. A tree's a tree.

But to me those trees have meaning. Like that big stump we measured when we took you down there--that tree was eleven feet around. It was a huge tree. And it was the gateway to the garden. That was our tree. And there was one just a bit smaller next to it. The gate hung between them. We brushed up against those trees every time we went out to the garden. We walked through them every time we went to the garden for more than forty years.

And I still think about the little attic in our house.



A room was fixed up there, and it has a little window. I used to sleep there, and when I think of that room, I think of a poem I memorized at school. I forgot who wrote it, but it went something like this:

I remember, I remember the house where I was born  
The little window where the sun came peeping in at morn  
He never came a wink too soon, or brought too late a day  
But now, I often wish he'd borne my breath away.

Seeing the house and the village--everything gone, everything destroyed. You know yesterday, you were looking at what's left of the old village barn--one side of the stone foundation. When you think back over the years of toil, the work people done then--they didn't do it for themselves. They did it for the generations that would live there after them.

For any of these old farms, it's the same. People had dreams. They'd build a house, and a barn, and other things. People were born there. They were married there. And they died there.

People come in to work on the dam, mostly people from outside..., and they bulldoze the house down, or fall the trees--there's no meaning for them. They never lived here. They're not going to be here after the job is done... But it's my history, my life.

I remember my grandmother there and my parents, and my children running around. Grandmother died there on June 13 1951, and the funeral was on the farm, since we had no prayer home. My brother Philip died Sept 28, 1957, and the funeral was on the farm, too. They were both buried in our cemetery at Lundbreck, and we were married on the farm. And in July or August 1959, my brother Nick had a wedding on the farm.

So there were two funerals and two weddings in that house. And people used to come there to have St. Peter's day celebrations on the farm. The history, the stories, the people and everything--everything's there--Everything's gone now. It's just like burying something.

So I still think about it and talk about it with my wife and my children, and the little grandchild we have. I've taken some photographs of her there.

I said to my daughter, "Well, she's still small, and doesn't know about this place. And the years will go by, and there'll only be a body of water there." At least from the pictures I've taken of her there she'll be able to say, "This was the farm, this was Great

Grandfather's farm of Grandfather's farm, and where they lived. There's the old barn, and the house, and everything."

So with my brother Nick, his wife, and my daughters when they come down to visit, we go down there. I say, "Remember how we used to live--used to go swimming down there. Go take a look now."

And with the other people that are affected, that have had to move, we talk about it too. But to a lot of people it has no meaning. To them a river's a river, and a dam's a dam...

*Mr. Verigin:* All that's left of the farm now is the Verigin barn and the bathhouse. In the summer of 1989, the bathhouse was moved, and on August 10, 1989, the barn was moved. They built a foundation for the barn down at the Pincher Creek Museum and put it there.

They moved the bathhouse from the farm to the museum, too. The bathhouse was repaired, and a large cauldron was donated by some Doukhobor people from Shouldice, Alberta. And the barn was reshingled with new cedar shingles.

It's good that people are talking about "historical value"--about keeping something with history in it. Before it was "knock it down and destroy it." Now people realize perhaps we can save it, or if we can't save it, perhaps we can move it.

And at the opening [of the museum], it was good. People came and talked about our history, and we sang. And it's there now for people to know about the Doukhobors. But it's not the same, not the same as living with it.

One time I remember sitting at the dinner table at the Heritage Inn in Pincher Creek with four lawyers. Our lawyer had brought three of his partners, and we sat down. There were four were trying to convince me that I should settle, and I disagreed with them. I knew what the prices were around then. And if it came to the point that we would have gone to expropriation, we would go, because we weren't getting anything this way anyway, so we weren't going to lose anything.

The thing is we had no choice. We didn't want to sell. If you wanted to sell, then sure they were in a position of coming down on their price. But you didn't want to sell, and they wanted the land. The

Government wanted the land bad, and they were displacing you.

It's only right they should pay you for that. And they offered way too low. It hurts when a person comes in and tells you that you have to move, and then they tell you your land is worth so much, and your house and buildings are worth nothing.

*You're coming to my place and telling me my land's not worth much--my house and buildings aren't worth anything! Well, they talk about dictatorships--I don't know exactly what a dictatorship is--but isn't that dictating to a person? Telling you what you're worth, and what you should do or shouldn't do?*

They said, "We don't pay for sentimental value"--what the place is to me. Well, that's fine for them to say. If I came from the moon or from Edmonton or Calgary, it might be the same for me. But it's not. This is my home. The Verigin home passed on for generations. My grandmother lived there and my parents, and I lived there....It's home.

*Mrs. Verigin:* He's hiding a little bit there. I think it's the peoples' *feelings* toward what took place. A lot of people were hurt, and there's no harm to express that. The Government, they knew they were forcing people out, so actually they know there's some hurt.

Once we had [grain] elevators here in Crowley [the town where the Verigins now lived] and they were demolished, for what reason I don't know. There was a woman who wrote an article in the newspaper. She writes that the people who demolished those two elevators they just set a match to it and they're gone.

But, she says, the *feeling* of those elevators going down for the people who lived there--how they were built and everything about them--those elevators made the town and all of that has been demolished....

She said people should stop and think how people are hurt by it all. And that's what Mike is trying to explain about his farm and about the farms here, you know. It's just not burning the place, or taking it away; it's the *feeling* that was left amongst the people. The sadness and the sorrow. Just set a match and it's all gone. But there's your life...

*Mr. Verigin:* Like Doris said, those elevators, they made the town. The town centered around those elevators. They were landmarks. They were the first elevators when you came from British Columbia. Here they were in the middle of a little prairie town.

And like Doris said, everything was centered on them. Farmers would bring the grain there, and go to the café, or go in the beer parlor, or get mail, or buy groceries... All of a sudden, in one day, both elevators were gone--demolished. People stood out in the streets watching them go down. Since then, Crowley doesn't look the same. It doesn't feel the same.

*Mrs. Verigin:* And like Mike mentioned, the lawyers and people who came down to assess the land--they don't know what life is all about here. They don't know what they're taking away from the people. They don't understand. It just seems to be the money, money, money, and that hurts a lot of people.

Like I said, Mike came out of there really, really hurt, when they just made statements that the land was worth this and wasn't worth that. This kind of thing hurts a person. It's not just money--it's the *feelings*.

*Mr. Verigin:* To a lot of people--maybe to newcomers here and to others, too--it's "I'm here today, tomorrow I'm there." There's some people that do not have this sentiment. They don't feel like I do.

Some people who sold might think, "Well, I got a good deal. I got a better farm now. I should've sold it a long time ago."

But I think a lot of people, especially the older people, don't. For example, we'll say you came to live here in Pincher Creek. It would be a "town" and a "house" to you for many, many years. After you've lived there, after you've had happiness and sorrow in the house, and your children were born here, and your grandchildren come and other people, too, then somehow you'd become attached to it.

And you have to know things like that big tree I mentioned before, and the mud, and the river, and the attic. It becomes part of you. All you have to do is look at something, or touch something, and it will bring your past life back to you. And then the house will have value to you.

But again, as I said, there are some people--I think it wouldn't matter to them ever. Just another house, just another farm. A lot of people do that--travel place to place and never think about it.

*Mrs. Verigin:* You see, it's *everything*--all the buildings and how they were built. And how Mother and I used to gather twigs for the fire, and little things we noticed there. How the trees grew. How the cattle



came down to drink. And how they used to go up in the hills and bring them. And the dogs they had... and the chickens. And then as a person grows older all that is still there, that back life.

## THE BUCHANANS

*Ron Buchanan:* This new place is ours in a sense, but we're not familiar with it yet to feel comfortable like we did in Pincher. We don't know it very well. Even to the point of not knowing what names to give it yet.

You know, I'd name the places--all the fields right now--if I knew what name to give them, but I don't know what name to give them, so maybe over the course of time. Like "The Pig Field" at our old place. We probably had pigs for twenty years that I can remember, and I know my father had them longer than that, and at one time, it was just a field where the pigs were put.

I don't think it was called The Pig Field at first, but maybe ten years or so later after the pigs had been out there for a long time, it was "the Pig Field."

Yeah, that's why the naming hasn't happened here yet. I can see, just talking about it, that this is part of "turning the corner" that we were talking about before in the kitchen. I'm sure names will come and I don't think we should put pressure on ourselves for not having names--you can't make it happen. We just have to take our time about it and when a name comes up for a place, then it'll have a name. And not to worry about it in the meantime.

*Ron:* I did bring a lot with me: the farm equipment and the cows and the hand tools. For example, if I go to do something in the shop I'm using the same tools I had down there.

But still things are different here because its a different set of buildings. And when you come across something that is different, sometimes it strikes you--you remember how it was or where it was. That happens quite a bit if you let your mind do it.

You'd like a concrete example? Maybe I could tell you about our welder and the welding bench. I have the same welder and the same welding bench as I had in Pincher Creek. I use them a fair bit in the summer time to repair breakdowns in the farm machinery. In the former shop, the welder was sitting beside the

door which faced west, so in the afternoon you had a lot of sunlight coming in. In this shop, I put it right beside the door for the most light.

But in this shop the door faces east so that in the afternoon you're kind of in a shadow. And very often when I'm welding in the afternoon you notice it the most. So, here you are with your welding helmet down and, without thinking you say, "It was a lot easier to see in my other shop." I remember, just like that, how it was in my other shop and how it was easier to work, because of how the door made better lighting in the afternoon.

I attempt to try and *not* remember, really. I've tried to condition myself not to think about it. Remembering is quite often painful. That's the reason why I try and prevent it. Very often at night, though, or when you first wake up in the morning, that's painful too. It's harder to condition yourself at those times, I think.

•  
*Karen Buchanan:* When we first came here we talked quite a lot to other people about Pincher. I remember saying, "Well, in Pincher Creek we did this" or "In Pincher Creek we did that." Then I began to realize people might not be interested, or they don't know what you're talking about, so you'd better try not to always be talking about Pincher Creek. Now, I hardly mention it to other people....

We've been back three times. The first year we went back twice, then we skipped a year, and then we went back this past summer.

•  
*Ron:* I think what I found most disconcerting [in returning] is seeing the things that didn't change. The hills right around where we lived--that's the only thing that didn't change. But seeing them sitting in a different setting--the same hills were there, the hills to the east and the hill to the north--nothing was changed on those hills.

But the valley itself, the trees, that's completely different. And just seeing those hills, you know they're the same hills, but it's like filming all your hills in a different setting. They just aren't the same... You take a close look at them, and you have to confess, "Yes, they're the same hills." You know they're identical, but there's a difference, and that's a little tricky for your mind.

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