



Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter

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This issue of EAP includes regular features as well as commentaries and essays. Philosopher Steven Bindeman reviews philosopher Edward Casey's *The Fate of Place*, a philosophical history of the concept of place. Next, Associate EAP Editor Margaret Boschetti discusses environment-behavior researcher Clare Cooper Marcus' *The House as Mirror of Self*, a study of the psychological, spiritual, and symbolic meanings of houses and at-homeness.

Our feature essay this issue is by literary scholar Carol H. Cantrell, who explores the relationship between modernism and place. We conclude with poems by Judyth Hill, Timothy Eiler, and Sheryl L. Nelms.

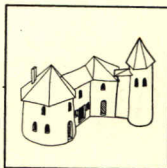
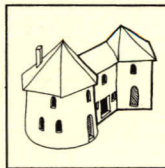
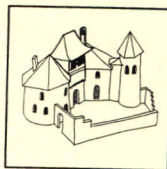
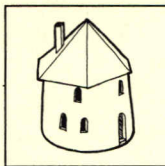
As always, we encourage readers to send news, reviews, essays, poems, drawings, items of interest,

and the like. Please let us hear from you. We need fresh material, especially items including graphics!

PHENOMENOLOGY CONFERENCES

The 38th annual meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP) will be held 7-9 October, 1999, at the University of Oregon. In conjunction will be held the annual meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences (SPHS): SPEP: M. Bower, Drawer 61/Department of Philosophy, Earlham College, 801 National road West, Richmond, IN 47374 (765-983-1438). SPHS: M. LaFountain, Sociology Dept., University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA 30118 (770-836-4589).

*Below: These drawings from Clare Cooper Marcus' *The House as a Mirror of Self* illustrate the evolution of psychologist Carl Jung's house on Lake Zurich in Switzerland. In 1923, Jung built the initial tower dwelling (which he said represented the maternal hearth) just after his mother's death. Four years later, he added a central structure to the house. In 1931, as indicated in the third drawing, Jung added a tower annex as a place for contemplation. Later, in 1935, he built a courtyard and loggia by the lake. Finally, after his wife died in 1955, he completed his house with a central tower, which he said represented his "ego-personality." See review, p. 4.*



MORE DONERS, 1999

Since our winter issue, other *EAP* readers have contributed more than the base subscription, and we are grateful. Our 1999 financial situation is now secure. Without your support, we could not continue. Thank you very much!

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

Established in 1991, the **Ecological Design Association** aims to "enhance awareness of environmental issues among the design professions and related industries and to encourage interdisciplinary contact." With a membership of some 700, the group publishes a bi-monthly newsletter and a triennial journal, *EcoDesign*, which features articles, design work, items of interest, and book reviews. Recent issues have focused on "ecoliving," "designing with nature," and "design for healthy and sustainable living." EDA, British School, Slad Road, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 1QW England.

The **Institute for Deep Ecology** offers a series of programs for 1999, all of which "promote ecological values and actions." Programs include "Embodying Nature" (29 April-May 2), "Deep Ecology Wilderness Quest" (16-24 May), "Loving Our Place: Ecology, Politics, Art, and Spirit" (18-25 July), and "Recovering Our Future" (6-10 August). Contact: IDE, PO Box 1050, Occidental, CA 95465 (707-874-2347; ide@igc.org).

Greening of the Campus is a conference to be held at Ball State University, 30 September-2 October. One aim is to "understand the potential for univer-

sity and college campuses to influence the environmental impact of campus resources." Participants will also examine "the opportunities for college and university campuses to provide environmental awareness and sensitivity." Contact: B. Amato, University College NQ 323, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306-0220 (765-285-2385; <http://www.bsu.edu/greening>).

The **Environmental Writing Institute** will take place 19-24 May, 1999, at Montana's Teller Wildlife Refuge, 45 miles south of Missoula. The program is sponsored by the Refuge and the University of Montana and will be led by author William Kittredge and 14 other nature writers. Contact: Prof. Don Snow, Environmental Studies Program, Rankin Hall, Univ. of Montana, Missoula, MT 49812 (406-243-2904; <http://www.umt.edu/ewi/ewipage.htm>).

Technology and Culture is a scholarly journal devoted to the historical study of technology. The journal is sponsored by **SHOT**—the Society for the History of Technology, which encourages the study of the development of technology and its connections with society and culture. Contact: John Hopkins Press/Journals, 2715 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218; <http://shot.press.jhu.edu>

The **Sacred Sites International Foundation** is sponsoring an 8-day study tour focusing on the Cheyenne, Lakota, and Shoshone tribes of the Northern Plains states. The trip is scheduled 14-21 June, 1999, and will be led by anthropologist Robert Vetter and Cheyenne elder Moses Star. Contact: SSI, 1442A Walnut St., #330, Berkeley, CA 94709 (510-525-1304; sacredsites@aol.com).

The **Ancient Philosophy Society** provides "a forum for diverse scholarship on ancient Greek texts," including phenomenological, poststructural, hermeneutic, psychoanalytic, and feminist research. The group's inaugural meeting will be held in conjunction with the annual meetings of SPEP (see p. 1). Contact: D. Hyland, Philosophy Dept., Trinity College, Hartford, CT 06106 (860-297-2426).

DESCRIBING PHENOMENOLOGY

As part of its "editorial mission statement," the Summer 1998 issue of Phenomenology and the Human Sciences published a brief description of phenomenology. Thinking EAP readers might be interested, we reprint the first portion here.

Phenomenology has proved to be a rich repository for human study. The century-old movement has been applied to a wide variety of questions, issues, and problems. As a methodology, phenomenology contains both constants and variables. Its constants were established by [philosopher] Edmund Husserl; its variables emerged with subsequent general theorists as well as others who have applied its techniques to specific areas. It may be profitable to state some of the general canons of phenomenology in order to situate the movement within our own historical period.

1. From Husserl onward the movement attempts to get back to "things-themselves" as these things appear in consciousness and human experience. Phenomenology is not interested in general speculation or in constructing models, the sole value of which is ingenuity or complexity.
2. Phenomenology's method remains flexible. Its practitioners have emphasized various aspects in the pursuit of the varied regions of experience. Description is emphasized over explanation.
3. As a shared discipline, phenomenology has its own techniques of confirmation, verification, and corroboration. Individual thinkers and the results of their thinking are subject to review and possible correction.
4. This movement and its methods combine the precision of the social sciences with the sensitivity of the humanities. In its studies of human beings, phenomenology does not reduce data to one approach or procedure.
5. Phenomenologists do not separate facts from values. These two are intertwined in the goals, reflections, and behaviors of human beings, alone or in groups.
6. Each special region of phenomenological investigation—psychology, sociology, and so forth—acknowledges a philosophical core which provides the underpinnings and the goals for phenomenological study.

CITATIONS RECEIVED

"Cyberspace and Geographical Space," 1998. Special issue of *Geographical Review*, vol. 87, no. 2 (April).

Articles on the relationships between cyberspace and place, including "Cyberspace and Virtual Places" (P. Adams), "The Emerging Geographies of Virtual Worlds" (J. Taylor), and "The Sacred, the Regional, and the Digital" (P. Stars).

Führ, E., 1998. *Architecture and Home: A Discussion of Heidegger's "Building, Dwelling, Thinking"* [special issue of *Wolkenkuckucksheim*]. Cottbus, Germany: Brandenburg Technological Institute Press.

This internet journal includes 13 articles on Heidegger's oft-cited 1951 essay, which is also reproduced. Contributors include Karsten Harries ("In Search of Home"), Alberto Pérez-Gómez ("Dwelling on Heidegger: Architecture as Mimetic Techno-Poiesis"), and David Seamon ("Concretizing Heidegger's Notion of Dwelling: The Contributions of Thomas Thiis-Evensen and Christopher Alexander"). The journal can be found at: <http://www.theo.tu-cottbus.de/Wolke/>

Hanson, Julianne, 1998. *Decoding Homes and Houses*. NY: Cambridge University Press.

Using the theory of space syntax, this architect examines "how domestic space provides a shared framework for everyday life, how social meanings are constructed in the home, and how different sub-groups within society differentiate themselves through their patterns of domestic space and lifestyles."

Kazanjian, M. M., 1998. *Phenomenology and Education*. Atlanta, GA: Editions Rodopi. ISBN 90-420-0330-8.

"A phenomenology of education can become the human basis of a promising holistic logic, bringing together analytic and existential themes." Includes discussion of a phenomenology of cities, architecture, urban planning, and nature.

Lane, B., C., 1998. *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes: Exploring Desert and Mountain Spirituality*, Oxford University Press.

The author of *Landscapes of the Sacred* (1988) explores "the spiritual journey to the center," including "his experiences in the desert areas of Palestine and New Mexico."

Nardi, B. A. & O'Day, V. L., 1999. *Information Ecologies: Using Technology with a Heart*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

This book examines the relationship between people and technology. The authors speak of an *information ecology*: "a system of people, practices, technologies, and values in a local environment."

Spirn, A. W., 1998. *The Language of Landscape*. New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press.

This book presents a "poetics of city and nature" that claims to fuse "function, feeling, and meaning." Topics include landscape grammar, landscape expression, and polemical landscapes.

Spretnak, C., 1999. *The Resurgence of the Real: Body, Nature, and Place in a Hypermodern World*. NY: Routledge.

This philosopher argues that the ideologies of modernity have "devalued the knowing body, the creative cosmos, and the complex sense of place." She also argues that "the modern crisis is being challenged by an impressive network of corrective efforts today."

Stefanovic, I. L., 1998. Phenomenological Encounters with Place: Cavtat to Square One. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 18, pp. 31-44.

This article provides phenomenological readings of two contrasting places: the small village of Cavtat on the Adriatic coast; and central Mississauga, a suburb of Toronto. In part, the article identifies "converging images" that may "help to illumine...some essential moments in the evolution of sense of place."

Thompson, J. W., 1997. *The Rebirth of New York City's Bryant Park*. Washington, D.C.: Spacemaker Press.

The story of the restoration of Bryant Park from New York City's "largest outdoor drug market to the hugely popular 'town square' of midtown Manhattan." The restored park is said to serve as "a prototype for the redesign of spaces in other cities."

Zepp, I. G., 1997. *The New Religious Image of Urban America: The Shopping Mall as Ceremonial Center* (2nd ed.). Niwot, CO: Univ. Press of Colorado.

This book examines the "magnetic quality and pervasive nature of malls" in the U.S. and asks: "What is the cultural and religious significance of this pattern of social and symbolic interaction?"

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Architect/builder **Mark Miller** recently presented a lecture, "Zen in Architecture," at the Art Institute of

Chicago. In exploring how spiritual practice can influence architecture, he used historical buildings as well as his own work to illustrate the philosophy of *ki* flow—i.e., "life-force"—and to demonstrate how architectural design can be influenced by the principles and concepts of martial arts philosophies. Address: 7235 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago, IL 60626.

Biologist and herbalist **Ryan Drum** spent the winter in Vermont and writes: "Wintering in Vermont is especially inspiring for consideration of human-place connectedness. There are many 100-240 year-old wooden houses and barns here with enduring multi-colored slate roofs, some patterned, made with local slates mined a few miles west of where I sit. Old slates are recycled after wooden buildings rot or burn away beneath them. Some slates are still mined near West Pawlet [where Drum was staying]."

Timber frame post-and-beam construction persists and old timbers are cherished and lovingly used in new homes. The elegant fit of many 1700s and 1800s homes and farms into the hills and benches yields a subtle comfort beyond clever siting. The harshness of the long winters demanded thoughtful site selection, and the beauty of the landscape seems to have prompted a rural agrarian landscape beyond raw utility.

"Contemporary trophy houses clumsily mimic in style and materials the big strong colonial homes in obviously dysfunctional locations with gorgeous views, poor soil, outrageously steep drive-in roads, connected to the land by gravity and money rather than agricultural productivity. The new settlers and homesteaders, tainted by easy electricity and gasoline, sprinkle fanciful natural-wood, big-windowed, heavily-insulated, techno-utilitarian modest dwellings in scrub forests.

I urge *EAP* readers to visit Pawlet Village and stop in Mack's General Store, perched across a deep, 12-15-foot-wide, serpentine chasm—a narrow gorge with the roaring stream of Flowers Brook below. A window box in the middle of the store gives view to the gorge below. The store building is three stories and is a modest old-fashioned, full-service general store. No gas pumps, and the only store in the small village." 8 Know Way, Waldron Island, WA 98297.

Casey, Edwards S, 1997. *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Like a surveyor mapping a plot of land, Edward Casey in two recent books has been setting forth his configuration of the concept of place. In his earlier *Getting Back into Place* [see *EAP*, spring 1995], he delineates the intellectual history of the concept of place. In this new volume, he presents its philosophical history.

Casey structures his philosophical analysis of place through a division into four parts. In the first part, he examines mythical and religious narratives of creation from around the world, with an eye to recognizing the primordially of place at the beginning of things. He then turns to Plato's mythical cosmology in his *Timaeus* and to Aristotle's treatment of place in his *Physics*. In part two, Casey follows the theories of Hellenistic, Neoplatonic, medieval, and Renaissance thinkers on the subject. In turn, part three looks at early modern theories, while part four explores the late modern and post-modern view that place needs to be recognized in a way that is no longer subordinate to Space or Time.

It is fascinating to see the nuggets of insight that can be uncovered when the concept of place is restored to its proper importance. For example, in part one—where Casey plots the ground of place from void to vessel—one realizes how the utter void is of little use to the cosmologist, since, without place, there is not material or spiritual medium through which created things might eternally exist or evolve over time. (As Casey is careful to point out, however, the void, too, holds the promise of eventually giving way to place.) The cosmogony rituals (accounts of how the created universe came to be) of various native peoples are then taken up with reference to instances of the repetition of place whereby the primordial place of creation is recognized by the sanctification of another place in its stead.

Casey also introduces the concept of chaos, in distinction from the naked void, to refer (from the book of Genesis and from Hesiod's *Theogony*) to the opening of a gap between two already existing things. Sky and land, or heaven and earth, are thus differentiated in a scene of emerging order. The ordered cosmos emerges from the place of chaos, and not from the no-place of the void. God, then, does not create from a pre-existing abyss of nothingness, but from things (however indeterminate) that are

already around. Plato's mythical Demiurge creates the world out of a preexisting space he calls the "Receptacle." Even Aristotle, albeit phenomenologically rather than mythically, recognizes the power of place insofar as it plays a dynamic role in the determination of the physical universe of locating things in their proper places.

The passage from mythos to logos having been mapped out, Casey then traces the implications of Aristotle's model of the implacing power of place to the emergence of space as part of a gradually opening, ultimately infinitely large universe. The story of this opening is the history of the turning from the religious determinism of the medieval world to the scientifically mechanical measurement of the modern. Casey's focus on the role of place within this turning is a clarifying one, since it shows a revealing vacillation between an absolutist and a relativist conception of space. Either space is a vast (usually empty) arena, or it is nothing more than the relations among things. Ultimately, the Aristotelian idea that space is a container within which things are located gives way to the Kantian theme that undifferentiated space is a transcendental creation of our own minds, within which differentiated individual places become submerged.

While for modern thinkers the way into place had been through the mind, Casey illustrates how the late moderns locate it in the body. A distinctly bodily subject replaces the mental, intuitive one, and a unique access to the understanding of specific place is uncovered, over and against the mental construction of relative space it leaves behind. The key figure in this reorientation is again Kant, who, in asking what it means to orient one's self in thought, is led to the recognition that it is only through the bodily experience of bilaterality that we are able to situate ourselves in an otherwise undifferentiated space. (Things are either to the right or to the left, before or behind, above or below, in relation to the two sides a person's body.) In this way the human body shapes and supports the particularity of place.

The privileged position of the human body is also recognized by Husserl, who, in referring to the lived body as something extraordinary, saw it not only as the bearer of the "I" but also as the locus of felt sensations. The bodily self thus becomes for

Husserl a null body or zero point, against which all other experiences are located.

The lived body is also taken up by Merleau-Ponty, who recognizes how kinesthetic feelings constitute the most precious evidence we have of how the place-world gives itself to us in the form of objects. Since the lived body is itself a place and is not merely *in* one, one of its key functions is to provide ongoing spatial orientation. Just as a place animates the lived bodies that are in it, so too does the lived place animate those same bodies.

In transition to the postmodern focus on the topology of place, Heidegger's theme of appropriation is then recognized as the creative locus into which possible ways of dwelling in space are entered. Through the indwelling provided by interaction with specific and authentic works of art, while passing from poetry to painting to sculpture, Heidegger is able to continue his search for the essential traits of place, from gathering, to nearing, to re-joining, to thinging.

Finally, Casey turns to the postmodern thinkers, for whom the concern with place reaches paramount importance. Here he deals with the fate of place in the work of Bachelard, Foucault, Deleuze, Guattari, Derrida, and Irigaray. In Bachelard's topoanalysis, which involves the philosophic rendering of the poetic imagination, the psyche is recognized as the provider of place for these images. In the analysis of these intimate spaces, time becomes intensely absorbed and virtually stopped, and the abiding priority of spatiality takes its place. The oneiric house of dream-memory is thus entered. With Foucault, Casey locates the genealogical thesis that space and place are historical entities subject to the domination of specific manifestations of power, which leads to Foucault's fascination with non-central marginalized sites in his search for locations for establishing a counter-force against the centralizing tendencies of modern discourse.

In the work of Deleuze and Guattari, Casey focuses on the idea of smooth space, where things pick up speed. This is also a nomad space, decentralized, always in motion and in between places, yet still body-based and landscape-oriented. He then attends to Derrida's concern with the similar textual and textual weaves of writing and architecture.

Derrida deconstructs architecture in order to reveal its spacing-out aspects, whereby a building functions by clearing out a space in order to enable certain kinds of events to happen. A building becomes more of a happening than a thing. Casey concludes with an analysis of Irigaray's concern with the sexed body. For her, and specifically against Aristotle, there is not being in place except in terms of sexually specific historically grounded meaning. Human bodies (and her focus is primarily on female ones) being more than mere things are recognized as organic in sexually differentiated ways, and each individual needs to be respected not merely by the terms of the other sex but in terms of a bodily grounded openness to divinity.

Casey's encyclopedic grasp of a vast (and heretofore virtually invisible) field is truly impressive. His survey traces the philosophic lineage of the fate of place over more than 2000 years of western thought. He shows how the derogation and assimilation of place to space has had enormous implications in a number of diverse fields, ranging from anthropology to psychology, theology to mythology, art to architecture, feminism to philosophy.

Even with such a vast undertaking, however, there do seem to be some telling oversights. The site of pain is overlooked, for example, as are the various experiences of the sick, the wounded, and the dying. The site of the battlefield is never mentioned, nor are the sites of high and low places. The similarities and differences between eastern and western (or between northern and southern) perspectives on the subject of place are omitted. The diverse implications of computer technology on our contemporary experience of place are completely ignored. The analyses of the face-to-face encounter and of the quantum world are perhaps a bit too sketchy.

But this is just carping. One has to be impressed by the consistently high quality of scholarship, clarity, and depth of insight achieved by Casey in this work.

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Clare Cooper Marcus, 1995. *House as Mirror of Self: Exploring the Deeper Meaning of Home*. Berkeley, CA: Conari Press.

Just as many people in the 1970s were inspired by Clare Cooper Marcus's "House as a Symbol of the Self,"¹ her *House as Mirror of Self*, may work to enlighten a new generation of design professionals about the importance of human emotional attachment to the physical aspects of the home and to the role of dwelling in the life-long process of individuation—of becoming who we truly are. In her examination of new dimensions of person-place experience, Marcus may also inspire a regeneration of research that involves at least three important issues: (1) the kinds of methodology used in gathering information from participants; (2) the life-cycle framework of the home-self relationship; and (3) the need for the home environment to nurture what Marcus calls the "soul-Self." In this review, I discuss each of these issues in turn.

1. A CREATIVE METHODOLOGY

Marcus's book is the fruition of over 20 years of interviews with people to discover why they felt the way they did about their houses and homes. The more than 60 men and women Marcus interviewed lived in the San Francisco Bay area and represented a wide range of backgrounds in terms of age, income level, owner/renter status, type and size of dwelling, and urban/rural context. Most centrally, all informants expressed strong relationships with their homes, both positive and negative.

In order to elicit unconscious feelings in as natural and non-threatening a way as possible, Marcus interviewed all informants in their homes and used a process of picture making and role playing to establish a dialogue between the person being interviewed and his or her home. Interviews were taped and transcribed; in some cases multiple interviews were conducted over a seven- to ten-year period. This thoroughness of methodology generated rich descriptive data, though when used by persons less able than the author (who has training in Gestalt therapy techniques), the results could be less successful. Marcus describes how she interacted with her informants:

Each story in this book was told to me while sitting in the person's own home. I found this to be a necessary part of putting

people at ease. In order to have them begin to focus on their emotions, I first would ask that the person put down his or her feelings about home in a picture; I supplied a large pad of paper, crayons, and felt pens. If they objected with "Oh—I can't draw," I reassured them that this was not a test in drawing, but rather an opportunity for them to focus on their feelings without speaking. Some people did childlike house diagrams with words or colors indicative of feelings. Others produced mandala-like symbols, semiabstract images, or artistic renderings. For most people, it seemed that this experience of beginning to explore feelings in a visual image while I absented myself from the room was extremely helpful in allowing the person to focus before starting to talk.

While this was going on, I would wander around the house or apartment, taking photos and notes about how the setting seemed to me. Then, after 15 to 20 minutes, I would return and ask the person to describe, somewhat objectively, what they had put on paper. For example, a young woman who was happy with her recently purchased woodsy house described how she had first drawn an image of a pond with the phrase, *calm like water in a pond* and then had added small, smiling houses and the words *cozy, spacious, gracious, and lovely*. (p. 8).

Included in Marcus's book are many drawings and color plates that illustrate a range of expression from highly pictorial to abstract. The combinations of graphics with oral expressions enrich the participants' stories and provide additional information for analysis. While this style of presentation is not an entirely original approach for eliciting highly personal information, the power of the method is clearly demonstrated through the specific conclusions of the study.

2. LIFE CYCLE AND THE HOME-PERSON RELATIONSHIP

Though much has been studied about the sociological aspects of housing, Marcus's book offers an empirical basis for the theory that the "house interior and its contents mirror our inner psychological self." Furthermore, the author shows that this relationship is a lifelong process beginning in childhood and following through the teen and adult years. Additionally, the relationship includes a wide number and scale of settings, both interior and exterior, in which people experience feeling at home.

The book is organized into ten chapters documenting the life-cycle nature of the home-self journey, or developmental path: Special places of

childhood; growing-up; always or never leaving home; self-image and setting; disruptions in bonding with home; and home as transcendent self. Each of these topics introduces several issues that are explained in a very readable, story-telling format based on individual case studies interpreted by the author using Heidegger's pre-logical thought processes—i.e., attempting to capture the pre-verbal aspects of the self/dwelling relationship, with references to studies by other researchers. After reading the introductory first chapter, one may read the other chapters in any order, as each can stand alone, though reading them in sequence convincingly builds reinforcement that the home/self relationship is a life-long journey.

The chapter, "Special Places of Childhood," introduces new descriptive information to reinforce familiar themes discussed in Marcus and others' work using environmental autobiography with design students. Marcus links the resulting themes (hiding places, child-created dwellings, home-away-from-home, exploration vs. fear of the unknown) with important developmental behaviors that guide children's growth. Marcus addresses the issue of whether childhood memories are based on reality or fantasy with the following story:

A woman architect I met talked about a recurring memory of an attic—of creeping up into it, exploring it, knowing it was forbidden territory. She couldn't be sure if it was a real place, or if she had once had a particularly vivid dream of an attic that kept reverberating in her mind. In some ways, I told her, it doesn't matter; if the image keeps recurring, we can be sure it is the unconscious trying to tell us something, nudging us to explore, perhaps, what is in the attic. Eventually, this woman built herself a real attic by adding a second story to her suburban home. Accessed by a ladder, this space was hers alone, forbidden territory to her husband and children. Here she daydreamed, watched shadow patterns on the skylight, and eventually started a meditation practice. The attic was the opening to her spiritual journey. Whether she had ever, in reality, visited an attic in her childhood was irrelevant (p. 39-40).

Another chapter, "Becoming Partners," illuminates the importance of the home setting in reinforcing or upsetting the challenge of adults living together. Symbolic meanings attributed to physical things—houses and objects in them—are deeply ingrained within us, though often unconsciously so. These parts of the self assert influence upon personal relationships within the family and home setting. As the following story suggests, family therapists and specialists in family studies could gain insights into

the impact that the physical environment can have in human social relationships:

It may be that what a home symbolizes for each person is more critical than almost any other issue. In all the conversations I had with couples who were comfortably making and sharing a home together, they all seemed to be in accord over the basic function and meaning of home. Concerns over privacy, territory, and personal space can usually be negotiated or made to work via house-remodeling or a move. But if one perceives the home principally as a symbol of status, the other as a nurturing vessel for family life, or if one cares deeply about homemaking while the other seems to just use the place as somewhere to sleep without appreciation for the partner's efforts, it may be more difficult to avoid resentment and conflict (p. 153).

3. HOMES NURTURING THE SOUL

Though each chapter of Marcus's book is rich in detail and depth of insight, it was the last chapter, "Beyond the House-as-Ego: The Call of the Soul," that I found most fascinating and revelatory. The discovery of connections with the soul, or "Higher Self" as Marcus calls it, was not anticipated when her conversations with people about their homes began. Many of these connections, though not all, were discovered through people's experiences with the natural environment: Examples include tree houses, the desert, or an ocean house. The struggle in the middle years to reconnect with the "soul-seed" planted in the child's unconscious offers the opportunity and challenge to grow by returning to a part of the self that is at the core of a person's being but which may often get overlaid and stifled by outside pressures and adult responsibilities. In her introduction to this chapter, Marcus explains:

In keeping with the theme of this book, I am most interested here in the environments that seem to trigger that poignant reconnection [with the "soul-seed"]. Each of us has to find the place of our soul—in our memories, our imagination, or in the material world. For some people, this place of soul nurturance may not be in the home at all; it may require spending time in another place or—over a lifetime—in varying soul-nourishing places, each appropriate to a particular stage of emotional development. When we start to feel not totally at home in our dwelling, or conversely, when we seek a broader home in another place, it is likely that the soul is demanding recognition (p. 254).

I find the idea of the higher Self of the soul (as opposed to the ego-self) in relation to one's home on earth, a focus well worth attending to by individuals personally, by educators and students in the classroom, and by designers in their practice. This possi-

bility seems to be an issue that a mature society could and should address, as well as the mature person.

In this regard, some reviewers may criticize Marcus's book for its lack of generalizability, but it is a book to read for insights, not for prescriptions. The book sheds light on universal themes, wisely recognizing that the home-self relationship is dynamic and individualistic, defying simple solutions. Because of its range and scope, the book should appeal to professionals in several fields: housing and design, psychology, human development, and sociology. Because of its very readable style, *House as Mirror of Self* should interest the layperson as well. Do-it-yourself exercises following each chapter allow readers to explore their own personal histories and experiences with homes. These exercises could also be used in the classroom to provide the topic with personal significance for students.

Marcus' list of references is extensive but omits some important contributions to the topic of this book by researchers in housing interior design. Though the body of work arising from those disciplines is not large, there are studies that corroborate the message in this book. In addition, there are unfortunate reference errors that could confuse readers; hopefully these will be corrected before another printing.

In spite of these minor blemishes, *House as a Mirror of Self* is a major work and a fascinating read.

—Margaret Boschetti

NOTE

1. Clare Cooper, *The House as a Symbol of Self*. In J. Lang, C. Burnette, W. Moleski, & D. Vachon, Eds., *Designing for Human Behavior* (Stroudsburg, PA: Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross, 1974).

JUNG'S DREAM

In her book (pp.40-41), Cooper Marcus presents Carl Jung's dream of himself as a house:

It was...a house I did not know, which had two stories. It was 'my house.' I found myself in the upper story, where there was a kind of salon furnished with fine old pieces in rococo style. On the walls hung a number of precious old paintings. I wondered that this should be my house, and thought, 'not bad.' But then it occurred to me that I did not know what the lower floor looked like. Descending the stairs, I reached the ground floor. There everything was much older....The furnishings were medieval; the floors were of red brick. Everywhere it was rather dark. I went from one room to another thinking, 'Now I really must explore the whole house.' I came upon a heavy door and opened it. Beyond it, I discovered a stone stairway that led down into the cellar. Descending again, I found myself in a beautifully vaulted room which looked exceedingly ancient. I discovered layers of brick among the ordinary stone blocks....As soon as I saw this I knew that the walls dated from Roman times. My interest was now intense. I looked more closely at the floor. It was on stone slabs, and in one of these I discovered a ring. When I pulled it, the stone slab lifted, and again I saw a stairway of narrow stone steps... These, too, I descended, and entered a low cave cut into rock. Thick dust lay on the floor, and in the dust were scattered bones and broken pottery, like remains of a primitive culture. I discovered two human skulls, obviously very old and half-disintegrated. Then I awoke.

Cooper Marcus quotes Jung's interpretation of his dream:

It was plain to me that the house represented a kind of image of psyche—that is to say, of my then state of consciousness, with hitherto unconscious additions. Consciousness was represented by the salon. It had an inhabited atmosphere, in spite of its antiquated style.

The ground floor stood for the first level of the unconscious. The deeper I went, the more alien and the darker the scene became. In the cave, I discovered remains of a primitive culture—that is, the world of the primitive man within myself—a world which can scarcely be reached or illuminated by consciousness. The primitive psyche of man borders on the life of the animal soul, just as the caves of prehistoric times were usually inhabited by animals before man laid claim to them.

"THE LOCUS OF COMPOSSIBILITY": MODERNISM AND PLACE

Carol H. Cantrell

Cantrell is a professor of English and serves as Graduate Coordinator at Colorado State University. The following essay is the first part of a longer article that illustrates the themes discussed below through the work of British writer Virginia Woolf.

*This article was first published in the summer 1998 issue of *Isle* (vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 25-40). We thank Cantrell and *Isle* Editor Scott Slovic for permission to reprint from this article, which is part of a forthcoming book-length study in which Cantrell examines the relationship between modernism and nature. Readers wishing a copy of the complete article, may contact Cantrell. Address: English Dept., Colorado State Univ., Ft. Collins, CO 80523 (Ccantrell@vines.colostate.edu). © 1998 Carol H. Cantrell.*

Modernist art, including modern literature, would seem to be hostile territory for a student of literature and the natural environment. Oscar Wilde's insistence that "Life imitates Art," that "Life in fact is the mirror, and Art the reality" (1968, p. 307), echoes through modernism, a body of art which has taught us to privilege the formal and the abstract over the referential.

Moreover, modern writers are famously expatriates, wanderers, exiles; they seem to be rooted in the shifting ground of the 20th century rather than in local and national traditions. The elusive nature of "the real world" in much modernist art and thought is memorably captured by the title of Marshall Berman's book on modernism, *All that Is Solid Melts Into Air*.

Yet modern writers were uniquely situated as witnesses to the profound changes in human relations with the planet which have become visible in this century. Modernism, at least as the term is used in relation to painting and literature, is located between the turn of the century and the beginning of World War II, a period which saw a flourishing of innovation in all the arts fed by dialogue between the arts.

Modernist art was produced by artists who were born in one century, most commonly in the 1880s, and came to maturity in another. For them, World War I was the most visible evidence of a fault line of catastrophe which utterly reshaped reality and their sense of reality. The profundity of this change is suggested by Virginia Woolf's witty phrase, "On or about December 1910 human character changed" (Woolf, 1992 p. 70).

One measure of the shift in the human experience of the world registered by modern art is its insistent expression of a deep distrust in the foundations and institutions of Western culture. This

distrust is part of a more elusive sense of things, a sense virtually all modern artists shared, that they had experienced a revolutionary change in "the given," including "the given" we call nature.

Such foundational changes had been felt before in human history, but what was unique about this experience is that the changes in "the given" were manifestly a function of human culture. For the moderns, this sense of things was simultaneously devastating and exhilarating. Standing as they did on the relatively firm footing of what Perry Anderson has called the archaeology of "a still usable classical past," and the shifting sands of a "still indeterminate technical present" and "a still unpredictable political future" (quoted in DeKoven, 1991, p. 19), it seemed not only possible but necessary to create or invent new ways of seeing, new ways of registering the perceptual shock of change, new ways of being readers and viewers, and to respond with a new urgency to questions about the consequences of human creativity.

A CRITIQUE OF WESTERN REASON

Implicit in the modernist aesthetic project is a critique of Western understanding of reason, particularly as it is based on the separation of perceiving mind from the perceived world. Much of the infamous difficulty of modern art is inherent in its attempt to explore alternative conceptions of perception, to dramatize the involvement of the perceiver within what is perceived. Elements of the experience of the world which our culture conventionally treats as background—issues of perspective, framing, and medium, for example—become for modernists the foreground and even the subject of much of their work.

Related projects for many modernists involve the exploration and representation of various

kinds of otherness, particularly non-Western cultures, and the multiple territories which lie outside language, and the converse project of exploring the self-referentiality of language and perception. Key elements of modernism—the attack on dualistic thinking, the foregrounding of backgrounds, the exploration of the relation of language to alterity, and the self-referential nature of symbol-making—are vital areas of inquiry for those of us who are interested in the relationship between literature and the natural environment.

PLACE AND THE LIVING BODY

My entry into the subject of modernism and the natural environment is through the notion of "place." Unlike "landscape" or "wilderness," "place" necessarily includes the human presence and in fact is centered around it. At the same time, "place" is where our embodied selves experience the world, and through which we receive the sources of energy and nurturance which keep us alive and in which our activities make themselves felt most immediately. It is where, in David Abram's words, "the sensing body is not a programmed machine but an active and open form, continually improvising its relation to things and to the world" (Abram, 1996, p. 49).

Yet "place," like women's traditional work, is usually backgrounded in Western thought, in part because both are intimately connected with the body, the mundane, the ephemeral. Without bodies, without places in which bodies live, none of the human achievements that erase their own conditions of creation would be possible. My conception of place rests on the insight that just as we cannot talk about mind without body, we cannot talk about body without place.

In developing this notion of "place," I draw on work ranging from geography to perceptual psychology growing out of the work of the phenomenological philosopher Merleau-Ponty. His emphasis on bodily situation and the exploration of "the perceptual faith" that it engenders are useful tools for ecocritical analysis because their beginning point is the continuity between human and world. "We grasp external space though our bodily situation," he writes. "Our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 369).

The "living" body or the "phenomenological body," in Carol Bigwood's paraphrase, "is not a separate physical entity in a world external to it but is of the same stuff as its environs" (Bigwood, 1993, p. 50). Moreover, like the rest of the physical world, the phenomenological body is not fixed but "continually emerges anew of an ever-changing weave of relations to earth and sky, things, tasks, and other bodies" (ibid., p. 51). For the phenomenologist as for the ecologist, the weave of relations which we know as "reality" is in fact neither fixed nor stable; not only do living things change in themselves, but constitutive relations constantly change as well.

BODY AND WORLD AS CONTINUOUS

What Merleau-Ponty does that much ecological thought does not do is to put the human perceiver in the picture; indeed, for phenomenology, the experience of the human observer is the starting point, not an irrelevance or nuisance. At the same time, Merleau-Ponty rejects the notion that the human being is all that there is, or all that we can know. His assumption as a philosopher is the same assumption we make in everyday life: that our perceptions are based in a continuity between our bodies and the world. In his words, "my body is made of the same flesh as the world (it is a perceived), and moreover...this flesh of my body is shared by the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 248).

Furthermore, we share perceptions with other perceivers, who "have the power to decenter me, to oppose [their] centering to my own" (ibid., p. 82). Objective knowledge rests on a costly omission of interactions between perceivers: "High places attract those who wish to look over the world with an eagle-eye view. Vision ceases to be solipsist only up close, when the other turns back upon me the luminous rays in which I had caught him" (ibid., 78).

Merleau-Ponty's double stress on reciprocity and ongoing process gives us a way to describe and understand the interactive nature of human relations with the natural world no less (or more) than with human culture. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty's work offers the possibility of a connection between the dialogics of language use and the interaction we have with the world. Merleau-Ponty uses the metaphor of conversation to describe the way in which interactions with the world around us lead us

to new knowledge, and suggests that this is not only an analogy:

it is the same world that contains our bodies and our minds, provided that we understand by world not only the sum of things that fall or could fall under our eyes, but also the locus of their compossibility, the invariable style they observe, which connects our perspectives...and...makes us feel we are two witnesses capable of hovering over the same true object, or at least of exchanging our situations relative to it, as we can exchange our standpoints in the visible world in the strict sense (*ibid.*, p. 13)

PLACE AND PHENOMENOLOGY

It may be useful to pause at this point to clarify where a phenomenological understanding of "place" differs from concepts of "place" we are used to using, especially in relation to literature. First, this notion of place is emphatically not about regionalism, the effects of place on writing, or the effects of specific places on identity. Not only do all these definitions of place assume a foreground/background relation between person and world, they also do not provide much help in thinking about what the geographer Edward Relph (1976) has called the "flatscape" of much 20th-century reality.

Within the notion of place I am using, "place" is not something we have more or less of, but a condition of being alive; even a bulldozed placelessness is a kind of place within which and out of which many human beings make their lives. A related understanding of "place" which I resist is an identification of place with stability, with permanence. Instead, the emphasis on moment-by-moment interaction in the work of Merleau-Ponty, Abram, Bigwood, Gibson, and others suggests that place is as unstable as the horizon. Not only does place change with our orientation—even non-biological entities are in flux. This is perhaps most obvious from the air, where the fractalline patterns of desert and mountain, of rivers converging and meandering, record the inscriptions of wind and water.

Indeed, once place is acknowledged as being as much in process as any living being, though the rates of change vary dramatically, it is easier to think of time as an essential component of any place, of the interdependence of "here" with the "now." In this sense, the clouds and weather which comprise most of what we see of the "places" de-

scribed in Wallace Stevens' poetry are exemplary representatives of place.

PLACE AND SELF-REFERENTIALITY

The notion of "place" I am suggesting here might be useful in thinking about virtually any kind of writing, for the phenomenological perspective implies that any writing—any product of human creativity—will bear the imprint of interactions between human and world.

At the same time, a phenomenological understanding of place seems especially relevant to the study of modernist texts. In modern literature, "place" is a problematic, not a given. Its difficulty and significance is suggested by the array of ways in which modern writers represent place. Kafka's mazes, Hemingway's reliance on place names when words have lost meaning, Rilke's angels, and Joyce's Dublin are just a few instances of the rich variety of ways in which modern writers have struggled with representations and understandings of place.

For these and other modern writers, the relation of human self to world or, more accurately, the terms of the dialogic between the "sensing, improvising" human maker and a world full of places potentially "unserved" (to use Hopkins' word) by human technology must be imagined in new ways. Much of the task of reimagining for modern writers involves jarring themselves and their viewers or readers not just out of conventional thought but out of routine habits of perception, and specifically out of the habit of thinking of place as "landscape," "out there," "objective" and thus without relations to the self.

PERCEPTION FOLDING BACK

For both moderns and phenomenologists, self-referentiality is an essential aspect of human relations with the world. Modern art is famous for its preoccupation with the self-referentiality of language: modernist paintings no less than poems demonstrate that to name something is to refer back to the one naming.

Merleau-Ponty's emphasis is on the reciprocity of perceiver and perceived: "my hand, while it is felt from within, is also accessible from without, itself tangible....Through this criss-crossing within it of the touching and the tangible, its own movements incorporate themselves into the uni-

verse they interrogate" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 133).

Merleau-Ponty's concept of the "flesh," a concept developed in his last writings, names the folding back of perception upon the perceiver which makes relationality the ground of experience. "The flesh we are speaking of is not matter," he writes. "It is the coiling over of the visible upon the seeing body, of the tangible upon the touching body, which is attested in particular when the body sees itself, touches itself seeing and touching... these two mirror arrangements of the seeing and visible, the touching and the touched, form a close-bound system..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 146).

Though the "flesh" makes a "close-bound system" possible, it is anything but a closed or solipsistic system. Merleau-Ponty's concept of the "flesh" depends upon difference as much as connectedness, for we are connected with what we perceive as we are being interrogated by it. We are, in Cataldi's words, "*simultaneously open to and closed off from others; simultaneously intermingled with and distanced from them*" (Cataldi, 1993, p. 28).

If Merleau-Ponty provides a way of resisting the dualistic separations which have sanctioned the treatment of animals as mere mechanisms and some human beings as animals, he does not substitute identity for separation. And this is an issue important to anti-dualist thought, whether it be modernist, ecological, or feminist. The alternative to the detached, egotistical self is not, as Val Plumwood has pointed out, the collapse of difference between selves; rather "the resolution of dualism requires... recognition of a complex, interacting pattern of both continuity *and* difference" (Plumwood, 1993, p. 67).

Thinking about place dramatizes the usefulness of Merleau-Ponty's shuttling between continuity and difference, for within a given place there are multiple reciprocal and dialogical relationships, ranging from those studied by the geographer, for whom "physical setting, activities, and meanings are always interrelated" (Rolph, 1976, p. 48), to more nebulous and shifting boundaries between "inside" and "outside"—which are "always ready to be reversed, to exchange their hostility" (Bachelard, 1964, pp. 217-218).

PLACE AS AN OPEN-ENDED IDENTITY

Finally, I want to explore the dimension of "place" which is probably most comfortable in modernism and least comfortable in an ecocritical literary environment—that is, the dimension of human making or creativity which I think is implicit in what I have been saying about "place." The first of the numerous entries under "place" in the OED is "An open space in a city; square, market-place," and virtually all the uses of the term suggest human activity—human beings living together, making a "place together," with connotations of fittingness and locatedness.

These meanings accord well with the thought of the ecological psychologist James Gibson (1986), whose work explicitly explores the experience of place. Place, he points out, precedes "space" in our experience, for space is an abstraction derived from place which establishes coordinates separate from the perceiving subject.

Place, for Gibson, is defined by the perceiving subject, for whom horizons and occluded objects shift and change as the perceiver walks or turns her head. Thus the perceiver is literally the center of her world. At the same time this perceiver looks and walks in the direction she does because the environment prompts these responses in what Gibson calls *affordances*, a word he made up to describe what an environment "*offers* to the animal, what it *provides* or *furnishes*, whether for good or ill" (ibid., p. 33). Different species within the same environment—and different members of the same species as well—will be drawn to different affordances within it.

Thinking of "place" as interdependent with a perceiver of place may seem to undercut environmental thinking, particularly thinking about wilderness areas and other places we want to spare from human presence. I would contend, however, that the discipline of thinking about "places" rather than "spaces" is at the very least a useful corrective to ways of thinking in which human beings are either all or nothing in relation to their environments.

And there are several features of "places" which cut human beings down to size. One is that the human (or other animal) perceiver is conceived of as being within something that surpasses her—that is, place—not the other way around. Another is that we are not authorized to generalize about place on the basis of one center of perception as we are

with space. Finally, and most important, the relation with place I have been describing is dialogic. A "place" has an open-ended identity negotiated by multiple voices, not just one, and not just by human voices.

At the same time, thinking of human relations to environments as inevitably participatory clarifies and complicates the role of human creativity. Phenomenologically, the "radical intentionality of human consciousness is fundamental," joining perception and creativity on a single continuum. "The world is both revealed and shaped by the acts of perception in which it is grasped"; thus, perception is not passive "but an active taking hold and a molding of one's own world" (Fisher, 1969, p. 10).

Indeed, for Merleau-Ponty—and for Gibson following—intentionality is inherently a part of human perception, as our orientation to affordances in the environment suggests. Human creativity—i.e., an active, shaping response to place—is inherent in virtually everything we see and do, as we constantly improvise our relation to the world around us, responding to affordances, making sense of things. Indeed, "For Merleau-Ponty, all of the creativity and free-ranging mobility that we have come to associate with the human intellect is, in truth, an elaboration, or recapitulation, of a profound creativity already underway at the most immediate level of sensory perception" (Abram, 1996, p. 53).

This creativity invents and reinvents the world we see as given and authorizes the changes we make in the given. Particularly in this century, we have learned to enforce meaning and unity on large parts of the world by turning them into abstract spaces, which are "understood to be empty and undifferentiated and objectively manipulable" (Relph, 1976, p. 23).

Yet even an extreme rationalist relationship with an environment is a relationship, though it is

not seen as such, and it proceeds from and leads to further relationships, many of them unintended. The question Merleau-Ponty invites us to ask is not what kinds of relationships can be imagined with the places in which we live and with the wild places in which we do not live, and what kinds of human construction and creativity possible relationships set in motion. Modern writers saw that the disastrous world they came to inhabit was the result of choices made at very deep levels of creativity—including the level of perception—and their work gives us the chance to explore some of the unexamined ways in which we are making and unmaking the world at every moment.

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POETRY

WHEN YOU ARE RECEPTACLE, YOU BECOME MULE'S EARS

In the rooted community. As in

Aspens, a shudder and hiss,
the grey blue ceiling of flicker above
and beneath, cow parsnips umbrellizing over their
leaves.

Warblers calling tree to tree.
Vireo's nest on the ground, woodpecker's
picking insects from the sap in etched bark.

There are myriads of details. Not to mention
that algebraic relation between the breeze
and this coolness on my skin.

Everything here is lifting or maybe
dropping down. Similarly, osha is a great healer,
and water hemlock, poisonous. Also,

stroking nettle the right way,
they can be visited without sting.
Saturated with color, in the shade of the grove

the surrounding meadow reads brilliant green,
which otherwise would bleach out in sun. Our
eyes have become little camera obscura, click,

click, our notebooks full of questions.
Six different shades of yellow
and they all have names.

We're nearing epiphany, when pattern
emerges into an affordance
of opportunity.

And we stand, telling true stories
in the cool, damp glade
of the suddenly miraculous.

--Judyth Hill

FLOOR, WALL, AND ROOF? (FOR THOMAS THIIIS-EVENSEN)

In her youth,
she crawled through a window
from her attic room that
overlooked the roof.

She would sit on the shingles
in the open air of
her private room.

Here, for a young girl,
window becomes door and
roof becomes floor.
Do their meanings change?

When her father climbs a
ladder to patch the roof,
he places his tools in the window,
not the door.
And he smears tar on the roof,
not the floor.

--Timothy Eiler

FOG

A bale
Of angel hair

unfurled
across Kansas

swaddles the moon

fills creek bottoms
with billows

of white
Fiberglass

--Sheryl L. Nelms

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