



# Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology

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This *EAP* begins 30 years of publication and includes “items of interest” and “citations received.” We offer an “in memoriam” for geographer **David Lowenthal**, an early figure in environmental phenomenology, who died in London in September at the age of 95. We feature two “book notes”: first, architect and architectural theorist **Hendrik Auret’s** *Christian Norberg-Schulz’s Interpretation of Heidegger’s Philosophy*; and, second, philosopher **Edward Casey’s** *The World on Edge*.

This issue of *EAP* includes four essays, the first of which is the second part of a 1999 conference presentation on Goethean science by the late philosopher **Henri Bortoft**. Second, anthropologist **Jenny Quillien** reflects upon her recent experiences of living in Amsterdam to consider the primary role of language in contributing to places and lifeworlds.

Third, speedskater **David Feric** draws on his firsthand experience of the sport to point toward a speedskating phenomenology. Last, artist and art educator **Doris**

**Rohr** considers the work of British artist and art critic **John Ruskin** as a conceptual and methodological means to facilitate a style of seeing and drawing that maintains sympathetic contact with the thing looked at and represented.

*Left: John Ruskin’s 1872 Moss and Wild Strawberry (graphite and traces of body-color on grey-blue paper, 541 x 376 mm., Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, UK). In describing his drawing aims, Ruskin spoke of “a delicate method of work, such as may ensure [the artist’s] seeing truly. For I am nearly convinced that, when once we see keenly enough, there is very little difficulty in drawing what we see.” Refer to Doris Rohr’s essay, p. 21; she discusses Ruskin’s Moss and on p. 23 and p. 28.*



## Conferences 2019

The 12<sup>th</sup>-annual “**Giving Voice to Experience**” conference takes place at Seattle University, March 8–9, 2018. The focus is how phenomenological and other modes of qualitative research have value for therapeutic practice. <https://www.seattleu.edu/artsci/map/professional-development/giving-voice-to-experience/>.

The **Society for Phenomenology and Media (SPM)** holds its 21<sup>st</sup> international conference, March 13–15, 2019, hosted by the Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia. The conference theme is “What we say about media and what that says about us: Medium, its message and geopolitics.” <http://societyphen-media.wix.com/socphenmedia#!info>.

The **Interdisciplinary Coalition of North American Phenomenologists (ICNAP)** holds its annual conference June 3–5, 2019 at George Washington University in Washington, DC, USA. The conference theme is “social phenomenology,” though papers on other phenomenological topics are welcome. ICNAP is an organization of scholars and practitioners committed to fostering interdisciplinary connections in phenomenology. <http://icnap.org/>.

The annual **International Human Sciences Research Conference** takes place June 24–28, 2019 at Molde University in Molde, Norway. The formal conference theme is “Joy, suffering, and death,” though papers and panels can relate to other topics as well. For the 2018 **HSRC newsletter**, go to: [https://www.seattleu.edu/media/college-of-arts-and-sciences/graduate-degrees/masterofartsinpsychology/professionaldevelopment/conferences-events-documents/ISHR-Newsletter\\_Revised.pdf](https://www.seattleu.edu/media/college-of-arts-and-sciences/graduate-degrees/masterofartsinpsychology/professionaldevelopment/conferences-events-documents/ISHR-Newsletter_Revised.pdf). **Conference info:** <https://www.himolde.no/english/research/events-articles-and-news/events/conferencesand-seminars/2019/ihsr2019/>.

## Items of interest

The **Architectural Humanities Research Association** (AHRA) is a non-profit academic organization that provides a network for researchers in architectural humanities across the United Kingdom and overseas. AHRA promotes, supports, develops, and disseminates high-quality research in the areas of architectural history, theory, culture, design and urbanism. One can become a member of AHRA by following the link to the AHRA website and hit the registration tab. AHRA currently has some 1,900 worldwide members; membership is free and open to all researchers working in schools of architecture and related disciplines. <http://www.ahra-architecture.org/>.

**Phenomenology of Time and Space** is the theme of the 18<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the **Polish Phenomenological Association**, to be held December 7–8, 2018, in Warsaw. The conference aim is to “rethink the fundamental phenomenological categories of time and space in their ontological, epistemological, and existential manifestations. We aim to review their contemporary relevance in various research fields inspired and affected by phenomenology (e.g., phenomenological psychology, anthropology, and cognitive science).” [phenomenologytimespace@gmail.com](mailto:phenomenologytimespace@gmail.com).

The 11<sup>th</sup> symposium of the **Architecture, Culture, and Spirituality Forum (ACSF)** takes place May 16–19, 2019, at Taliesin West in Scottsdale, Arizona. The main theme is “Continuity in Architecture, Culture, and Spirituality,” though organizers will consider other topics of interest. [www.acsforum.org/symposium2019/](http://www.acsforum.org/symposium2019/).

The 56<sup>th</sup> annual **International Making Cities Livable** conference takes place in Portland, Oregon, June 17–21, 2019. The conference theme is “A Healthy City for All.” <http://www.livablecities.org/>.

The 58<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the **Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy** (SPEP) will be hosted by Pittsburgh’s Duquesne University, October 31–November 2, 2019. Papers and panels from diverse philosophical perspectives in all areas of continental philosophy are welcome. Meeting conjointly with SPEP are two other groups supporting phenomenological research: The **Society for Phenomenology**

and the **Human Sciences** (SPHS) and the **International Association of Environmental Philosophy** (IAEP). IAEP’s annual meeting will be November 2–4, 2019. [www.spep.org](http://www.spep.org); [www.sphs.info/](http://www.sphs.info/); [www.environmentalphilosophy.org/](http://www.environmentalphilosophy.org/).

Upstate New York’s **Nature Institute** is sponsoring a two-week residential intensive, June 24–July 6, 2019. Drawing on Goethean science, the thematic focus is “Encountering Nature and the Nature of Things.” [www.natureinstitute.org](http://www.natureinstitute.org).

## Citations received

**Anna Ulrikke Andersen, 2018. Translation in the Architectural Phenomenology of Christian Norberg-Schulz. *Architectural Research Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 81–90.**

This architectural theorist examines a 1979 note written by architectural phenomenologist **Christian Norberg-Schulz** entitled “Translation.” She examines what role translation played in his theory of *genius loci*. She points out that, as discussed in this note, translation refers to “a tool for gathering, in the Heideggerian sense, which gives birth to an architecture in which the architectural outcome is not inferior to its precursor but simply different and from which something constructive might emerge. Seen in relation to architecture as language, translation can be understood as the crux of Norberg-Schulz’s longstanding interest in the meaning of architecture and place and how design must negotiate continuity and change.”

**David Appelbaum, 2017. Notes on Water: An Aqueous Phenomenology. Rhinebeck, NY: Monkfish Books.**

This philosopher and former editor of *Parabola* writes a poetic hermeneutics of water, focusing particularly on its etheric qualities and multivalent expression as lived symbol. Headings in a chapter entitled “Noah” include “flood,” “storm,” “mist,” “drought,” and “the olive branch.” Headings in a chapter entitled “Ptah” include “foam,” “stream,” “mist,” “clouds,” and “storm.” In some ways, the book is

reminiscent of Gaston Bachelard’s mode of poetic phenomenology.

**Kevin Baker, 2018. The Death of a Once Great City. *Harper’s*, July, pp. 24–47.**

This journalist provides a sobering account of “the fall of New York and the urban crisis of affluence.” Having lived in New York for more than 40 years, Baker has “seen all the periods of boom and bust..., almost all of them related to the ‘paper economy’ of finance and real estate speculation that took over the city long before it did the rest of the nation.”

He emphasizes, however, that these earlier “ups and downs” are blips compared to the current devolution that he describes as “the systematic, wholesale transformation of New York into a reserve of the obscenely wealthy and the barely here—a place increasingly devoid of the idiosyncrasy, the complexity, the opportunity, and the roiling excitement that make a city great.” See sidebar, next page.

**Michael Broadway, Robert Legg, and John Broadway, 2018. Coffeehouses and the Art of Social Engagement: An Analysis of Portland Coffeehouses. *Geographical Review*, vol. 108, no. 3 (July), pp. 433–456.**

These geographers consider the historic function of coffeehouses to promote “social engagement as so-called third places among independently owned coffeehouses in the city of Portland, Oregon. Twenty-three individual coffeehouses were evaluated to determine the extent to which they provide a supportive physical environment for social engagement.... [D]etailed patron behavior was recorded over a three-week period.”

The researchers determined that “few coffeehouses provided a supportive physical environment. The majority of coffeehouse patrons during the weekday and weekend ordered drinks ‘to go’. Among those who stayed during the weekday most sat alone and worked. Coffeehouses are spaces to ‘be alone together’. It was only on lunchtime weekends that coffeehouses were full of the sound of conversations.

Further study should consider the effect of eliminating free Wi Fi and banning laptops on social engagement and whether other place attributes need to be incorporated to promote social engagement.”

### **A few cupcake shops here and there**

As New York enters the third decade of the twenty-first century, it is in imminent danger of becoming something it has never been before: unremarkable. It is approaching a state where it is no longer a significant cultural entity but the world’s largest gated community, with a few cupcake shops here and there. For the first time in its history, New York is, well, *boring*.

This is not some new phenomenon but a cancer that is metastasizing on the city for decades now. And what’s happening to New York now—what’s already happened to most of Manhattan, its core—is happening in every affluent American city. San Francisco is overrun by tech conjurers who are rapidly annihilating its remarkable diversity.... Boston, which used to be a city of a thousand nooks and crannies, back-alley restaurants and shops, dive bars and ice cream parlors hidden under its elevated, is now one long, monotonous wall of modern skyscrapers. In Washington, an army of cranes has transformed the city in recent years, smoothing out all that was real and organic into a town of mausoleums....

By trying to improve our cities, we have only succeeded in making them empty simulacra of what was. To bring this about we have signed on to political scams and mindless development schemes that are so exclusive they are more destructive than all they were supposed to improve.

The urban crisis of affluence exemplifies our wider crisis: we now live in an America where we believe that we no longer have any ability to control the systems we live under (Kevin Baker, p. 25).

### **Christie Johnson Coffin and Jenny Young, 2017. *Making Places for People: 12 Questions Every Designer Should Ask*. NY: Routledge.**

In this pocket-sized book, two architects present “twelve social questions in environmental design”: (1) What is the story of this place? (2) Whose place is it? (3) Where is this place? (4) How big is this place? (5) What logic orders this place? (6) Does this place balance community and privacy? (7) What makes this place useful? (8) Does this place support health? (9) What makes this place sustainable? (10) Who likes this place? (11) What evidence is there this place will work? (12) Does this place foster social equity?

The book is written in a clear, accessible style; includes a good number of illustrations (all black and white); refers to key figures in the history of environment-behavior research; and delimits a reasonable and useful way to envision programming and designing.

### **Robert Freestone and Edgar Liu, eds., 2017. *Place and Placelessness Revisited*. London: Routledge.**

The 16 chapters of this edited volume, mostly by urban designers and planners, consider the continuing intellectual influences of geographer **Edward Relph’s** *Place and Placelessness*, originally published in 1976 and reprinted in 2008. “For four decades, ideas put forward by this seminal text have continued to spark debates, from the concept of placelessness itself, through how it plays out in our societies, to how city designers might respond to its challenge in practice.” Entries include **Relph’s** “The Paradox of Place and the Evolution of Placelessness,” as well as **Lucy Montague’s** “Theory’s Role in Placelessness”; **John Tomaney’s** “Insiderness in an Age of Mobilities”; **Hazel Easthope’s** “Losing Control at Home?” **Rachel Cogger’s** “Tuning In and Out of Place”; **Nancy Marshall’s** “Urban Squares: A Place for Social Life”; and **Kim Dovey’s** “Place as Multiplicity.” The sidebar, right, reproduces a portion of **Relph’s** “Afterword.”

### **The contradictions and confusions of place**

Interpretations of place, placelessness, place-making, and insiderness now stretch far beyond the ones I suggested four decades ago. Most of these interpretations have been, or can be, contested theoretically, while actual places—the ones we live or work in or travel to visit—are filled with contradictions and the confusions attendant on increased connectivity and mobility, unprecedented ethnic juxtapositions, the manipulation of identities to attract investment, and numerous other changes and strategies.

A particular place may offer a secure sense of belonging, or be exclusionary, or be both at once; a placeless landscape can be seen as an expression of the geography of anywhere that reflects a view from nowhere, or as an expression of efficiency and standardization that makes travel convenient; worldwide mobility can be compatible with, rather than a threat to, insiderness; place-making can be responsive to local meanings or manipulated for corporate ends.

What I gather from the remarkable range of discussions in this book is that places are particular, familiar, meaningful fragments of the world, yet little about them can be taken for granted. There are no obvious restrictions to the scale or character of places, and their particularity is everywhere now permeated by processes and products that originate elsewhere or nowhere in particular. A place at any scale is a world fragment that is a specific focus of meanings and activities, yet is both open to the world and an opening to the world.

This openness was not obvious when lives were mostly rooted and place-making was mostly a local activity. In this context, I suggested in *Place and Placelessness* that meaningful places have to be made through the efforts and experiences of those who live and work in them.

This conclusion needs to be revised to correspond to contemporary global mobility and displacement that result either from choice, as in the global

north, or are forced by war and deprivation, as in parts of the global south.

The challenge is to bring thinking, politics, and place-making practices into line with new realities of disembedding and re-embedding (Edward Relph, 2017, pp. 270–71).

**Kathleen T. Galvin, ed., 2018. *Routledge Handbook of Well-Being*. London: Routledge.**

This edited collection of 30 chapters “explores diverse conceptualizations of well-being, providing an overview of key issues and drawing attention to current debates and critiques.” The chapters are organized around three central questions: What is well-being? How do different disciplines and professions understand well-being? How is well-being manifest in human life? Several of the chapters emphasize a phenomenological approach.

Contributions include “Cities, well-being, world—a Heideggerian analysis” (Robert Mugerauer); “Well-being and being-well: a Merleau-Ponty perspective on psychosomatic health” (Jennifer Bullington); “Dwelling-mobility: An existential theory of well-being” (Les Todres and Kathleen T. Galvin); “Well-being and phenomenology: Lifeworld, natural attitude, homeworld and place” (David Seamon); “Heritage and well-being: Therapeutic places, past and present” (Timothy Darvill, Vanessa Heaslip, and Kerry Barrass); “Ecological health and caring” (Helena Dahlberg and Albertine Ranheim); “Embodied routes to well-being: horses and young people” (Ann Hemingway); and “Creativity and aesthetic thinking: Toward an aesthetics of well-being” (Dorthe Jørgensen).

**Thomas F. Gieryn, 2018. *Truth-Spots: How Places Make People Believe*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.**

Known for his earlier writings on place, this sociologist considers “how places lend credibility and legitimacy to beliefs and claims.” His real-world foci include the sacred site of Delphi, Thoreau’s pondside cabin, Linnaeus’ botanical garden, outdoor

historical museums, pilgrimage environments, research libraries, and American courthouses.

Gieryn writes: “The premise of this book is that place matters mightily for what people believe to be true. We can better understand why some assertions or propositions or ideas become for some people credible and believable by locating them somewhere on the skin of the earth—and by asking what things are to be experienced at that spot and how this place is culturally understood.”

The sidebar, below, includes a portion of Gieryn’s discussion of American courthouse architecture—specifically, the courthouse design of St. Louis’s Eagleton US Courthouse, completed in 2000 and part of the largest federal building program since the New Deal “for the renovation and construction of new courthouses,” an effort carefully detailed in the 1991 *U.S. Courts Design Guide*, which requires that all new federal courthouses “must be planned and designed to frame, facilitate, and mediate the encounter between the citizen and the justice system.”

**Public, restricted, and secure circulations**

The interior design of Eagleton follows stringent rules set down in the *Design Guide* for segregating discrete categories of people as they move to and from the courtrooms—in the interest of a fair and impartial trial. Federal courtyards have three separate circulation systems leading to the courtroom, and they must never intersect (except at spots well insulated by security doors, locks, cameras, guards, and signage).

Arranging passages on a courtroom floor at Eagleton was something like designing an electrical circuit where the wires must never cross—lest the system of justice short out. The *Design Guide* spells this out: “(1) *public* circulation and access for spectators, news media representatives, attorneys, litigants, and witnesses; (2) *restricted* circulation and access for judges, law clerks, courtroom deputy clerks, court reporters/recorders, and jurors; and (3) *secure* circulation and access for prisoners and U.S. Marshal Services personnel.” The three discrete circulation

systems are not optional but imperative: “Any uncontrolled intersection of differing circulation patterns constitutes a breach of security and must be avoided.”

The same principle of absolute segregation applies to the functionally specific spaces that surround every courtroom at Eagleton.... At [St. Louis’] Old Courthouse, four tiny niches just off the corners of the courtroom sufficed as support space; now, auxiliary activities require more square footage per floor than the courtroom itself. Architects spend a lot of time plotting out “adjacencies”—deciding which activities (and rooms for those activities) need to be next to each other, and which must be kept apart (Thomas F. Gieryn, 2018, pp. 113–14).

**Tonino Griffero and Giam-piero Moretti, eds. *Atmosphere/Atmospheres*. Milan: Mimesis International.**

This philosopher and comparative-literature scholar define atmosphere as “a sensorial and affective quality widespread in space.” Their edited collection’s nine chapters examine the topic via a wide range of themes. Chapter titles include: “Atmospheres of and in Geography” (L. D’Alessandro, R. Sommella, and L. Viganoni); “Technosocial Atmospheres: Migration, Institutional Racism, and Twitter” (A. Del Guercio, M. Anna Di Palma, and T. Terranova); “Economic Atmospheres” (A. di Maio and S. Ercolano); “Something More: Atmospheres and Pathic Aesthetics” (T. Griffero); “Some Notes on Atmospheres and Financial Markets” (A. Lopes and L. Gaeta); and “North American Atmosphere (Canada, Alaska, Greenland): Ecumene and Nordicity in Canada, Climate Change and Geostrategies in the Far and Extreme North” (R. G. Maury). This book is the third in the Mimesis series, “Atmospheric Spaces,” coordinated by Tonino Griffero [see *EAP*, summer/fall 2017, p. 1].

**Bradley Rink, 2019. *Place Ballet in a South African Minibus Taxi Rank*. In D. Agbiboa, ed., *Transport, Transgression***

**and Politics in African Cities.**  
**NY: Routledge.**

This geographer provides an ethnographic study of Cape Town's Mowbray taxi rank, one hub of the city's minibus taxi services. Rink writes: "Complexity, fluidity and precariousness characterize the taxi rank... which is a critical point of arrival, departure, and in-betweenness where vehicles, their drivers, guards, and passengers meet at the starting and endpoint of their journeys. The taxi rank is at once a place of flows, a place of stillness, a place of conflict, and a place of confluence."

**John Russon, 2017. Sites of Exposure.** Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.

This philosopher focuses on "our distinctive capacities and the world that provides the setting in which we deploy them." He argues that, "in all our affairs we fundamentally are dealing with a kind of exposure, a contact with an outside. It is in and through this contact with a challenging outside that we must make our lives, and this book is a study of how we make for ourselves a home in this outside, in this world to which we are exposed."

Russon concludes that "the dynamic interaction of being-exposed and being-at-home is what defines our life, and this is so at every level of our experience—from the most basic domains of bodily interaction with the physical environment to our political engagements with other people and to our most personal engagement with intimate matters of meaning and value."

**Dirk van Eck & Roos Pijpers, 2016. Encounters in Place Ballet: A Phenomenological Perspective on Older People's Walking Routines in an Urban Park, Area, vol. 49, no. 2, pp. 166–173.**

These geographers draw on the phenomenological concept of "place ballet" to "understand the meanings of encounters between older people visiting an urban park in the city of Eindhoven, the Netherlands." The authors make use of participant observation, including "a serial interviewing

strategy, in which older people are accompanied on their walks through the park, to expose daily walking routines. As part of these routines, characterized by clockwork precision, they meet fellow park visitors in place ballet." The authors conclude that place ballet "sustains an atmosphere of fellowship that encourages people to notice and care for each other."

**Troy Vine, 2018. Understanding Goethe's Polemics against Newton. Field Centre Research Journal, issue 1 (May), pp. 36–46.**

This researcher provides a critique of physicist Michael Duck's introduction to the recently-published English translation of the polemic part of Goethe's 1810 *Theory of Colours*, in which Goethe calls into question Newton's light and color experiments in his 1704 *Optics*.

Drawing on philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn's theory of paradigms, Troy argues that Goethe was working metaphysically to call into question the taken-for-granted way of science assumed by Newton: "I thus propose reading [Goethe's] polemics as an attempt to show that the conceptual framework that underlies Newton's theory—the presentational theory of perception, the material theory of light, and so forth—is responsible for [explaining Goethe's claim about Newton's *Optics*] that 'what is false, true, and what is true, false'.... On this reading, Goethe is less concerned with demonstrating that Newton is engaging in bad physics, but rather in bad metaphysics."

**Michael E. Zimmerman, 2008. The Singularity: A Crucial Phase in Divine Self-Actualization? Cosmos and History, vol. 4, nos. 1–2, pp. 347–70.**

This philosopher considers the current argument that the integration of robotics, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, and genetic engineering may soon generate "posthuman beings" that will far surpass ordinary humans in "power and intelligence." The result will be a "singularity," the aims and capacities of which "lie beyond our ken." Zimmerman argues that

"technological posthumanists, whether wittingly or unwittingly, draw upon the long-standing Christian discourse of 'theosis', according to which humans are capable of being god or god-like" with the eventual result that "humanity achieves absolute consciousness." Zimmerman ends with a set of provocative questions reproduced in the sidebar below.

**Leaving behind mortal flesh?**

I close with a few questions: many centuries from now, will intelligent beings look back upon human history as an episode in the biography of cosmic Geist? If so, what means are justifiable in pursuit of this extraordinary end?

Because people have so often committed terrible atrocities when convinced that they were carrying out God's will, should we keep in mind the possibility that transhumanists [i.e., supplementing humanness via technology and science and thus becoming more than human but still holding on to some human qualities] and posthumanists [i.e., the development of intelligences substantively different and greater than humans and thus no longer human] are themselves deluded in what is behind their visions for the future?

Does the drive to leave behind mortal flesh divert human energy that might otherwise go to restoring the life- and human-friendly features of a planet that has been ravaged by the very science and industry that unwittingly paved the way for trans- and posthumanists? Ought there be international forums in which these portentous questions can receive serious and lengthy hearings?

Or will technological innovations develop so rapidly that little time will remain for inquiry into the potential implications of trans- and posthumanism? Will the future envelop us before we even have the chance to think whether we ought to embrace it?

Or will environmental problems bring about a grimmer future, one that precludes the possibilities—both grand and terrifying—that we have been discussing here? (Michael E. Zimmerman 2008, pp. 369–70).

# In Memoriam: David Lowenthal (1923–2018)

Geographer **David Lowenthal** died September 18, 2018, in London. He was 95 years old and Emeritus Professor of Geography at University College London, following many years at the American Geographical Society in New York.

Lowenthal received the British Academy Medal in 2016 for *The Past Is a Foreign Country—Revisited*, honoring “a landmark academic achievement which has transformed understanding in the humanities and social sciences.” His research and writings ranged from the West Indies and American conservationist **George Perkins Marsh** through heritage issues to landscape interpretation. When he died, Lowenthal was proof-reading his just-completed book, *Quest for the Unity of Knowledge* (Routledge, 2018).

Though best known for his 1985 *The Past is a Foreign Country* (which examined how societies appraise, understand, and make use of the past), Lowenthal was a major figure in environment-behavior studies in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1965, he participated in the first formal session on “environmental perception and behavior” at the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers held in Columbus, Ohio.

The papers from this session were later edited by Lowenthal and published as *Environmental Perception and Behavior* (University of Chicago Department of Geography, 1967). Illustrating his strong interdisciplinary perspective, contributors included geographers **Yi-Fu Tuan**, **Robert Kates**, and **Lowenthal**; as well as psychologists **Robert Beck** and **Joseph Sonnenfeld**; and urban designers **Donald Appleyard**, **Kevin Lynch**, and **John R. Reynolds**.

For environmental phenomenology, Lowenthal is a central figure because of his masterly 1961 article, “Geography, Experience, and Imagination: Towards a Geographical Epistemology.” Replete with exhaustive footnotes, this article was one of the first efforts to delineate the wide range of ways in which human beings relate existentially to the geographical world in which they find themselves.

Referring to geographer **J. K. Wright’s** notion of *terrae incognitae*—people’s subjective geographical values and understandings—Lowenthal wrote that his major aim in the article was to explore “the nature of these *terrae incognitae*, and the relation between the world outside and the pictures in our heads.”

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Lowenthal taught an annual graduate seminar in “environmental perception” at Worcester, Massachusetts’ Clark University, where he influenced the thinking and professional futures of **Anne Buttimer**, **David Seamon**, **Graham Rowles**, and others who would become associated with “humanistic geography.”

Lowenthal was a remarkable thinker with vast curiosity and a perspicacious sensibility regarding people and place. His “Geography, Experience, and Imagination” is perhaps his most concentrated achievement and remains a required reading for anyone interested in environmental phenomenology.

In memoriam, we reprint a portion of this compelling work in the sidebars, below; the many footnotes in the original text are not included and can be found in the full version of the article (*Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 51, no. 3 [1961], pp. 241–60).

## At most a partial picture

Humankind’s best conceivable world view is at most a partial picture of the world—a picture centered on human beings. We inevitably see the universe from a human point of view and communicate in terms shaped by the exigencies of human life....

Purpose apart, physical and biological circumstances restrict human perception. Our native range of sensation is limited; other creatures experience other worlds than ours. The human visual world is richly differentiated, compared with that of most species, but others see better in the dark, perceive ultraviolet rays as colors, distinguish finer detail, or see near and distant scenes together in better focus.

To many creatures, the milieu is more audible and more fragrant than to us. For every sensation, moreover, the human perceptual world varies within strict limits; how bright the lightning looks, how loud the thunder sounds, how wet the rain feels at any given moment of a storm depends on fixed formulae, whose constants, at least, are unique to humans.

The instruments of science do permit partial knowledge of other milieus, real or hypothetical. Blood ordinarily appears a uniform, homogeneous red to the naked eye; seen through a microscope, it becomes yellow particles in a neutral fluid, while its atomic substructure is mostly empty space. But such insights do not show what it is actually like to see normally at a microscopic scale. “The apparently standardized environment of flour in a bottle,” Edgar Anderson surmises “would not seem undifferentiated to any investigator who had once been a flour beetle and who knew at firsthand the complexities of flour-beetle existence.”

The perceptual powers and central nervous systems of many species are qualitatively, as well as quantitatively, different from human’s. We can observe, but never experience, the role of surface tension and molecular forces in the lives of small invertebrates, the ability of the octopus to discriminate tactile impressions by taste, of the butterfly to sense forms through smell, or of the jellyfish to change its size and shape.

The tempo of all varieties of experience is also specific. Time yields humans on the average eighteen separate impressions, or instants, every second; images presented more rapidly seem to fuse into continuous motion. But there are slow-motion fish that perceive separate impressions up to thirty each second, and snails to which a stick that vibrates more than four times a second appears to be at rest.

As with time, so with space; we perceive one of many possible structures, more hyperbolic than Euclidean. The six cardinal directions are not equivalent for us: up and down, front and back, left and right have particular values because we happen to be a special kind of bilaterally symmetrical, terrestrial animal. "It is one contingent fact about the world," writes Bernard Mayo, "that we attach very great importance to things having their tops and bottoms in the right places; it is another contingent fact [about ourselves] that we attach more importance to their having their fronts and backs in the right places than their left and right sides." Up and down are everywhere good and evil: heaven and hell, the higher and lower instincts, the heights of sublimity and the depths of degradation, even the higher and the lower latitudes have ethical spatial connotations. And left and right are scarcely less differentiated.

Other species apperceive quite differently. Even the fact that physical space seems to us three-dimensional is partly contingent on our size, on the shape of our bodies (an asymmetrical torus), and, perhaps, on our semicircular canals; the world of certain birds is effectively two-dimensional, and some creatures apprehend only one.

Human beings' experienced world is, then, only one tree of the forest. The difference between this and the others is that human beings know their tree is not the only one; and yet

can imagine what the forest as a whole might be like. Technology and memory extend our images far beyond the bounds of direct sensation; consciousness of self, of time, of relationship, and of causality overcome the separateness of individual experience....

Whatever the defects of the general consensus, the shared world view is essentially well-founded. "We are quite willing to admit that there may be errors of detail in this knowledge," as Bertrand Russell wrote, referring to science, "but we believe them to be discoverable and corrigible by the methods which have given rise to our beliefs, and we do not, as practical humans, entertain for a moment the hypothesis that the whole edifice may be built on insecure foundations" (David Lowenthal, pp. 246–48).

### **The geography of the world**

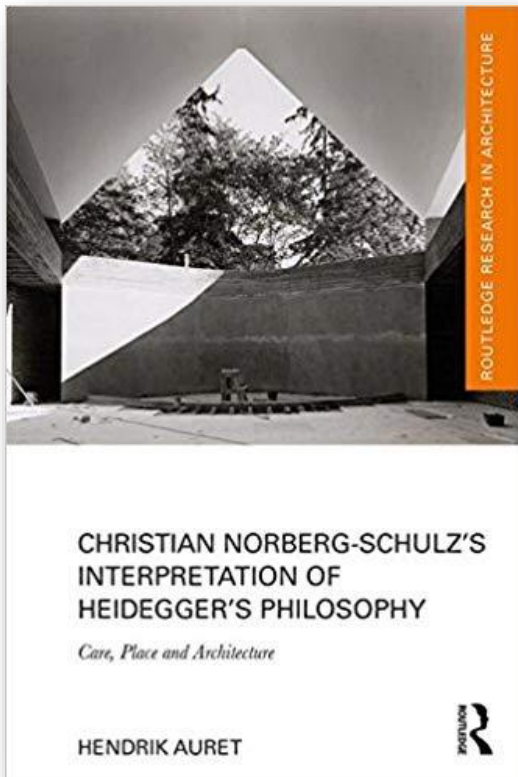
Every image and idea about the world is compounded... of personal experience, learning, imagination, and memory. The places that we live in, those we visit and travel through, the worlds we read about and see in works of art, and the realms of imagination and fantasy each contribute to our images of nature and human being. All types of experience, from those most closely linked with our everyday world to those furthest removed, come together to make up our individual picture of reality.

The surface of the earth is shaped for each person by refraction through cultural and personal lenses of custom and fancy. We are all artists and landscape architects, creating order and organizing space, time, and causality in accordance with our apperceptions and predilections.

The geography of the world is unified only by human logic and optics, by the light and color of artifice, by decorative arrangement, and by ideas of the good, the true, and the beautiful (David Lowenthal, p. 260).

## Book Note

Hendrik Auret, 2019. *Christian Norberg-Schulz's Interpretation of Heidegger's Philosophy: Care, Place and Architecture*. London: Routledge.



In the last several years, the writings of Norwegian architect and architectural theorist **Christian Norberg-Schulz** have been called into question by critics of architectural phenomenology. In his *Architecture's Historic Turn: Phenomenology and the Rise of the Postmodern* (2010), for example, architectural theorist **Jorge Otero-Pailos** argued that Norberg-Schulz's understanding of Heidegger's philosophy was an "instrumentalist misreading" that sought "to wrest control of architectural history from art historians and simultaneously seize jurisdiction over architectural aesthetics from designers" (p. xxix, p. 181).

More recently, a special issue of the architectural journal *Log* (2018), provocatively titled, "Disorienting phenomenology," includes contributors who question Norberg-Schulz's work, described by ed-

itor **Bryan Norwood** as a "root subjectivity" that "we can characterize as essentially colonizing, enlightened, white, straight, male, and able-bodied" (p. 12). Or as contributor **Jos Boys** makes the point, Norberg-Schulz (as well as **Gaston Bachelard** and **Peter Zumthor**) expresses "a shared belonging that assumes its own commonsense universality while simultaneously making concrete a normative order in which some bodies are present and others are absent" (p. 64).

As a counter to these criticisms of Norberg-Schulz's thinking, South African architect and architectural theorist **Heindrik Auret** *Christian Norberg-Schulz's Interpretation of Heidegger's Philosophy* is a welcome rejoinder because he offers a balanced critique of the Norwegian's interpretation of phenomenological philosopher **Martin Heidegger** and argues that Norberg-Schulz's thinking might be better clarified and grounded through a way of being that Auret calls "the art of care." He writes,

*I believe that there is a way to overcome Norberg-Schulz's one-sided reliance on continuity and change and once again breathe life into architectural place-making. Architecture, besides being the 'art of place', is also 'an art of care'. Architects need to be mindful of time, instead of continuously trying to overcome or transcend it. This demands a certain measure of humility and restraint, but also calls for the most resolute dedication to unveiling the Moment of revelation; the moment when the unique living of a shared way of life finds affirmation in architectural making (p. 4).*

The sidebar, below, includes passages from the last chapter of Auret's book.

### Care and Place

If architecture is to be understood as *livskunst* [Norberg-Schulz's Norwegian term for the "art of the experience of living"], architects not only need to illuminate the life-place totality as an existential space between earth and sky but should also recognize the temporal role of care and its connections to mortality and the divine.

Instead of constituting two isolated concepts, care and place reveal compelling facts about each other. Place reveals the way in which care always already identifies with and is drawn to a concrete region between earth and sky. Care reveals place not only as a concrete topological reality but as an appropriated region of concern. The interaction of place and care constitutes a lived regioning. *Livskunst* presents a way of making and appreciating architecture appropriate to the concerned Being of the intentional ... (p. 203).

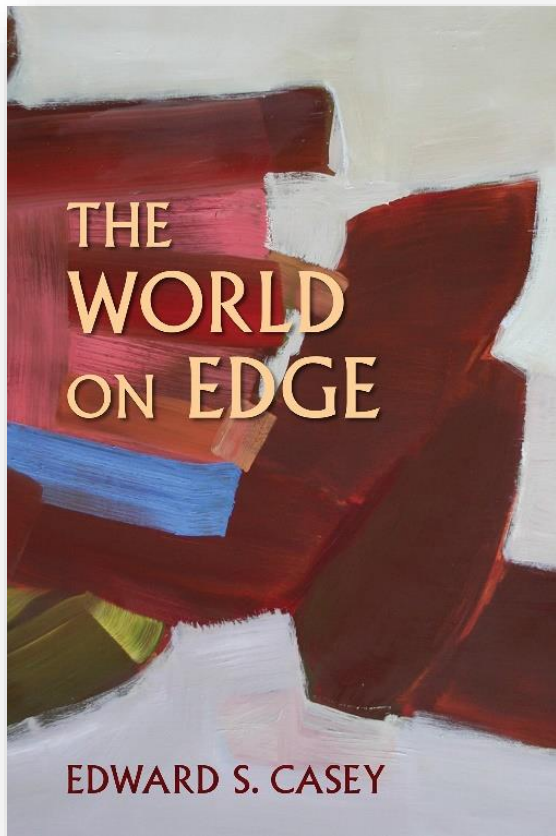
Works of architectural *livskunst* stand between heaven and earth as poetic proclamations of the ecstatic concern governing the relationships between mortal beings of care and the place as a region of concern under the sway of a guardian spirit; a fourfold regioning in which *Dasein*, the being of care, is always already between earth and sky, birth and death.

In these moments, fleeting but serving as a vanguard against half-heartedness, the constructs that seem to endure as care and place are fused in the ecstatic openness and steadfast captivation of *livskunst* (p. 206).



## Book Note

Edward S. Casey, 2017. *The World on Edge*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.



**T**he *World on Edge* is the latest book by philosopher Edward Casey, whose *Getting Back into Place* (1993/2009) and *The Fate of Place* (1997) have been two primary engines for the robust recent research in place phenomenology. Broadly, *The World on Edge* can be described as a phenomenology of edges, which are crucial to human experience because

*our life consists of one encounter with edges after another—some benignly supportive, others obstructive, but others distinctly traumatic—and as we grow up we move into increasingly complex and demanding edge circumstances. Much emanates from edges: energy, definition, provide, outreach. Much begins with edges,*

*whether in painting, politics, or poetry, and everything ends with edges: every thing and every event terminates in edges, including the event of death as the ultimate edge of our life” (p. xv).*

In generating a more exact description of edges, Casey first considers several broad modes of physical edges, including borders, boundaries, surfaces, and limits as well as the more ephemeral edges that mark places and events. Second, he examines human-made vs. natural edges by contrasting urban and wilderness situations. Third, he considered bodily edges, which “are psychological rather than physical”; and, last, the edges of earth and sky. Casey uses this outline “to show how edges pervade our inner as well as our outer lives, and how they arise in the interaction between human beings and what surrounds them.... For in truth edges are everywhere: as far as we can see and as close as we can touch” (p. xix).

The first sidebar below provides Casey’s introduction to edges; the second reproduces passages from his discussion of edges as they relate to places.

The first sidebar below provides Casey’s introduction to edges; the second reproduces passages from his discussion of edges as they relate to places.

### Edges as a formative force

This book pursues the thesis that edges are constitutive not only of what we perceive, but also of what we think and of the places and events in which we are situated. Edges do much more than demarcate or delimit spatial spread or temporal extent, being a formative force of their own.

I shall maintain that the role of edges is central to the drama of experience at every level—perceptual,

practical, cognitive, aesthetic, emotional, intersubjective. Far from being a negligible aspect of ordinary experience, they are an extraordinary and quite constructive (though also at times destructive) basis of this experience.

Yet edges have been almost entirely overlooked in previous philosophical accounts of human experience. At most they are noted and then passed over in favor of abiding philosophical preoccupations such as the nature of truth, the verification of knowledge claims, or the evidential nature of sensory perception. The nature of edges has been quite literally marginalized.

But what if edges are not merely incidental aspects of perception? What if they are distinct presences in their own right—indispensable not just to perception but also to many other kinds and parts of our experience of the world?

Edges, I contend here, are essential to being a thing or a thought, a place or an event—and, by extension, a person or an artwork. Without edges, none of these could be what they are. Edges contribute to the peculiar character of that which they constitute, its status as *this* rather than *that*. Nothing distinct or finite can emerge except as edged—and edged in a specific manner that helps to form its unique identity (p. xiii).

### The singularity of place edges

Places are peculiar in that *all their edges exhibit edge/edge relations*—every edge of a place is interactive with other edges rather than independent or freestanding. There is no edge of a place that does not emerge from the way that place is situated in its own larger environments and thus in relation to a plethora of other edges in these environs, including those of

the particular things that populate it. With rare exceptions, the edges of a place interact with those of the surrounding world in manifold and subtle ways.... In the case of edges of places, all of them are interactive with other edges—those of its own occupants as well as those of other places and what is in them.

Several sorts of edge conspire in the making of a single place. To be a place at all is to possess a multiplicity of edge types. To call places “open textures” [i.e., porous and extending places beyond themselves] ... is to contrast them with *sites*, which are spaces determined in strict terms by the closure effected by imposed or imputed edges, which tend to be rectilinear (as in building sites).

Moreover, where a material thing tends to feature one consistent kind of edge [e.g., the margin around a printed page], a place characteristically possesses a variety of edge-types. Thought there are more complicated places than the corner of W. 110<sup>th</sup> Street [in New York City] where I live, this particular place proves to be rife with edges of disparate sorts—so many, in fact, that my description of it could continue indefinitely. A proliferation of edges inheres in any given place, more so than for any given thing in that place.

A place is an especially powerful catchment area of edges, absorbing and exhibiting a variety of them—natural and artificial, conspicuous and understated, fully presented or only adumbrated. This reflects the fact that *a place has no single definitive edge*, no set limit in any strict sense. To have a definite edge is a basic feature

of sites, by contrast; but places... are not so restricted. Consider how places we designate by phrases such as “Gramercy Park” or “Battery Park”... refuse to be characterized as stopping or starting at a certain precise point, whatever city maps may claim.

By the same token, when places... intersect, they do so in diffuse ways that defy definite, much less complete, description. South Harlem merges into the Upper West Side across Morningside Park, which acts as a buffer zone between [the two], at once connecting and separating them. Yet no local inhabitant is likely to say that South Harlem extends only to a particular point—say, to Manhattan Avenue but not one yard beyond.

In Morningside Park (which abuts Manhattan Avenue), Harlem residents mix with Upper West Side residents and Columbia University students. Such intermediary or liminal spaces abound in cities. Their existence makes it difficult to establish a strict border between two or more parts of the city. It is notoriously difficult to specify, for example, just where city neighborhoods begin or end...

In short, the edges of places are more like boundaries than borders. They share with boundaries an inherent openness and vagueness of spatial extent. These two qualities are present here in such elementary phenomena as being able to walk back and forth between different places in a city with comparative freedom—with many opportunities for entry and exit: from South Harlem I can approach Columbia University by any number of streets ranging from 110<sup>th</sup> Street to 120<sup>th</sup> Street and across the multiple walkways of Morningside Park.

It is as if places... provide many point of access, some newly evolving, some of more ancient vintage—in direct contrast with sites, whose very definition and existence depends on the maintenance of tightly contained and rigid limits that resist change. Such limits resemble borders much more than boundaries.

Despite its fuzzy fringes, which facilitate close links to a larger constructed or natural environment, a place is always a whole of some sort, at some scale; it is equivalent to *this* part of the world, *this* neighborhood, *this* street scene, *this* hotel lobby.

It may not have a proper name or toponym, but is still an integral, intuited *something*: a place is never sheer vapor or mere myth; it is not nothing, nor does it come from nothing. The fact that it comes always with edges means that it cannot be entirely nebulous: even fuzzy edges give a certain definition and shape to a place.

Indeed, its very identity as a place comes in significant measure from its being distinctively edged. Its edges are not just where a place fades out or ends. Prominent as the ending of a place may be, especially when marked as such, a place's edges also convey the basic character of the place itself, its physiognomy as well as its ingression into a larger encompassing world. Such edges are not merely the exoskeleton of that place but are also an integral part of its very being, essential to its being the place it is (p. 76, pp. 77–78, p. 79).

# Seeing and Understanding Holistically

## Goethean Science and the Wholeness of Nature—Part II

Henri Bortoft

*Bortoft (1938–2012) was a philosopher, physicist, and science educator who wrote Taking Appearance Seriously (2012) and the influential Wholeness of Nature (1996). This essay was originally the second and third parts of a paper for the conference, “Goethean Science in Holistic Perspective: Scientific, Ethical, and Educational Implications,” held at Columbia University’s Teacher College, New York City, May 20–22, 1999. The first part of this paper was published in the summer/fall 2018 issue of EAP; additional parts will be included in future EAPs. Note that, in the original written version of his talk, Bortoft does not provide complete references. Here, we have added citations as available, but some works remain unreferenced. The editor thanks Stephen Wood for assistance in locating references. The essay is published with the permission of Jacqueline Bortoft. © 2019 Jacqueline Bortoft.*

As I explained in Part I of this essay, I am interested in Goethe’s work as it contributes to a science of wholeness. In locating Goethe’s contribution to this effort, I begin by considering his work in the context of the historical development of modern science—a task that Goethe himself found of considerable interest.

In spite of our shifting understanding of the nature of science, the “myth” of empiricism continues today to dominate science education and popular understanding. This perspective assumes that scientific knowledge is based directly on the experience of the senses. Empirical observations and experiments are the grounds upon which scientific knowledge is built. In this view, modern science began when human beings “came to their senses” and no longer relied on religious or philosophical speculation.

The history of science, however, does not support this view. In fact, when we look at the major scientific developments from Copernicus to Newton, we find that what actually unfolded was the opposite: people “took leave of their senses” *in favor of the mathematical*. From the beginning, modern science elevated the mathematical above all other aspects of nature. Renaissance scientists like Galileo contended that the experience of the senses was an illusion and that reality was to be discovered accurately only by going behind experiential appearances to discover mathematical relationships, ratios, and harmonies not visible to the senses directly.

But why should the mathematical be elevated above all other factors with the consequent demotion to secondary status of all

non-mathematical aspects of a phenomenon? There was nothing like this demotion in medieval science, where mathematical certainty had its place but was not given the privileged status of *the way to truth*. Furthermore, there was no objective basis for this demotion in that no one suddenly “discovered” that reality is only mathematical.

In fact, this emphasis on the mathematical had no “scientific” basis. It was not discovered by science but *incorporated into science*. Grounded in the cultural-historical ethos of the time, this mathematical emphasis points to a free-standing decision to do science in this way. “Free-standing” is the crux here, since there is nothing inherent in nature that requires consideration only in terms of its mathematical aspects. There is no *intrinsic* scientific basis for this mathematical choice. Rather, this choice works as a *precept*: this is how science will be done and specifies what counts as “scientific.” The result is a new organizing idea that transforms science itself.

### The historicity of science

The rejection of the senses and the affirmation of mathematics as the source of truth arose from the way in which Platonic philosophy was interpreted in the Renaissance (together with the role of the Sun as representative of God in the visible world and therefore the center of that world).

This shift in understanding relates to what historians of science now refer to as the intrinsic historicity of science: that cultural-historical context enters into the very form that scientific knowledge takes. This recognition of an intrinsic historical di-

mension means that science is not, as is often assumed, a self-founding and self-generating activity with absolute foundations. Nor does this contextual recognition mean that scientific knowledge is somehow arbitrary or relative in a subjective sense. What it does mean is that nature is portrayed in its mathematical aspect because that aspect is an integral part of what nature is. But this way of understanding does not preclude that there are other ways in which nature can manifest and thus be.

Once, however, scientists embark on a research program emphasizing mathematical knowledge, the possibility of understanding nature in other ways is mostly set aside. At least at first, there was no suggestion that sensory qualities were not real aspects of the world, even if they were not considered to be as fundamental as nature’s mathematical dimension.

Over time, however, sensory qualities were denied any “objective” reality in themselves and, instead, were taken to be entirely subjective. Galileo seems to have first introduced this ontological bifurcation into physics, and this point of view was subsequently adopted by others, most notably Descartes. The result was that anything in nature not mathematical (i.e., identifiable via quantity) was assumed to be “subjective” and thereby excluded. The eventual result was the impoverishment of nature [1].

### Incorporating secondary qualities

Goethe recognized that this elevation of the mathematical above other qualities of nature was unwarranted in that the emphasis had no *intrinsic* validity. He did not seek to devalue the mathematical approach

but to restore the distinction between the sciences and mathematics in situations where this distinction had become confused, thus distorting a fuller understanding of nature [2].

His major aim was to renew the significance of the so-called “secondary” qualities of the natural world. In his light studies, for example, he took color as a phenomenon in its own right and, by giving attention to the *phenomenality* of color, he sought to discover the laws of color phenomenologically. He hoped to locate the necessary connections that constitute the “inner logic” of the qualities of color (such “laws” being the equivalent in a phenomenological science of the quality of color to the mathematical laws in the quantitative science of light).

The irony is that, in returning *directly* to the phenomenon via firsthand, sensuous experience, Goethe was doing what many people assume science does anyway but which in fact is not done in its mathematical version.

### A dynamic way of seeing

Goethe’s method for a science of color can be specified in one word: *attention*. He *gives attention* to the phenomenon in question and thereby strives to guard against the introduction of any theoretical factors outside the phenomenon. Such external factors could only have the effect of obscuring the necessary connections within the phenomenon itself and substituting for the perception of necessity in the phenomenon what is no more than an external explanation—“external,” that is, as compared to the intrinsic nature of the phenomenon itself [3].

Goethe directed attention to the phenomenon in two stages. First, he attempted an *active seeing*, a way of encountering the phenomenon considerably different from a taken-for-granted registering of sense impressions. In active seeing, one works to reverse the direction of seeing so as to go from the observer into the observed (rather than from the observed to the observer, which is the habitual way in which one looks and sees).

This effort of active seeing is followed by what Goethe called *exact sensorial imagination*, in which one attempts, without looking, to re-envision the original encounter. The effort is an imaginative but accurate consciousness of the phenomenon

[4]. Unlike any fanciful imagination that embroiders the phenomenon and envisions it as something more or less than it is, the aim of exact sensorial imagination is to be as true as possible to the perceived phenomenon. But this is not a static activity as if the aim were just to achieve an “inner” picturing of the phenomenon. Because we attempt to make the imaginative seeing happen in a way that we do not need to do with “outer” perception, there begins to be movement and flexibility in our inner picturing.

It is by this means that consciousness shifts, and one becomes a participant in the coming-into-being of the phenomenon rather than an onlooker observing a finished product. This shift of consciousness—from static observations to unfolding process—is the key to Goethe’s dynamic way of seeing. It is this different way of encountering nature that is Goethe’s most valuable potential contribution for deepening our understanding today [5].

### Goethe’s prism experiments

We can get some idea of Goethe’s method by considering the experience of looking through a prism at a white rectangle with a black background. One sees colors at the rectangle’s horizontal edges: red, orange, yellow at one edge; violet and light blue at the other.

When we begin looking, we tend to focus on distinguishing colors. We give attention to the quality of each color and then try to do for ourselves, via exact sensorial imagination, what nature provides via direct experience. We visualize the colors at each edge, seeing them together in the order in which they appear. By making ourselves reproduce the phenomenon we have seen in our mind’s eye imaginatively, we become aware of an aspect of the colors subtler than their separation into “red,” “orange,” “yellow,” and so forth.

One comes to realize that the colors are not just juxtaposed externally but *belong* together. There is a “belongingness” among the colors at the two edges not visible in sense experience alone. One can express this quality by calling it “unity without unification” (though perhaps “wholeness” is preferable to “unity” here).

One can recognize this “belongingness” in Heidegger’s distinction between “*belonging together*” and “*belonging to-*

*gether*.” In the former, the “belonging” determines the “together,” whereas in the latter the “together” determines the “belonging.” In the latter case, we may “together” things that don’t “belong” or simply miss the way in which things *already* “belong” independently of any attempt on our part to “together” them [6].

In workshops, it happens quite often that one or two participants spontaneously experience a “movement” in the colors at the edges. For example, one participant might say that “the colors seem to grow out of one another,” or someone else suggests that “the boundaries of the colors have dissolved, and I feel like I’m ‘swimming’ from one color into another.”

Goethe himself commented that no color can be considered as stationary [7]. For participants not coming to this shifting pattern directly, one can provide a “guided” visualization from white to pale yellow, orange, red, and black, and then the reverse. Practicing this shifting pattern of visualizing helps to facilitate a flexibility of seeing [8].

Working with exact sensorial imagination in this dynamic way has the effect of strengthening the initially weak sense of the colors *belonging* together. One result is that we begin to experience a quality of necessity in the colors. Instead of red, orange, and yellow experienced as merely contingent—as if the order of these colors were just accidental—we *experience* the order in the qualities as *necessary*.

One way to become more aware of this non-contingent *belonging* is to visualize an incorrect color sequence—e.g., red, blue, yellow. Most participants recognize that this arrangement simply does not fit: “The blue popped out when I tried to make it go between red and yellow. And the blue makes a separation between the red and yellow. They no longer seem together” [9]. It is crucial to our understanding of Goethe’s way of science that we can come to have the experience of *necessity* of the phenomenon itself. We are familiar with this requirement in mathematics, to which it is usually supposed that the intuition of necessity is restricted.

It is here that Goethe’s way of science becomes phenomenological instead of being either phenomenal-empirical or hypothetical-speculative. In both the latter situations, one goes outside the phenomenon to introduce elements of another kind from

outside the domain of color qualities themselves—e.g., wavelengths and their instrumental measurement.

In rephrasing the phenomenon in these ways, there is no longer any necessity within the phenomenon. It has been converted into something other than itself. When we see the necessity, then it is part of understanding the phenomenon that there is no need to look beyond it for anything further. This point is very difficult to explain to anyone who has not yet had the experience of necessity [10].

A corollary is that, when we have not reached the experience of necessity, then we feel impelled to search for some explanation external to the phenomenon. One recognizes this importance of necessity in Goethe's often-quoted remarks:

- *Let the facts themselves speak for their theory.*
- *Don't look for anything behind the phenomena; they are themselves the theory.*
- *The greatest achievement would be to understand that everything factual is already its own theory [11].*

## The Urphänomen

There is an awkward point in workshops on Goethe's approach to color in which participants must make a transition from the experiential investigation to what Goethe called the *Urphänomen*—the primal or archetypal phenomenon of color. Goethe does not mention this transition in "Contributions to Optics" (1792), in which he limits himself to an investigation of the formation of colors at different boundaries when seen through the prism [12].

The "awkward point" is that the introduction of the primal phenomenon seems like a discontinuity—a sudden jump in seeing. For sure, the workshop leader can smooth this transition over as a conjuror does when he comes to a "gap" in his performance that he covers in a way that spectators don't notice. But the fact remains that Goethe does not describe how he came to his claim regarding the *Urphänomen* that "One instance is worth a thousand, bearing all within itself"—a claim that, in relation to color, he found in the shifting colors of the sun and sky [13].

Goethe speaks of this jump from lived experiences of color to the broader *Ur-*

*phänomen* as an *aperçu*—a sudden moment of insight and understanding. But this explanation does not tell us *how* Goethe came to relate these particular facts—i.e., the changing colors of the sun and sky—to the original prism experiments [14].

This recognition that there must be an "instance worth a thousand, bearing all within itself," indicates that Goethe's way of proceeding is phenomenological rather than empirical. An empirical procedure would collect many different instances of a phenomenon and compare them to find something they had in common. The presence of this commonality would then be taken to be essential for the occurrence of the phenomenon. An empirical approach involves *induction*—i.e., generalization arising from many cases.

In a phenomenological approach, in contrast, only one instance is needed to see what is essential. The difference is that, phenomenologically, we see the necessary principle in the facts. We do not infer, deduce, or construct this principle but *see it directly*. This is not to say that such seeing always happens clearly at once. Rather, the recognition will more likely be achieved only with difficulty because, in many instances, there will be contingent and accidental factors that obscure what is necessary and essential.

What is needed is an instance in which these "asides" are reduced to such a degree that what is necessary and essential—i.e., the pure phenomenon—shines forth in seeing. This is the phenomenological grounding for the "One instance worth a thousand, bearing all within itself."

## Universal and particular together

What we realize in Goethe's phrasing here is the emphasis on the universal in the particular. We don't see the particular as just an instance of the universal in the way that a particular triangle is an instance of the universal "triangle." Rather, we see the universal in the particular so that, instead of being *merely* an instance of the universal, the particular becomes a "window" through which we *see* the universal. Or we might say that the particular is a "mirror" in which the universal *appears*.

This seeing is twofold—i.e., simultaneously universal and particular. Crucially, however, *there is no separation*. The universal is twofold but non-dual; it is not "behind" the particular and separate from it.

The philosopher Ernst Cassirer emphasized that, for Goethe, "the particular and the universal are not only intimately connected but... they interpenetrate one another." Goethe said that "The universal and the particular coincide: the particular is the universal itself appearing under different conditions." The mode of consciousness that sees the universal in the particular is "inside out" to that which sees the particular as merely an instance of the universal.

In relation to Goethe's color studies, one realizes that, via the varying colors of sun and sky, we see how colors arise from light and dark alone—the darker colors arising from light overcoming darkness; the lighter colors, from darkness overcoming light. The qualities of the different colors become intelligible in themselves.

In addition, the order of the colors becomes intelligible, and the quality of necessity is now grounded in the coming into being of the phenomenon itself—as also does the experience of the *belonging* together of the colors, particularly the two different edge-color phenomena, which are now seen to *belong* together as a dynamic polarity.

Where with the senses we see separateness, we can simultaneously see wholeness—as we now see the wholeness of the *yellow* sun and the *blue* sky, which are otherwise just juxtaposed facts. Where before there was only contingency, there is now necessity grounded in the coming into being of the phenomenon.

This dynamic relationship is seen especially when the "poles" of the two color edges are brought together and green appears [15]. Now for the first time we have the colors that Newton described as the "spectrum of light" and that he took as the *beginning* of his investigation. But now, instead of being just a contingent arrangement of colors, this spectrum is a necessary whole and intelligible as such. Each color is intelligible in itself and hence in relation to the others, in terms of its coming into being.

Newton wrote about the *origin* of the colors seen with the prism, but the so-called "spectrum of light" that he took as his starting point is a secondarily derived phenomenon instead of the simple phenomenon he took it to be. He began with what is in fact already a "finished product" that he then tried to explain by projecting the colors back into light, imagining them

already there but not visible until separated by the action of the prism. Newton's claim was that the prism simply brings out what is already there [16].

Newton's understanding here reminds one of the person who, in Rumi's saying, tries to "reach the milk by way of the cheese." What Newton claims about the origin of color is like saying that cheese comes from milk because it is in the milk already. He no more describes the *origin* of color than this saying describes the origin of cheese.

Goethe, on the other hand, *does describe* the origin of color. He shows how the colors are "excited" in the light when conditions are right. When conditions cease, the colors cease. Instead of starting with a phenomenon that is a "finished product"—the so-called spectrum of colors—he follows through the coming into being of this phenomenon. In doing so, he *consciously participates* in the phenomenon instead of remaining an independent onlooker.

## Different movements of thinking

In making this transition from the phenomenon in its finished state to its coming into being, Goethe ends up where we usually begin. What he does, in effect, is to go back "upstream" and "flow down" again to finish where the standard Newtonian explanation begins, a direction of understanding that simply flows further "downstream" while giving the illusion that it is returning to the source by back-projecting the finished product into the origin.

There are two quite different movements of thinking here. If we cannot transform from the product into the producing, then our efforts at explanation can only take us further away from what we imagine they take us toward. The result is Goethe's dynamic mode of consciousness: to follow the coming into being of the phenomenon instead of beginning with the phenomenon in its finished state. This different way of seeing and thinking may be his most important contribution to our understanding today.

## Notes

1. There are no grounds for this way of understanding nature other than the elevation of the mathematical, for which, in turn, there are no grounds other than cultural-historical context. This situation did not stop thinkers from trying to offer foundations, but the key point is that there is no *intrinsic* scientific foundation. Descartes made the most notable effort to provide this

foundation by arguing that the new science of mathematical physics was grounded both ontologically and methodologically in God. For further discussion, see Bortoft 1996, chaps. 1–3.

2. Note the two following passages from Goethe:

*An important task: to banish mathematical-philosophical theories from those areas of physical science where they impede rather than advance knowledge, those areas where a one-sided development in modern scientific education has made such perverse use of them.*

*I can receive mathematics as the most sublime and useful science, so long as they are applied in their proper place; but I cannot commend the misuse of them in matters which do not belong to their sphere, and in which, noble science as they are, they seem to be mere nonsense. As if, forsooth! Things only exist when they can be mathematically demonstrated. It would be foolish for a man not to believe his mistress' love because she could not prove it to him mathematically. She can mathematically prove her dowry, but not her love!*

3. For a discussion of how this approach differed from Newton's work on light and color, see Bortoft 1996, pp. 205–07; pp. 223–26. Also see Bortoft 1971, 1982, 1985, 1986, 2012, 2013.

4. Exact sensorial imagination is often misleadingly described as producing a mental image *in* consciousness, whereas phenomenologically it is not a content of consciousness but a mode of consciousness and a special kind of intentionality.

5. Hjalmar Hegge (1987) identified the practice of exact sensorial imagination as the means by which necessary connections can be seen within the domain of qualities. Mastering Goethe's method of seeing and understanding amounts to a way of developing the mode of consciousness needed for Goethe's way of science. In other words, the activity of Goethean science is an educational activity. It is the education of a mode of consciousness.

6. For a thorough explication of "belonging together" versus "belonging together," see Bortoft, 1996, pp. 3–26; 290–320.

7. See *Theory of Colours*, ¶ 772 (Goethe 1970).

8. Older workshop participants sometimes have more difficulty with exact sensorial imagination, perhaps because the capacity atrophies through lack of use. But it can be restored given time.

9. Biologist Brian Goodwin first suggested this effort to visualize a wrong color sequence.

10. The awkwardness is that we usually don't recognize that we *were* experiencing the order as contingent and accidental until *after* we have begun to experience the quality of necessity—a situation that makes describing this difference difficult.

11. One thinks of related comments by Wittgenstein: "A phenomenon isn't a symptom of something else. It is the reality" (Wittgenstein 1953, section 126). Or "Since everything lies open to view, there is nothing to explain" (Wittgenstein 1964, p. 283). Bortoft discusses Wittgenstein's relation to Goethe in part I of this essay; see *EAP*, fall/winter 2018—Ed.

12. Goethe understood the *Urphänomen* of color to be the tension between light and darkness—what he described poetically as "colors as the deeds and sufferings of light." Lightness overcome by darkness leads to the lighter colors of yellow, orange, and red, while darkness overcome by lightness leads to the darker colors of blue and indigo. Goethe argued that,

in nature, the *Urphänomen* could be seen in the sun's shifting color—from yellow at midday to orange and red while setting; or in mountain ridges receding in the distance, with nearer ridges indigo and farther ridges blue. Goethe understood the blue of the sky as the lightness of the atmosphere in front of the darkness of outer space.

13. See note 12.

14. My guess is he found the idea of the *Urphänomen* in a book. This determination is not unusual—Copernicus, for example, explained that he found the idea for the heliocentric universe in ancient books. In this sense, it is not what one finds but what he or she does with it that counts. We know that Goethe researched thoroughly the history of color, and he may well have found his "One instance worth a thousand, bearing all within itself" in the writings of the Renaissance painters—Leonardo da Vinci perhaps? If this is true, it would explain why there seems to be such a "jump" when presenting Goethe's work on color in workshops. Nevertheless, by whatever means Goethe came to it, the recognition that there is a connection between the prismatic colors and the colors of the sun and sky is an insight in itself. For further discussion of the *Urphänomen*, see Bortoft 1996, pp. 231–46.

15. Significantly, when one uses the prism to view a black rectangle on a white background, one sees how the two colored edges move together in reverse order and "blend" to generate a new color—a ruby-magenta, or "peach blossom," that is the complementary color to green. One can now form a circle that marks Goethe's color wheel based on complementary colors. The result is a circle that is a dynamic whole in which, as Goethe wrote, "no color can be considered stationary."

16. For a discussion of the ambiguities and hidden influences in Newton's 1672 paper to the Royal Society, see Bortoft 1996, pp. 192–212.

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# Does a Song Lean Forward?

## Experiencing Language as an Immigrant

Jenny Quillien

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“Emigration, forced or chosen, across national frontiers or from village to metropolis, is the quintessential experience of our time.”

—John Berger, *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos*

I write from Amsterdam where, for the time being, I live and work. My condition as a new immigrant has prompted passing strange itches, twitches, aches, and musings on the nature of language. Committing wandering thoughts to paper seems one way to comb them out. Sharing can’t hurt.

I’m here by choice and, like many, relish the novelty of place as it awakens groggy nerve endings, unfamiliar smells, colors, tastes, and sounds constituting a cup of phenomenological espresso. Awarenesses of new surrounds, mine at least, seem to surface onion-esquely. Some layers peel off thin and fast, others thick and slow, some opaquely conceal following layers, others shimmer permeable and translucent, but they come in succession.

A first hard slap on the ears. Multiple tongues both recognizable and not make me giddy. Opportunities to retrieve from the dusty attics of my own mind unused skills in French and German add to the buzz. I had been speaking nothing but American English for a dozen years. There’s nothing wrong with American English, but all day, every day? Isn’t that a bit like leek soup for every single meal?

Quick on the heels of initial euphoria comes the hilarity of screwing up. I’ve never really minded making a fool of myself. I need face cream. I enter a drug store. Locate the cosmetics counter. See a poster of young beauty with glowing skin. Below the poster, little white tubes, pink caps, and labels I can’t read. Face cream. Right?

Can’t get that wrong, right? Well, try a few days with deodorant paste on your mug. All puckered up. Never mind. At least there was no sweat on this brow.

More slowly, using my linguistic body as a temperature gauge, I encounter embedded layers of lingering war memories. The past breathes. Amsterdam faces and embraces the sea but turns its back coldly on the hinterland. Should you, in a make-a-fool-of-yourself-moment, blurt out *Vielen Dank* instead of *Danke well* or *bezahlen* rather than *betalen*, you will stand corrected immediately. These easy-going burghers will forgive most every clumsiness, but they don’t like that one.

Actually, the Dutch are more than just forgiving of mistakes. As a small, practical nation, they don’t really expect their foreigners to learn Nederlands at all. In this hub of transaction and transport, what prevails as lingua franca is Amsterdamer English. Easily rather crude, Amsterdamer English has few rules. Swear words and references to human anatomy, including yours, your mother’s, sister’s, or aunt’s, are accepted currency but, for reason not yet clear to me, it is very bad form to say *God damn*. Street vocabulary runs rather adolescent—*Wow. Cool*. Idiomatic expressions are banned, and should you unthinkingly confound a conversation by saying something like *So we’re in like Flynn*, you will be told not to do that sort of thing. Speech is KISS: Keep It Simple, Stupid.

I ran across a short article in the *DutchNews.nl* of June 3, 2018, by Alison Edwards, an Australian-born resident, who completed a 2014 thesis at the University of Leiden with the title, *English in the Netherlands: Functions, Forms, and Attitudes*. Edwards found a few distinctive

grammatical characteristics of Amsterdamer English. Idiosyncrasies include front-loaded sentences (*Especially for our external clients, this could be an interesting offer*); redundant prepositions (*to discuss about*); and the use of adjectives instead of adverbs (*The aim is to organize the services as efficient as possible*). Edwards notes that native speakers cause confusion in international English-speaking environments. For example, she observes that in the European parliament, where simple, imperfect language is the default, the complex, idiomatic English of the native speaker leads to breakdowns. Once the native speaker has left the room, business runs more smoothly.

This lingua franca is remarkably efficient. It will get you where you need to go, from point A to point B, by skimming, by skirting depth, avoiding multiple meanings, ambiguities, and humor: a sort of Hovercraft English, a transportation vehicle that never quite touches ground or water. It is impoverishment that makes it effective. Impoverishment enables speakers to conduct quick, dirty, limited translation searches inside their heads, spit words out, and get on with the day, more or less. And for many situations, simple transactions and daily goings-on, why not?

But is this always a good idea? For example, the Dutch university system, hit hard with a budgetary crunch, chose the solution of opening wide its doors to paying international students and changed the classroom language from Dutch to English. Edwards claims that, in her interviewing of these international students, she learnt that their choice of Holland was not just due to the affordable price of schooling here. They chose it also because the English here is easier. Perhaps

the classes are a bit like those special BBC news broadcasts using limited vocabulary and grammar for listeners who are just learning English.

But at what point does English Lite compromise the complexity of the material taught? I understand faculty publishing in English to get a wider readership, but abandoning the national language at the university level? Wouldn't that be a step toward putting the Dutch language on a downward spiral, a slow retreat to the realms of kitchen and playground where only the simpler proficiencies are required?

**M**y day-to-day life is mostly conducted in the lingua franca so my language diet became a steady regimen of bare bones rather than a steady leek soup. In a vague, aching sort of way, I became hungry. Hunger prompts food search. I'm on the lookout for native speakers and for movies. With two friends, one Dutch, one Turkish, I watched *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, a story of hillbillies, violence, "take the law into your own hands," and lunatic cop. Post-film, over a glass of wine, my friends asked, *Is America really like that?* I didn't really care about that sort of question. When, in the film, one cop reprimands another with, *No, no. You've got it wrong. We don't torture niggers. We torture colored people*, what I heard was language, comforting language, however outrageous the content. There are many Englishes. I had just had 90 minutes with one of my Englishes: at last, a decent bowl of potage.

Little feasts with native speakers sometimes come my way. One evening I sat with an American book club organizer who has been living here for years. The conversation was rich and required no effort. I became aware of my physical reactions. I had exhaled profoundly. My breathing had slowed down. I had leaned back. The meat on my bones had sunk heavily a couple of inches into my metallic bistro chair. I was actually perched on a rather stern cafe stool but, subjectively, it felt like the best padded armchair to come my way in weeks.

After buzz, comedy, history, hunger, and food hunt came a thick layer of fatigue, sheer headache exhaustion at the end of each day—from the demands of decoding heavily accented speech. My new workplace operates in Amsterdamer English, but all co-workers come to that common

denominator from somewhere else. To each his pronunciation, from each to listen.

Are my co-workers also in a state of chronic fatigue? It is patently obvious that they abandon Amsterdamer English whenever possible. From my desk, I hear duets in Urdu or Dutch that are started and then dropped as soon as lingua franca becomes necessary. But are the speakers needing a break from the fatigue of listening, or needing greater nuance and precision, or seeking relaxation and the sensation of "the meat on their bones sinking a couple of inches into their chairs?" I don't know.

**A**t this point in my contemplations, the Book Fairy waved her wand. I actually believe in a compassionate Book Fairy who will place in our paws exactly what we need, when we need it, to bring our own inarticulate musings a step toward clarity.

In this specific case, the Book Fairy was lurking around the ABC, a book store in the heart of old Amsterdam, frequently used as a meeting point as it sits at the juncture of multiple tram lines and offers an out-of-the-rain place to browse while waiting. A small, slim, shiny book literally jumped from the shelf: *Confabulations* by John Berger. I thought I had already devoured every line Berger ever wrote but here was another, Berger's latest and last, published about a year before his death at age 91. The topic was not art, Berger's traditional focus, but language.

Berger isn't concerned with accents, brogues, and twangs. He is, however, mightily concerned with shades of meaning. Decent translations, Berger argues, are not binary, from language X to language Y. The process is triangular. One must stay with the initial utterance until it seeps down deeply into a pre-verbal core to what lays beneath and, with patience, one must let that utterance soften, diffuse, and only then invite that "non-verbal something" to find new form in the second host language.

This process makes its own demands and does not abide short cuts, time deadlines, or Google translate. And, make no mistake, says Berger, language is feminine. The expression "mother tongue" is not for naught. It doesn't matter how testosterone-laden the content or delivery. The creature of language itself is feminine and its center a phonetic uterus. In prose, and all the more

so in poetry, the sounds come from deep within that uterus.

*Il pleure dans mon coeur, comme il pleut sur la ville* (Paul Verlaine).

*Wie Wasser von Klippe zu Klippe geworfen* (Friedrich Hölderlin).

*Twas brillig, and the slithy toves did gypre and gimble in the wabe* (Lewis Carroll).

*Ter viel ne keer een bladjen op het water* (Guido Gezelle).

Do the sounds—as pure sounds—have cultural significance? One Dutchman commented on his appreciation of the harsh guttural sounds of Nederlands:

*The sounds are who we are: direct and aggressive. We get annoyed with our Belgian neighbors and all their pussy-footing around. Why can't they just say what they think?*

Does language affect who we are? Another Dutchman, bilingual thanks to a few childhood years spent in Michigan, volunteered:

*When I speak American, I'm another person.*

*Hmm? think I. Am I another person when I speak French?* The answer is quite possibly yes.

When I asked him to clarify, the Dutchman mundanely remarks: *Well, if I'm speaking American, it's usually because I'm with Americans.*

*Hmm? think I. So it's not the language per se but the Zelig effect?*

One of Woody Allen's commercially unsuccessful, but arguably more interesting movies, *Zelig*, revolves around the neurotic protagonist suffering from a lack of self and seeking the comfort of identity by morphing into a member of whatever crowd he happens to be with—for example, sprouting beard and payot in the company of Hassidim.

Are we all a bit *Zelig*? Does *Zelig* bring us back to ousted linguist B. L. Whorf, who argued that language influences thought? Now banned from proper academic circles, today's worst hoax for unsuspecting undergraduates in cultural anthropology is to give them Whorfian material on Eskimo words for snow and Hopi lack of past tense.



I confess to lingering sympathies with demoted Benjamin Lee. When we learn a new domain, be it snowboarding or wine, we learn its vocabulary and through the lexicon we sharpen our perceptions. For example, we must cultivate our awareness to recognize when a red wine corresponds to the descriptors “tannic,” “muscular,” or “velvety.” And perhaps language does influence thought.

When I learnt that the Hebrew word *mitzvah* meant both joy and duty—two words I wouldn’t normally put together—I had to stop and stretch my mind. *Bar mitzvah*. Ah, I see, becoming a man is *both* the joy *and* the duty of the boy. Yes, I get it. Or the French word *farouche* translated in English as (1) wild; (2) shy; (3) fierce; (4) socially inept; (5) resistant; (6) untamed; and (7) flees when approached.

Indeed, *farouche* means the bundle of all those translations and, now, it’s also the name chosen by French fashion house Nina Ricci for a new perfume. The thought *farouche* is completely unthinkable without the word; learning the vocabulary, however, certainly helps. But, to get back to *Zelig*, I would contend that French (to take a language I know) calls forth its own attitude, aesthetic, and sensibilities. Speaking French requires me to become French. It’s far subtler than, say, the maneuvering between the formal *vous* and the familiar *tu* forms. French requires a different attentiveness and positioning of self in the social world.

For me, there is another private proof of how language influences memory and thought. I know (can’t prove but know) if I read an English author in English or a French author in French, I will recall those works only in the original language. If I must translate, I struggle with equivalences and must follow Berger’s triangular “let-it-sit-and-soften” method. If, however, I read a translation of, say, *War and Peace* (since I can’t read Russian), I don’t remember if the translation was English or French, won’t care which language is used to discuss Tolstoy and his work, and my recall lacks hooks, depth, color, and incisiveness. It smacks of Hoovercraft transportation.

**W**hat can we say of the Dutch language itself? I don’t know yet. That’s an onion layer still to come. I’ve got a running argument with a colleague:

My stance: *I’m here, therefore, I learn Dutch. Simple as that.*

His stance: *Bah, a waste of time to learn Dutch. A peasant patois. They don’t even have a literature.*

A Dutch friend concurs with my colleague: *We don’t nurture our own language. We are a nation of engineers and traders and visual artists but not writers. We just borrow language, mostly from the British.*

And borrow they do. So, it’s not just that the Dutch are excellent at teaching foreign languages in their schools; it’s not just that they take the small-nation practical path of adapting to the world language of English; it’s that they undermine their own tongue through heavy infiltration and, for the most part, they don’t care. Dutch seems to be nothing but a local sauce linking English nouns and expressions. For example, earlier this morning I’m in a waiting room and pick up a woman’s magazine and an old newspaper, just idly leafing through the headlines.

From the newspaper *Metro*, April 11, 2018: page 1. *Bye Bye Facebook. Dit is het begin van aftakeling* [the beginning of the decline] *social media*.

From the woman’s magazine *JAN*, August 2017: page 49. *Wanneer ontdekte je de liefde?* [When did you discover love?] *Love is a battlefield.*

And turning back a page I find this whopper: *Ik zag in Lev geen* [I saw in Lev no] *husband material. Hij was een* [he was a] *boyfriend. Dat is dus* [That is] *how fucked up you get als je le veel* [when you too much] *“Sex and the City” hebt gekeken* [have seen].

These are not informal email exchanges but formal publications, newspapers and magazines, so I wonder if Dutch will even survive. In spoken Dutch, it is much the same. When sitting in on Dutch meetings, held in Dutch, for Dutch attendees, the experience will be something like hearing *bleep bleep bleep* double bind *bleep bleep bleep bleep* stress *bleep bleep* deadline *bleep bleep* self-fulfilling prophesy *bleep*.

**D**oes it matter? Somehow, yes, I think it does. Up until this immigrant experience in The Netherlands, I had never paid much attention to the *Académie Française* (created in 1635

by Richelieu to curate the French language). The *Académie* decides on official spellings and hounds the population into saying ‘*fin de semaine*’ and not ‘*le weekend*.’ The *Académie* promotes French literature and bestows prestige upon authors. Maybe the *Académie* has a point. To survive and prosper, a language needs protocols, grammar, cultivation, recognition, and promotion of that language’s literature.

Consider the case of poor Algeria, which is almost a-lingual. Algerian is an unwritten dialect of Arabic. Classical Arabic is written but not spoken, and most of the TV programs for the larger Maghreb region are produced by Egypt in the Egyptian dialect. French instruction went by the wayside with winning the war for independence, and English is pop culture and movies.

I remember giving a few guest lectures at the University of Algiers. As class begins, the instructor must indicate whether the course will be in Algerian, French, or English. This is no cause for celebration. This is no indication that students and faculty are competently trilingual. In fact, few individuals can speak anything well. Certainly not well enough for university work. And it doesn’t really matter which of the three is announced as the language of choice; once in the room, everyone mucks about clumsily in all three trying to get the course content across. Not good.

Still, I abide by my stance to learn Dutch. Integration means you learn the language. As an immigrant, the new language, in whatever shape it is in, will speak volumes of the new land to me. To my point, I just learned that, in Dutch, the word for *guilt* and the word for *in debt* are the same. Tells us something about cultural values in a nation of commerce, doesn’t it?

**W**hat do I miss from my “Old Country” of New Mexico? I knew I would miss the abstract aloofness of the improbable New Mexican landscape—the mesas, old volcanoes, red rock canyons, the saturated, intense blue canopy, the autumn smell of roasted green chilies. I knew I would miss that. I didn’t know how much I would miss the songs.

In Santa Fe, Taos, and up and down the Rio Grande watershed, there remains a homegrown culture of song, not those annoying soggy-saccharine-cornball-commercial-phoney-nasal-imitation-country &

western-cry-in-your-beer ditties that swamp the radio waves. Real songs. Songs coming out of the land, its people, their trials and tribulations, and their self-mockery.

I miss local songwriters like Don Richman and Joe West, sons of these mountains who grew up with high desert dust between their toes. To be able to feel, as they do, the surrounding vibes of legend, poverty, struggle, values, and then gather those vibes and pack them into a song—that's a tour de force.

*'07 brought grasshoppers, the next year  
there was drought  
The wheat barely replaced the seed, steers  
were all shipped out  
And it was plain to see without more food  
the winter would prevail  
So B.F. and his Remington, went to hunt  
the Hermit trail  
—Ballad of B.F. Vance, Don Richmond*

It's through the absence of song in my current immigrant life that I've come to appreciate how much song-as-language can ground us. A song compresses language, puts poetry put to music. A good song can, in the Heideggerian sense, "gather" a place. By that I mean it can pull together, intertwine, condense, zip a universe into some tight little transportable packet. At the moment when the song is played, that packet comes unzipped and all those ingredients come spilling back out. Magic.

*I got an old guitar  
It won't ever stay in tune  
I like the way it sounds  
In a dark and empty room*

*Stuff that works, stuff that holds up  
The kind of stuff you don't hang on the  
wall  
Stuff that's real, stuff you feel  
The kind of stuff you reach for when you  
fall  
—Stuff That Works, Guy Clark*

The people of the Rio Grande dance to these songs. I miss this dancing in a strange sort of way. When living there, I had long sensed something significant but had never articulated it. It wasn't that we were out getting healthy exercise instead of being couch potatoes sucking on the glass tit of TV. But what exactly was significant?

I suspect the significance is that the local dancers embody their lives. Sounds ridiculous. but with humankind's penchant for denial, self-delusion, role-playing, and costuming, showing up as yourself and dancing yourself isn't necessarily a given. My mind rolls back to dancing scenes and pauses at an image of one of the local dancers, Raya Soleil. Pluck incarnate. Raya told me her birth name once—something dreadful like Gertrude Smingelschnortfeinstuck, so she changed it. Rich in energy and smiles, far less so in funds, Raya raises a handicapped son as a single Mom.

On Saturday nights, she combs her yellow hair, puts on a frilly skirt and cowboy boots, hits the dance floor and dances her head off. She just dances herself silly. She dances her life. And we would all go out and dance with her and we would dance for her and her son, and we would dance for ourselves and for our incomprehensible lives and for the love of all those dancers singled out by the Grim Reaper for early retirement, and each of us would dance for our own El Duende. None of this was discussed, but it was there. And on the shared dance floor was shared intimacy, perhaps not collective triumph, but at least a truce with life—for the duration of a song.

What John Berger could articulate and I could not was the essence of song. A song operates (it's Berger speaking so) *maternally*. In a womanly sort of way, each song goes its own direction but all to and from the same womb. We sing along, hum along, drive along, dance along, so that we can be enclosed by the song. We can be inside the song-as-message.

In turn, the song hunkers down inside the body it possesses, the torso of the singer, the feet of the dancer, the strummed guitar, the mind of the listener. The song's tempo constructs a shelter from linear time—a shelter, says Berger, in which future, present, and past can console, provoke, mock, and inspire. A song speaks of the past, of absence, of remembering and foreseeing, welcomes and farewells, of distance. We sing the song. The song sings us.

*Strumming my pain with his fingers,  
singing my life with his song,  
singing me softly with his song,  
killing me softly with his song.*

—"Killing Me Softly with His Song,"  
famously sung by Roberta Flack

When it is not possessing and filling the present, a song is unfixed in time and place but, even when not being sung and danced, it is a latent assembly point. A potential. A song hopes to reach listening ears in some future somewhere. John Berger proposes that a song leans forward.

And so, in my coming days as a new immigrant, I'll learn Dutch. It's not a melodious tongue. It would be more aesthetically pleasing to learn Italian. But I'm in Amsterdam, not Italy. Dutch is basically low German. In some ways, that makes it easier to learn, but I really have to watch out for the faux pas of using words the invaders used. It's more socially acceptable to be a Yankee. I can find communities of real language to offset the poverty of the lingua franca. That's not hard at all. The fatigue of listening doesn't seem to diminish with practice, but there is always the end-of-day glass of wine.

I'm rather interested in the politics of language. The closest to a governing body for questions of language seems to be a committee that publishes a 'Green Book' on spelling preferences. The Dutch traded their language for money in the universities, but it's feet to the lowland fire in the immigration offices. Turks and Moroccans (and me) must pass a Dutch language exam to get permanent residence rights. Will the *Zelig* effect take hold? Will I feel and be felt to be Dutch as I gain proficiency? I'm thinking, yes, that will be the case.

Perhaps more difficult will be the songs. I have yet to encounter anything on the music scene that seems genuinely Dutch. There's a considerable connoisseur audience for real jazz and a lot of copying of British and American pop music, but I haven't found songs that come from here and speak of here. There are, as yet, no songs-as-message I can crawl inside of.

I went out dancing once. Yuk. Fake Brit band with people wiggling solo on the floor. There was nothing at stake. No El Duende. No dancing of life itself. It seemed pointless. I certainly didn't feel the songs were singing me. But we never can tell. Maybe there is a song out there somewhere with immigrant empathies and it will lean forward and find me.

# Notes on a Phenomenology of Speedskating

## Kinetics, Environment, and Time

David Ferlic

**Ferlic** grew up outside Chicago and lives in Colorado. He is an alumni member of United Skates Speedskating (USS) and of Colorado Gold Speedskating. The photograph below is of the author's "limbering up" for speedskating practice. His posture illustrates the basic speedskating position that accommodates balance, power, and speed. Note the extreme length of the speedskate blades. [davidferlic@comcast.net](mailto:davidferlic@comcast.net). Text © 2019 David Ferlic.

Phenomenology—at least my version of it—has always come easy. I find it clarifying and fun to see the world and everything in it via kinetic, environmental, and temporal dimensions. In this essay, I use these three themes to offer some notes on a phenomenology of speedskating, a sport I have enjoyed since childhood.

There are many types of speedskating, including outdoor and indoor; recreational and competitive; and long-track and short-track. Whatever the mode, all speedskaters use similar (but not always the same) techniques and equipment. Tracks differ as do skating attire and skill levels. Here, I focus mostly on indoor short-track speedskating, since this is the type in which I am most often involved.

Skating arose thousands of years ago when humans attached bones to their feet to propel themselves on the ice.

In the fourteenth century, the Dutch invented wooden skates with iron runners. Today, skate blades are typically made of tempered carbon steel, coated with high quality chrome. Also popular are lightweight aluminum or stainless-steel blades.

Unlike hockey or figure skates, speedskates have narrow blades with less curve and no hollow or valley. These blades can be easily removed and adjusted according to the skater's skill level. Even sharpening speedskate blades is unique: one uses a jig and diamond-sharpening stone. Blade



lengths vary but, in comparison to those of figure-skating and hockey, speedskating blades are considerably longer and sometimes called "sleds."

Phenomenologically, speedskating is intriguing because of its peculiar manner of motion, multiple determinants of performance, skating-rink variety, and the sport's singular combination of grace, sounds, sights, and texture. Let's start out with speedskating kinetics, by which I refer to the sport's motion and energy.

### Speedskating & kinetics

As a mode of human locomotion, speedskating is unique in that the skater achieves forward velocity by sideward push-offs. This manner of movement is different from running, in which the runner propels himself forward by pushing off in the direction opposite the running direction. In contrast, rather than each leg's pushing straight back, skating requires the skater to push off the ice with the edge of the skate blade in a diagonal motion. Explains Franco Normani, host of the website "Real-World Physics Problems":

*If a skater tried to run on an ice surface by trying to push off the ice in a direction parallel to the skate blade, he couldn't do it because there is almost no friction between the ice and the blade. He would just slip and go nowhere.*

The skater must push off the ice with a force that is perpendicular to the edge of the skate blade, which is positioned horizontally (angling outward and forward) on the ice. Most of the skater's movements are performed on these edges. One realizes the truth of the adage that "speedskating is for people who live on the edge."

In competitive speedskating, one usually skates in a counter-clockwise direction. To turn, one executes a kind of sideward, cross-over push-off. Skaters utilize the skates' left-outside and right-inside edge on turns—what are termed "crossovers"—

and then use both skate edges on straightaways, mostly using the blade's flat part.

Drawing on the kinetic power of rhythm, speedskaters swing their arms forward and to the side, in contrast to the forward-and-back arm movements of sprinters. In running, the motion of the arms keeps the athlete's body from twisting on a vertical axis with the result that sprinters always face forward. In contrast, speedskaters' sideways push means that the arm motions must be partially side to side because the arms keep the body from twisting. Sometimes, to rest, skaters put one or both arms behind their back.

Ideally each skating stroke, when the skater is going straight, begins with a weight shift to the outside edge of the skate, a move to the flat bottom, a push out with the inside edge, and then a repetition of this same pattern via the other skate. The movement of arms and legs pushing out and shifting weight can be imaged as a circle and manner of dance. And, as with all dances, there is plenty of room for variation, individuality, speed, and style.

Because speedskater skates are considerably longer than hockey or figure skates, speedskaters must push to the side or they will tumble forward and find themselves impaled. This "pushing" comes naturally as a primitive gesture and as an impulse of self-preservation.

Gravity-wise, skaters get as "low as possible," taking on a squatting position with toes, knees, shoulders, elbows, and nose in a straight line and stomach tucked in. This awkward position takes much practice to perfect. This squatting not only reduces drag caused by air resistance but also allows the skater's legs to push out farther with each stroke, generating more resistance and thus greater momentum.

One experiences the speed and motion as awesome; there is a feeling of wonder—of floating, gliding, and sense of bodily oneness with ice and earth. Every muscle in the skater's body comes into play—toes, feet, ankles, calves, knees, thighs, hips, back, stomach, shoulders, arms, elbows, neck, head, and eyes all take part. The ice is hard and cold. No one wants to fall. The aim is a oneness in balance and movement. Better, easier, and much more exhilarating than walking, running, or driving!

## Speedskating and environment

In turning to environmental aspects of speedskating, we start with ground as ice: hard, frozen water molecules. Speedskating sites include rivers, lakes, canals—practically anywhere that water freezes. Broadly, the harder and colder the ice, the faster you can go (and the more important it is that your skate edges be sharp to cut into the ice to negotiate successful turns).

Next, there are long tracks versus short tracks, the differences of which relate to lengths of racing ovals and distances of races. Long-track racing, if staged on an inside rink rather than on outside venues like rivers or lakes, typically involves two skaters racing against the clock. Long-track skaters often use "hinged" skates that allow the heel to "hinge" up and away from the skate's insole. This flexibility allows the foot a good amount of freedom from the skate proper, and the skater can increase speed.

In contrast, short-track racing involves six or more skaters all racing against each other. Short-track racing requires much more turning and adept use of skate edges. This format regularly produces bodily contact that makes short-track events sometimes seem a "demolition derby." In fact, short-track skaters sometimes wear shirts reading, "You only live once." Typically, short-track skating takes place on rinks shared with hockey- and figure-skaters. The walls of these rinks are lined with dasher boards—heavy pads that cushion skaters who lose control.

Coaches tell skaters that they must increase speed, since the faster that skaters move, the more they are able to lean to produce more centrifugal force around turns, thereby allowing skates to stay in line. In other words, parallel blades generate more resistance and therefore more speed as the skater moves centrifugally against the force. The caveat here is that as skaters go faster, the harder they slam the wall if a skate slips out. For this reason, essential equipment includes helmets, knee pads, neck pads, and no cut suits.

One of the best parts of speedskating is the gratification of having conquered gravitational and centrifugal forces. It is an extraordinary feeling, even more remarkable on a hot summer day as one enters a world

of ice. Also pleasurable is speedskating's solitary quality: meditative, invigorating, restorative, and entirely different from the sing-song, seductive quality that accompanies figure skating or the violent, "hard-rock" ambience associated with hockey.

This is the speedskater's environment: the beauty, coolness, and quiet of ice with skate blades riding on the hard surface and cutting through that surface on turns.

## Speedskating and time

How long does one skate? It depends. Races are usually 500, 1,000, 1,500, or 3,000 meters; and 3,000- or 5,000-meter relays. One's track time depends on how intensely and forcefully he or she contends with ancient, natural forces. Broadly, skaters skate as long as they want to, according to their physical, mental, and spiritual goals. They skate as long and as hard as they desire, depending on what they are training for and the particular type of training for which they aim. Skating is fun, cool, challenging, and great for enhancing muscle strength and balance. Skating clears the mind, body, and soul.

Yes, one gets tired. Muscles and lungs may burn from exertion. There may be pain and discomfort. But speedskating is invigorating. The skater become one with the ice and, if outside, with the beauty of the natural environment in which he or she is immersed.

It is difficult to describe skating's circular motion of time, which may relate to the length of a lap on a skating oval, or the repetitive rhythm of the seasons, or the way that water molecules freeze, harden, become ice, melt and becomes water again. Or even the cycle of life and death.

## An intoxicating synergy

However one describes speedskating, it incorporates kinetics, environment, and time in an intoxicating synergy of motion, balance, ice, and speed. One feels a sense of accomplishment as he or she confronts and conquers basic forces of nature and survives to skate another day.

# Drawing in and out of Place

Doris Rohr

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The influential Victorian art critic, cultural theorist, and draughtsman John Ruskin is a vital influence on my research and creative practice. Ruskin's writings have experienced a resurgence of interest from contemporary critical and philosophical perspectives, enabling me to contribute to and benefit from a wider discussion reinterpreting Ruskin's relevance today [1].

In my doctoral thesis, *Drawing on Nature—the Legacy of Ruskin's Moral Cosmos*, I set out to retrace Ruskin's thinking on how drawing can act as a foundation for understanding the natural environment [2]. Ruskin did not divide the natural from the human-made, as his interest in the environment stretched seamlessly across the natural 'vegetable' states of being to cultural artifice. As design theoretician Lars Spuybroek explains:

*To John Ruskin, all things are plants, be they houses, carpets, city halls, church spires, paintings, countries or anything else—everything is immobile and flourishing at once [3].*

In this essay, I discuss my methods of practice, which are concerned with drawing and my environmental experiences. Ruskin's work is central to my research and informs my thinking and ways of seeing and creating. Ruskin's writings reinforce a reciprocal relationship between theory and practice, mediating and scrutinizing a problematic binary understanding of culture and nature. He firmly believed in the value of drawing as a form of visual engagement that transcends mere looking.

When reading Raymond Fitch's biography of Ruskin, one realizes that Ruskin's engagement with natural and human-made environments was far from static [4]. I consider his love for gothic architecture and his preference for Italian pre-Renaissance painting as attempts to re-invigorate the present and future. He reminds us of the greater cohesion of arts unified in a large concerted social effort subordinated to a spiritual ideal that transcends individualism.

Ruskin's *Elements of Drawing* was first published 1857 [5]. It soon became a standard textbook for art students and amateurs; it is still used today as a primer connecting drawing philosophy with hands-on exercises. Ruskin's teaching of laborers at night school was indicative of his social commitment and attested to his wish to reform society, also evident in his unfinished project of establishing an alternative education system through the *Guild of St George*. Drawing was therefore instrumental in his plans for social reform in accordance with spiritual ideals about appreciating the natural world and searching out its ordinary order [6].

In *Elements of Drawing*, Ruskin advocates the use of innovative technology of his time (the daguerrotype) to countercheck the accuracy of one's observational power [7]. Yet approaches concerned with surface alone would not do justice to the complexity of his drawing theory and practice. For Ruskin, travel was essential for environmental awareness. Seeing something new or unusual, he would stop to record details that caught his eye (wild flow-

ers, trees, architectural ornament, fenestration, façades). He would traverse long distances by carriage to visit his preferred places of culture located within or adjacent to his favorite natural locations: for example, the city architectures of Venice set in the lagoon (*Stones of Venice*) or Swiss mountains, towns and villages (*Modern Painters*). He explored the vernacular as cultural products emplaced within their own geography [8].

Ruskin's *being on the move* is an important factor to note, as it shifts the mode of perception from immobile, fixed positioning in control through surveillance (via the vista and Renaissance perspective) to the three-dimensionality of the enveloping environment as a fluid, navigational experience, capturing the attention and imagination of the traveler who *becomes* its subject.

The importance of walking, of being on the move, and on how this makes us perceive our environment, and in turn how it perceives *us* is a subject that philosopher Edward Casey examines through a phenomenological approach to walking *from space to place*. Walking connects us with our environment in an intimate network relationship [9]. The activity of engagement as *living experience* is best captured for Casey via the German term *Erlebnis*, preferable to the passivity of memory, the *already-elapsed experience* (*Erfahrung*), a vantage point that effectively distances us from being part of the ecology of relationships *in place*:

*Walking is relational: my body connects with path, grass, sand. The world passes*



me at my own pace, is animated, flowing through me, below and above me, projecting infinite possibilities of three-dimensional orientation. Walking is a form of drawing with the body in space: performative drawing. This encounter with infinite spaces becomes more than perception; it transforms into lived experience [10].

In a related way, anthropologist Tim Ingold presents an understanding of sight that sits comfortably with Ruskin's. Ingold deconstructs the assumption that sight diminishes the other senses [11]. He reinstates sight as an agent for multi-sensory awareness no longer maligned as the 'villain', of the panoptical *ocular-centric* gaze of modernism [12]. Through careful re-examination of Descartes, James Gibson and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (among others), Ingold draws on anthropological information from native and aboriginal cultures to reinterpret sight as a perception that does not operate separately from the other senses. Enriched by sound, touch, and physical awareness, sight is no longer presented as a disembodied agent. We hear with our eyes and see with our ears:

*[I]t is not vision that objectifies the world, but rather the harnessing of vision to a project of objectification that has reduced it to an instrument of disinterested observation... [13].*

Ingold's suggestion here that movement and sight do *not* operate in isolation from other senses is an important factor in my own approach to drawing [14]. Furthermore, Ingold's argument validates Ruskin's emphasis on *proper* looking—in other words, that drawing helps us to see more clearly [15]. In addition, a reciprocal approach and understanding of the process

of drawing helps me to understand the relationship between perceived self and others, inanimate or animate, inter-subjective or inter-objective, leading on to Ruskin's concept of *sympathy*, which lies at the heart of my drawing method.

### Walking-Drawing

Of longstanding interest to me is the walking-drawing that formed part of the self-education of artisan, craftsman, builder, and architect for centuries, evident in the notebooks of Scottish Arts and Crafts architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh [16]. Mackintosh walked through many British landscapes, acquainting himself with a deeper understanding of vernacular architecture *in place*. He believed it insufficient to study historical architectural styles from photographs, plans, elevations, and blueprints. Mackintosh asserted that understanding vernacular building had to be the result of a holistic experience of encountering a building in its setting.

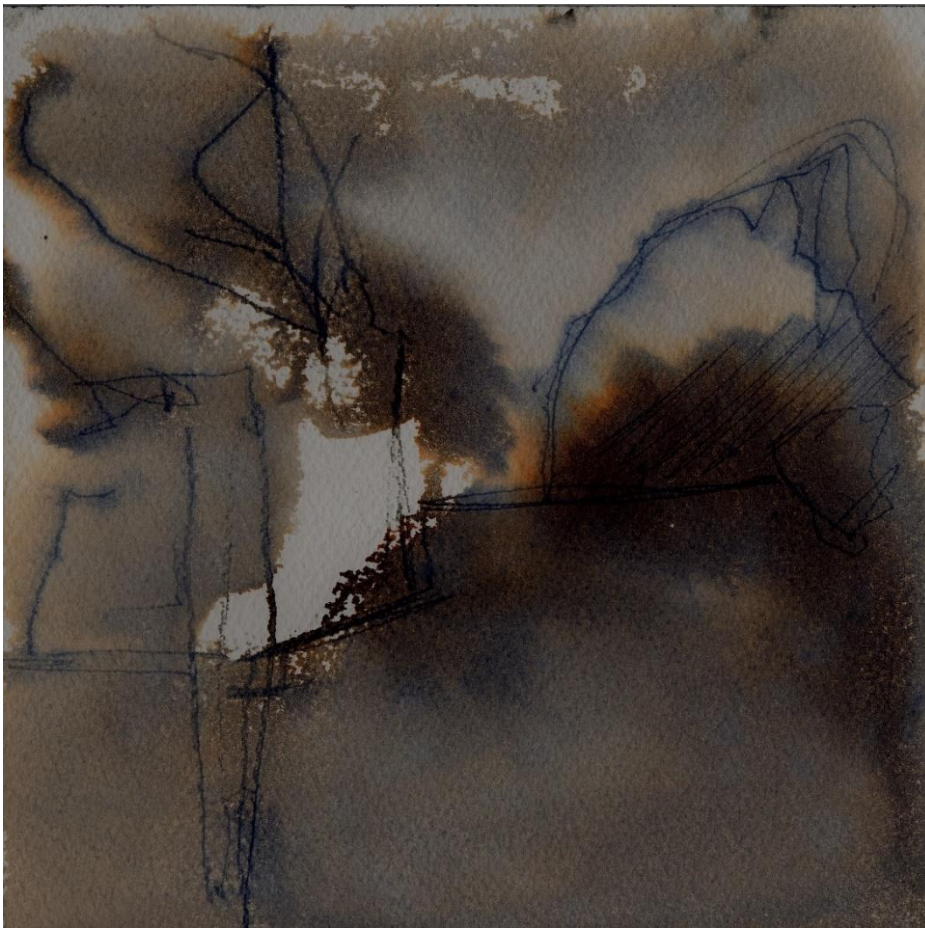
This approach is highly relevant to my own sketchbook practice. I recently relocated to the rural area of England's North Yorkshire, where I find myself constantly examining the use of vernacular stone and the situation of dwellings in the landscape, being *emplaced* by the distinct geology and geography of the region, formed through the practices of traditional hill farming and connected through a network of historical-cultural footpaths establishing public right of way and communication lines among habitations. These public footpaths cut through possessive relationships of land and continue to enable access to privately owned properties. These days more a leisure pursuit than providing walkways for necessity, the shifting usage of these trails indicates that living in and with the land is

undergoing constant transformation, especially in terms of uses valuable for human society. Even so, the century-old rights of way provide continuity and connect us physically with history.

Unlike Mackintosh, I do not aim for translation into innovative building or any form of architecture. In this sense, my practice lacks that sense of destination and synthesis, or so I thought until recently when I wrote this essay, which allowed me to consider further my drawing methods—a welcome point of revision after completing a doctoral program. Even a practice-based PhD study is somewhat artificial in the way it ties one's imagination and creativity to a research question, thereby inviting a sense of hierarchy and subservience of practice to theory that is hard to resist. Some two years following completion, I am still in recovery, finding myself reconnecting my love for landscape as natural-cultural phenomenon with my preference for sketching—the practice of understated notebook-keeping not intending finish or publication at the point of making.

There remain continuities with my completed PhD, in particular through German philosopher Martin Heidegger and English travel and nature writer Robert Macfarlane and his musings on the value of ancient routes of walking. I am uneasy about a sense of lingering escapism, when indulging in experiences of walks across fells, at sunset and moonrise, watching bats chasing bait, or listening to mountain sheep's disembodied muffled sounds in the enclosing night. This unease no doubt connects with what Heidegger refers to as *anxiety*, an inverted form of caring:

*Heidegger leaves open the possibility of temporary connectedness with nature as a*



*spiritual encounter—and this is described as authentic, as the rare moments when a human being can overcome alienation and separateness from being part of nature through caring for the environment. Care and the state of anxiety are the two remaining possibilities to overcome alienation from environment and to allow for momentary authentic existence [17].*

### **Expanded sight**

Walking as a practice of perception interacts with multi-sensory awareness, though there is a question about stationary activities of drawing and how they might work to heighten sense experience—in short, standing still so the surrounding world might inform me through its presentness and continuous flux. Is it that the world around me, which continues to inform me and is not isolated from myself, is taking over the motion, and I, the center in a world of flux, assimilate?

Walks in nature, appreciation of environment through slow motion, engagement on a pace of one's own, contact with feet to ground, and sense of balance, all other

senses finely tuned to listening in on ambient sound anticipating the unexpected, reconnect with the wild in me that is apprehensive and highly attuned to unusual sounds. Walking is a pace different from cycling or going by train or car, different speeds, divided attention. The walking experience of the environment differs from the observation of detail, in some sense a partitioning or severing apart from the wider environment, as a temporary act, a zooming in, a partial focus perhaps, allowing fullest attention of a differentiation.

Such walks do not seek out problems of which there are so many in our ecologically precarious times. Rather, in these walks, I take comfort from landscapes that remain intact, congruent, preserving a more traditional way of life of farming and interaction of humans with animals and plants, agriculture and ecology, of history embedded in landscape. These landscapes are inspiring and uplifting because they present continuity.

The Yorkshire Dales, (like other extensively farmed and remote landscapes in the West of Cumbria in England, the North of

Scotland, or North Wales), have a particular pull and magnetic hold on people. The hill farmers know this through their animals, as Yorkshire and Cumbrian hill farmers rely on their sheep's knowledge of place. The unbordered, open-moorland grazing of mountain sheep like Herdwicks or Swaledale breed requires these animals to be 'hefted' to the land. These sheep have interior compasses guiding them back to their place of origin and belonging.

I am mindful that any type of farming is problematic as it puts the power into human hands, whereas hunter-gather societies have a fairer relationship of sharing land and natural resources, something I am only too often reminded of in my daily walks past the auction mart of the village where I now live. Yet I admire how the relationship of farmer to animal and earth informs the way the land is shaped and produces a particular type of North Yorkshire vernacular architecture incorporating local stone to make what looks to me like large drawings or utilitarian earthworks with dry-stone walls, barns, and sheepfolds that dissect and structure the landscape.

But a sense of guilt arises from my deliberately shunning to draw attention to how precarious and threatened such seeming equilibrium is. This landscape is healing for me, but what can I do to return the favor? Besides participating in environmental activism or supporting charity, my drawing the land could be considered a gift in return, a spiritual activity to celebrate and ask for forgiveness.

Ruskin also offers some answers. Never did any form of social ills or pollution stop him from practicing the art of drawing and celebrating beautiful forms and sympathetic relationships. Such drawing (for example *Moss and Wild Strawberry*) provides a model for how relationships should be: ecologically balanced, a social model; a symbiotic relationship that ensures *wildness in sympathy* [18].

### **Sympathy through drawing**

*Now in all this observe how the higher condition of art... depends upon largeness of sympathy. It is mainly because the one painter has communion of heart with his subject, and the other only casts his eye upon it feeling-lessly that the work of one is greater than that of the other [19].*



Drawing in sympathy can be described as an act of deep immersion that helps me to become aware of relations in my environ-



ment; close looking is part of this experience. In the passage just quoted from *Modern Painters*, Ruskin asserts that drawing transcends observation; drawing is about deepening the dialogue with the environment and is “communion of heart.” In the rest of this essay, I examine how I practice Ruskin’s method of drawing with sympathy.

My practice shows certain characteristics when engaging with the environment. I rarely invent from my head (although I believe that any improvisation or invention is based on memorized observations, consciously so, or unconsciously stored and filtered). Sense data need to be entered onto paper. These cannot not be solely about sight, as they are about a wider sense of experience, sub-consciously or consciously incorporating sound, humidity, the light of the day waxing or waning. When working in the field, I find that my drawings tend to be more fluid and become painterly; drawing while walking, slowing down, stopping, surrendering to the geography of a place, making myself fit

into the environment. At times I use photographs deliberately out of focus to capture the mood of uncertainty. I value the awakening and equilibrium of all senses in twilight.

Frequently however, I wish to draw a detail, an aim that initially requires an isolation of an object and a form of temporary ‘objectification’ through partitioning off an aspect of a larger organic system. This effort presents a challenge for sympathetic engagement. Botanical studies offer a possibility to allow the chosen object for drawing to remain *situated in place*, a difficult drawing experience practically because the terrain often obstructs full access to a chosen detail.

There is a poetry and sadness of loss that provides a counterpoint in my practice. This sadness mourns the cultures of possession, the subjection of others to systems of classification, often arbitrary out of hindsight. These divorced objects are elegies—being *out of place*, they fulfil a different metonymical function, making Ruskin’s approach to drawing relevant in a different way. In *Modern Painters*, Ruskin refers to the painting *Slave Ship* by J. W. M. Turner to exemplify art that provides catharsis [20]. In this painting, the sympathy extends to the suffering of the slaves, also out of place, and condemned to death by their captors (the practice of throwing slaves overboard to claim insurance money was apparently widespread during the period of slave trade.)

Artworks like Turner’s *Slave Ship* are much more than a news item or, in our day, a media image. Rather, the artistic aim is to draw the bystander in and help to internalize the event, to draw conclusions about one’s own morality and that of the wider world. Can paintings or drawings motivate change? No matter how temporary, can a change of heart provoke a feeling of attrition—a softening, perhaps, leading on to some more permanent change or even action to remedy?

### **Drawing Hippopotamus & Pangolin**

Recently, I discovered that the natural history collection of Liverpool’s *Victoria Gallery and Museum* houses a collection of taxidermy, displaced from their environment and divorced from their original habitat. These animal-objects ‘looked’ back at me, returned my gaze through their seemingly lifeless presence. Among those that





stood out most ‘loudly’ were two preserved pangolins and the embryo of a hippopotamus.

As I drew the preserved animals, now displayed to make visitors aware of endangered species, I pondered the contradictory attitude of human species to their fellow creatures. In the name of science, these animals were ‘privileged’ to death and preservation, displayed to raise our guilty conscience about their survival. These objects had a pulling power, in their helpless state, aborted prematurely from life, one literally not even born, the others not reaching their natural destination, both

types standing in metonymically for a much larger persecution of a species selected as desirable for alternative medicine.

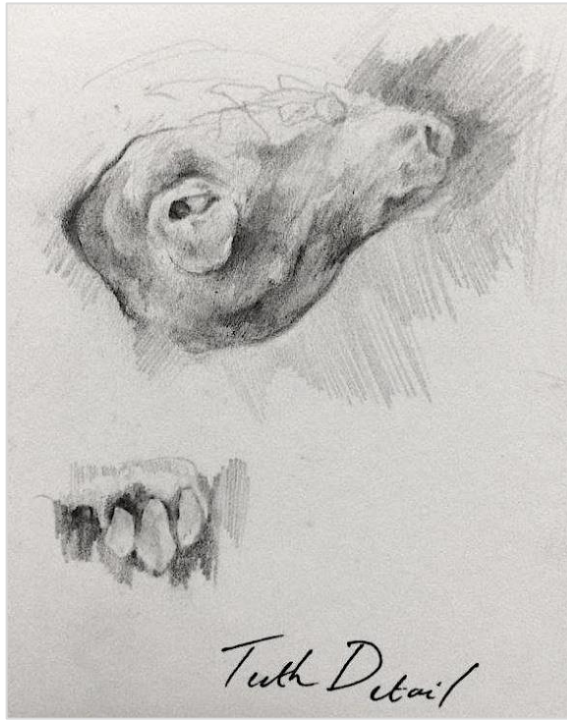
For several weeks, I sat drawing these creatures with sympathy. On one occasion, I was joined by Tamzin Ashcroft, one of my undergraduate students from Liverpool Hope University. I believe that this process to connect emotionally with these animals helps to restore lost life by my trying to understand their structure, organization, posture, and texture through drawing. My sense of self became diminished, my state of mind calmed, yet my senses were more

alert. Through drawing, I forced myself to confront what I had suppressed or failed to notice. I would suggest that a first stage of reinstating a respectful relationship to these exhibited creatures was facilitated through the effort to understand the complexity of their own presence and being.

For example, the pangolin beckons in its state of displacement. In my imagination, it asks to be reunited—a ghost-haunting collective consciousness. The act of sympathy creates a temporary bond that asks for remorse, forgiveness, and restorative action for the future. This process may relate to the role of shaman in aboriginal societies [21]. Or one thinks of the ecologically motivated practices of artist Josef Beuys, whose performances sometimes involved living and dead (taxidermy) animals. Such approaches relate to Ingold’s understanding of the ‘animic world’ as ‘dialogical’:

*The animals [killed for food] offer something of their potentiality and substance to human beings so that the latter may live, while humans, in return, through the proper treatment of the animals in death, ensure the release of their life force and hence their subsequent reincarnation. Human life, which in the totemic ontology is predicated upon the immortality of the land, is here predicated upon the mortality of animals. In the animic ontology, the killing and eating of game is far more than mere provisioning; it is world-renewing [22].*





## Stages in the drawing process

When studying details of the dead animals, I find that there are two stages in the drawing process: first, an emotional immersion and attraction, paying reverential attention; and second, re-production and re-invention. The latter more often is the result of my removal or distancing from the subject of study, a situation that is inevitable when I work from memory or draw making use of others' representations (e.g., photographs) because the self reclaims attention and the first-hand presence of the thing being represented (e.g., animal, plant, or landscape) is diminished.

I also recognize that my drawing practice relates to the degree to which my subject is a part of or apart from its original context and place. In this regard, I identify two additional aspects of the drawing process that can be described as follows.

**1.** When I draw a detail, I first separate an aspect of my subject from its context, thereby treating it as separate from itself, and creating a new (somewhat enforced) relationship with me, the artist. This subject-as-object becomes the focus of attention and often seems to evoke a quality of reciprocity—in other words, the Other looks back at me, catches my eye, somehow akin to a silent dialogue. This process requires full sensory engagement.

The act of seeing an individual entity, especially if within its natural habitat, is one of temporary severing, but the analysis leads back to synthesis. A connection is made between me and the selected aspect. I work to overcome the divide of self from nature through the act of drawing. The actual translation into line then forms part of a reparative action. Through my senses, I am infused by the Other, to the extent that self becomes oblivious. The Other captivates me.

Through trying to understand the Other's structure and special qualities of color, shape, organization, I overcome difference and hierarchies, which are broken down. Who has chosen whom begs the question. Has the object summoned me, or have I chosen it? The act of severing the part from the whole through focus of attention becomes a metaphorical act, as the severed part then stands in for the whole. This process is as applicable to cultural artifacts as to things of nature.

Deep immersion in details ensures a bond between me as artist and the chosen aspect of animal, plant, mountain, or building. This relationship need not be harmonious: suffering, loss, or sadness can also summon creative attention in powerful ways, thereby ensuring a temporary overcoming of the division between self and what that self perceives as Other. Sympa-

thy fosters a common thread that may involve compassion or an awareness of what one shares with the Other, no matter what that Other is.

**2.** A second drawing phrase unfolds in my studio and incorporates a different kind of bringing together in which I gather sense impressions and articulate my understanding of otherness through the immersive practice of drawing, with the desire for bringing together what I have learned, freely reciting, no longer obligated to observation but nevertheless subordinating the parts to new patterns and new purposes.

The fantastical is borne and the imagination leaps. In some ways, this phase is 'fiction' and 'visual story telling'. With the act of assembling from the material gathered through observation, something else is inserted: my will, my dreams, my fears. There is composition and deliberation; the parts that strike me have now become subject of my will to become subordinated to a larger idea. There arises a synthesis and outcome, frequently expressed through exhibition or installation.

One example is my focus on the suffering of animals: for my PhD show, I created several drawings that depicted narratives of ecological disasters. I presented these drawings on scrolls of lining paper stretching over several meters. One, entitled *Marine Scroll 2*, depicts the journey and plight of the herring, the transmigration of a shoal of fish into explosive energy ending in the absurdity of a doll contemplating melancholia. In another, entitled *Marine Scroll 1, Jetsam*, I placed plant and animal parts I had found alongside fragments of human detritus that included plastic, metal, and glass [23].

A second example is illustrated in drawings [see next page, top] through which I paid homage to ecologist Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962). These drawings' implied message played a key role in how I



reassembled the parts. These compositional considerations are important for directing the viewer to ‘get’ the message and illustrate an ideological dimension of my work.

A third example is a recent synthesis that borrows from my earlier Pangolin drawings, including my sketchbook images but supplemented by photographic references for color and posture. I created a somewhat fanciful creation more reminiscent of a medieval invention—a heraldic emblem incorporating a washed-out, ghostly presence suggested by the original taxidermy.

This approach to reinventing the animal fictionally provokes uncertainty. When I begin, I don’t know what I will ultimately draw. Parameters for correctness are lifted, and I am allowed to invent. There is tension about whether the new creation will be a miscreation, a parody, even a monster. And there is personal uncertainty as to whether my effort has failed or succeeded.

### **Recovering a sense of vision**

I am ambivalent about this second stage of practice because there is a lingering doubt—a sense that synthesis divorced from the original dialogue with the Other ‘kills’ the spirit of encounter. Are the results mere cultural trophies little different from the corpses objectified as collector items? Merleau-Ponty suggests that to avoid being “swallowed up... by the objects of sight” and resist objectification into mere things, “we need to reverse this perspective, to recover the sense of vision that is original to our experience of the world, and that is a precondition for its objectification” [24].



I believe that Ruskin allows for this phenomenological task of reversal through a mode of vision that is not “cold” and does not objectify. His drawing, *Moss and Wild Strawberry*, exemplifies a holistic, phenomenally experienced environment. In my own practice, this synthesis rarely happens in cloistered environments like the studio and is more often satisfactory if produced in situ or as part of a physical or imagined narrative implying motion and dynamic development. One example is my drawing, above, of daisies in light wind enveloped by summer shadows.

## Notes

1. Examples include: C. Gere, Ruskin’s Haunted Nature, in S. Mays and N. Matheson, eds. *The Machine and the Ghost* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2013), pp. 202–22; S. Casey and G. Davies, A Garland of Thoughts: Ruskin and Contemporary Sight/Site Sensitive Drawing, *Tracey Drawing in Situ*, Feb. 2014 ([www.lboro.ac.uk/microsites/sota/tracey/journal/institut/2014/casey-davies.html](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/microsites/sota/tracey/journal/institut/2014/casey-davies.html)); B. J. Day, The Moral Intuition of Ruskin’s ‘Storm-Cloud’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 45 (2018), 917–933; B. Dillon, A Dry Black Veil, *Cabinet*, 35 (fall 2009) (<http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/35/dillon.php>); T. H. Ford, Ruskin’s Storm-Cloud: Heavenly Messages and Pathetic Fallacies in a Denatured World, *International Social Science Journal*, UNESCO, 62 (September 2011), 287–299; S. Farthing, Learn to Draw. *The Elements of Drawing—John Ruskin’s Teaching Collection at Oxford* (<http://ruskin.ashmolean.org/education/8989/9033/9132>);  
2. D. Rohr, *Drawing on Nature—The Legacy of Ruskin’s Moral Cosmos* (2016) ([www.academia.edu/36177228/Drawing\\_on\\_Nature\\_the\\_Legacy\\_of\\_Ruskins\\_Moral\\_Cosmos](http://www.academia.edu/36177228/Drawing_on_Nature_the_Legacy_of_Ruskins_Moral_Cosmos)).

3. L. Spuybroek, *The Sympathy of Things: Ruskin and the Ecology of Design* (Rotterdam: V2\_Publishing, 2011), p. 232.  
4. R. Fitch, *The Poison Sky—Myth and Apocalypse in Ruskin* (Athens, OH: Ohio Univ. Press, 1982). This biography provides excellent insight to Ruskin’s early years, through letters, notes, and autobiography, besides interpreting his lifetime work with a primarily psycho-biographical approach.  
5. J. Ruskin, *The Library Edition of The Works of John Ruskin*, E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn, eds., vol XV (London: George Allen, 1903–12) ([www.lancaster.ac.uk/ruskin-library/the-complete-works-of-john-ruskin/](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/ruskin-library/the-complete-works-of-john-ruskin/)).  
6. S. E. Atwood, John Ruskin on Education, *Encyclopaedia of Informal Education* (2008) (<http://infed.org/mobi/john-ruskin-on-education>).  
7. J. Ruskin, vol. XV, p. 102 [see note 5].  
8. J. Ruskin, vol. IX, chap. XXX, pp. 412–15 [see note 5]. In this passage, Ruskin invites the reader to journey with him to Venice. As his boat approaches, the city seems to emerge from the lagoon like a mirage.  
9. E.S. Casey, How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time, in *Senses of Place*, S. Feld and K. Basso, eds. (Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press, 1997), pp. 13–52.  
10. Rohr, p. 62 [see note 2]. This quotation is from my notebooks, which I tend to take with me almost everywhere and at any time, to draw and write, enmeshing the two modes of recording frequently.  
11. T. Ingold *The Perception of the Environment* (London: Routledge, 2000),  
12. M. Jay, *Downcast Eyes* (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 1995).  
13. “In defense of Descartes, it is important to recognize two aspects of this account which are often overlooked. First, it was plain to him that perception—whether visual or tactile—depended on movement. Were there no movement of the body and its sensory organs relative to the environment, nothing would be perceived. Ironically, this point has been lost in much of the subsequent psychology of vision, only to be rediscovered by advocates of an ecological approach to visual perception who adopt an explicitly anti-Cartesian stance”; quoted from Ingold, p. 254 [see note 11].  
14. *Ibid.*, p. 273.

15. “[T]he chief aim and bent of the following system is to obtain, first, a perfectly patient, and, to the utmost of the pupil’s power, a delicate method of work, such as may ensure his seeing truly. For I am nearly convinced that, when once we see keenly enough, there is very little difficulty in drawing what we see; but, even supposing that this difficulty be still great, I believe that the sight is a more important thing than the drawing; and I would rather teach drawing that my pupils may learn to love Nature, than teach the looking at Nature that they may learn to draw”; quoted from John Ruskin in his introduction to the *Elements of Drawing*, p. 13 [see note 5].

16. Mackintosh’s 1920 drawing of the Dorset village of Worth Matravers is available at: <http://collections.gla.ac.uk/-details=ecatalogue.53110>.

17. Rohr, p. 165 [see note 2]. Examining a sense of ‘environmental unease’ in relation to Heidegger and Ruskin is a central part of my dissertation. I established a common ground through the method of drawing as an awareness-raising tool. I argued that efforts at critical seeing contribute to self-knowledge. I associated a lack of authenticity with a nagging sense of self-doubt and anxiety.

18. J. Ruskin, *Moss and Wild Strawberry*, (prob. June 1873), graphite and traces of bodycolor on grey-blue paper, mount 54.1 x 37.6 cm., (W.A.R.S. REF.090) Ashmolean Museum, Univ. of Oxford (<http://ruskin.ashmolean.org/collection/8979/object/14351%20->).

19. J. Ruskin, *Modern Painters IV*, in *Works VI*, p. 19 [see note 5].

20. J. Ruskin, *Modern Painters I, Works III*, pp. 571–72 [see note 5]. Ruskin praises Turner’s *Slave Ship* as the highest category of truth.

21. Ingold, p 281 [see note 11].

22. *Ibid.*, p. 114 [see note 11].

23. See Appendices in Rohr [see note 2].

24. Merleau-Ponty as quoted in Ingold, p 265 [see note 11] and drawn from M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception*, J. M. Edie, ed. (Evanston, IL., Northwestern Univ. Press, 1964), p 178.

## Images in text

p. 22: Doris Rohr 2018 Notebook walking/ train riding notebook page, mixed media on paper.  
p. 23: Doris Rohr 2018 Ink drawing during twilight in situ of landscape arrested moment during walk ink on paper.  
p. 24: Doris Rohr 2018 Ink drawing from walk—arrested moment: dusk, darkness closing in Ink on paper.  
p. 24: Doris Rohr 2017 Clover detail watercolor on paper.  
p. 25, upper left: Doris Rohr 2018 Notebook - Hippo embryo pencil on paper.  
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p. 25: Dead pangolin on display.  
p. 25: Doris Rohr drawing the pangolin in Victoria Gallery and Museum, Liverpool.  
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p. 26: Tamzin Ashcroft 2018 sketchbook page, closeup of eye and teeth of pangolin, pencil on paper.  
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p. 27: Doris Rohr Pangolin 2018 watercolor and ink on paper.  
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## Questions relating to environmental and architectural phenomenology (from *EAP*, 2014 [vol. 25, no. 3, p. 4])

### Questions relating to phenomenology and related interpretive approaches and methods:

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

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

- ❖ Can there be a phenomenology of nature and the natural world?
- ❖ What can phenomenology offer the intensifying environmental and ecological crises we face today?
- ❖ Can phenomenology contribute to more sustainable actions and worlds?
- ❖ Can one speak of a sustainable lifeworld?
- ❖ What is a phenomenology of a *lived* environmental ethic and who are the key contributors?

- ❖ Do the “sacred” and the “holy” have a role in caring for the natural world? For places? For lifeworlds broadly?
- ❖ Can phenomenology contribute to environmental education? If so, in what ways?
- ❖ Can there be a phenomenology of the two laws of thermodynamics, especially the second law claiming that all activities, left to their own devices, tend toward greater disorder and fewer possibilities? Are there ways whereby phenomenological understanding of lifeworld might help to reduce the accelerating disordering of natural and human worlds?

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

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

spaces and their relationship to mobility and movement?

### Questions relating to architecture and environmental design and policy:

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

### Other potential questions:

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



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# Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology

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

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

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## Exemplary Themes

- The nature of environmental and architectural experience;
- Sense of place, including place identity and place attachment;
- Architectural and landscape meaning;
- The environmental, architectural, spatial, and material dimensions of lifeworlds;
- Changing conceptions of space, place, and nature;
- Home, dwelling, journey, and mobility;
- Environmental encounter and its relation to environmental responsibility and action;
- Environmental and architectural atmospheres and ambiances;
- Environmental design as place making;
- Sacred space, landscape, and architecture;
- The role of everyday things—furnishings, tools, clothing, interior design, landscape features, and so forth—in supporting

people's sense of environmental wellbeing;

- The progressive impact of virtual reality on human life and how it might transform the lived nature of "real" places, buildings, and lifeworlds;
- The practice of a *lived* environmental ethic.

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

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