



Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter

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This issue is the last for 1998. We enclose a renewal form and ask you to respond promptly so we will not need to send a reminder. As always, we are grateful for additional contributions from those readers who are able to give. This year we ended with 142 subscribers—21 more than in 1997. This number allows us to break even, but barely. Without the extra donations of a sizeable number of readers, we would not be able to continue.

This issue includes items of interest, citations received, and book reviews. We also include two essays, the second of which, by architect Ian Lambert uses the phenomenological theory of Norwegian architect Thomas Thiis-Evensen to examine the architectural experiences of two 20th-century churches—LeCorbusier's Ronchamp Chapel and Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple.

The first selection is by Thomas Erickson, a designer of computer systems. As a telecommuter who lives in Minneapolis but works for IBM's research division in upstate New York, Erickson ex-

plores some of the aspects of doing work away from one's actual work place.

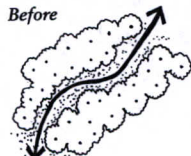
ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

The **International Association for Environmental Philosophy** offers "a forum for wide-ranging philosophical discussion of nature and the human relation with the natural environment, including not only environmental ethics but environmental aesthetics, ontology, theology, the philosophy of science, political philosophy, ecofeminism, the philosophy of technology, and other areas." One emphasis is "Continental philosophy and phenomenology and the contribution this can make to environmental philosophy." The group's first conference program will be held at the October meeting of SPEP (Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy—see *EAP*, spring 98). A newsletter will be published and dues are \$15/yr. Contact: Prof. K. Maly, Philosophy Department, University of Wisconsin, 1725 State Street, La Crosse, WI 54601.

Below: These drawings from With People in Mind (reviewed on p. 5) illustrate the importance of keeping views open along paths. On the far left, a path with dense vegetation; center and right, ways to improve visual access. Used with permission of Island Press.

Dense vegetation along a trail blocks views.

Before



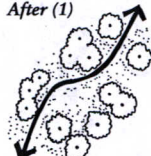
Plan



Sketch

Clearing vegetation opens views and increases the perception of safety.

After (1)



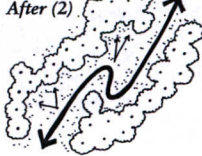
Plan



Sketch

In the case where external views are undesirable, internal views can increase visual access while retaining buffers.

After (2)



Plan



Sketch

ITEMS OF INTEREST

The annual conference on **Qualitative Research in Education** will be held 8-10 January 1999, at the University of Georgia in Athens. A central focus is "the purposes, practices, and problems of collaborative research." Other topics include "teaching qualitative methods, writing about qualitative research, traditions of qualitative inquiry, and personal journeys in research." Contact: Dr. H. J. McLaughlin, 427 Aderhold Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602 (706-542-5469; email: jmcl@coe.uga.edu).

Organization & Environment is an academic journal focusing on "the complex social causes and consequences of environmental damage, restoration, sustainability, and liberation." The journal includes a regular section on "artistic work focused on organizations and the natural environment"—e.g., photographic essays, nature writing, and other forms of creative expression. Contact: Dr. John Jermier, College of Business Administration, University of South Florida, 4202 East Fowler Avenue, BSN 3403, Tampa, FL 33620-5500 (813-974-1757).

The 2nd international symposium on **Space Syntax** will be held 29 March-2 April 1999 in Brasilia, Brazil, sponsored by the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, University of Brasilia, with the co-sponsorship of the Space Syntax Laboratory, Bartlett School of Graduate Studies, University College, London. The aim is "to bring together researchers and designers in many countries who are currently using space syntax techniques...." The first conference was held in 1997 and papers from that event are forthcoming in *Environment and Society B* and *Computers, Environments and Urban Systems*. These papers will also appear in a new monograph series, *Space Syntax*. Contact: Prof. F. de Holanda, Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo, Universidade de Brasilia, Campus Universitario-Asa Norte, 70-910-900 Brasilia DF, Brazil (+55-61-273-1254). There is also a Space Syntax Website: <http://www.mailbase.ac.uk/>

Ethics, Place and Environment is a new journal the central aim of which is "to provide a forum for the publication of research and scholarship on all aspects of geographical and environmental ethics." Topics include animal rights, questions of justice in urban

society, development ethics, and the construction of cultural values. Contact: James Proctor, Geography Dept., 3611 Ellison Hall, Univ. of California, Santa Barbara, CA 93106-4060 (805-893-8741).

CITATIONS RECEIVED

Brook, I., 1998. Goethean Science as a Way to Read Landscape. *Landscape Research*, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 51-69.

This philosopher "demonstrates the method of Goethean observation as a means of surveying and appraising landscape which allows a role for a schooled subjectivity." The focus is "Fish-wanton," [literally, "much water"], a 60-acre site near Edinburgh, Scotland, which is a mix of woodland, scrub, pasture, and bog.

Coates, G. J., 1997. *Erik Asmussen, Architect*. Stockholm: Bygggöret.

The first detailed study of this Scandinavian architect's buildings at Järna, an intentional community in Sweden: "Asmussen's organically expressive form language evokes an architectural experience of aliveness and a sense of participation in the forms and processes of nature."

Evenden, L. J., 1997. Wartime Housing as Cultural Landscape: National Creation and Personal Creativity. *Urban History Review*, 25, 2 (March): 41-52.

This geographer discusses the 26,000 units of working housing built by the Canadian government in the 1940s: "Authority-based, rational, central planning, a feature of Canada's wartime effort, provides the country with a core stock of dwellings. In half a century, a distinctive Canadian residential landscape has evolved from this, with diversity introduced as a result of individual taste, ability to pay, and local regulation."

Jenks, M., Burton, E., & Williams, K., eds., 1996. *The Compact City: A Sustainable Urban Form?* London: E. & FN Spon/Chapman & Hall.

The 29 articles of this collection examine the links between urban form and sustainable development. Authors highlight both positive and negative aspects of the traditional high-density, mixed-use city. Overall, the contributors show a "pressing need, in the developed countries, to act in a way that reduces the conspicuous consumption of resources" and "the viability and attraction of city living in all its guises."

Harries, K., 1996. Lessons of a Dream, pp. 91-108 in *Chora*, vol. 2, A. Pérez-Gómez & S. Parcell, eds. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press.

Interested in dreams and stories about an ideal architecture, this philosopher examines the appropriateness of Heidegger's depiction of a Black Forest farmhouse as one image of genuine building and dwelling.

Lawlor, A., 1997. *A Home for the Soul: A Guide for Dwelling with Spirit and Imagination*. San Francisco: Clarkson Potter Publishers.

This architect examines ways "to develop a consciousness about the spiritual possibilities inherent in our interior surroundings."

Seamon, D. & Zajonc, A., 1998. *Goethe's Way of Science: A Phenomenology of Nature*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press [a volume in the SUNY "Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology" series].

Written by major scholars and practitioners of Goethean science today, these 14 essays "consider the philosophical foundations of Goethe's approach and apply the method to the real world of nature, including studies of plants, animals, and the movement of water." Contributors include Frederick Amrine, Henri Bortoft, Nigel Hoffmann, Craig Holdrege, Mark Riegner, and John Wilkes.

Sherry, J. F., Jr., Ed., 1998. *Servicescapes: The Concept of Place in Contemporary Markets*. Chicago: NTC/Contemporary Publishing Co.

This collection of 19 articles attempts to identify the shifting forces that shape postmodern consumer preferences and behaviors. The focus is *servicescapes*—the sites, whether physical or cyberspatial, where buying and selling meet. Real-world examples include Nike Town Chicago, themed shopping malls, and cybermarketscapes.

Valle, R., Ed., 1998. *Phenomenological Inquiry into Psychology*. NY: Plenum.

This volume "brings psychologists up to date on the advances of phenomenological research methods in illuminating the nature of human awareness and experiences." *EAP* readers interested in empirical phenomenological methods and the issues of validity and trustworthiness will find several of the essays instructive, especially the first two chapters by Rolf von Eckartsberg—Introducing Existential-Phenomenological Psychology" and "Existential-Phenomenological Research."

Violich, F., 1998. *The Bridge to Dalmatia: A Search for the Meaning of Place*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

This book examines the meaning of place through detailed regional study of urban spaces of the Croatian Coast." Violich attempts to "read" urban environments and perceive the relationship in specific urban settings between place, buildings, and people—the three elements that determine urban quality and individuality of place."

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Tony Aldrich is a doctoral student in Architecture at Plymouth University in England. He writes: "... phenomenology in architecture has a difficult history in the UK. In the face of the positivist paradigm, its present discussion is conducted in a somewhat 'underground' manner; it is without a strong voice or even a body to speak from. Where I am based at Plymouth, we run a post-graduate course in "Humane Architecture," which is well attended and concerned, among other things, with phenomenology. But it is just one voice and would benefit from a wider forum, more discussion, and a focus for its arguments. Perhaps there are already discussion groups on the web for this topic? I haven't found any yet. Perhaps there is a case for setting one up under the auspices of *EAP*?" Address: 9 High Street, Rode, Somerset BA3 6NZ England; email: aaldrich@plym.ac.uk.

Aldrich also sent an abstract of his thesis topic, "The Acknowledgement of the Pre-reflective Capacity of Form in Alvar Aalto's Architecture." We reprint a portion of the abstract here:

A review of Finnish architect Alvar Aalto's approach to design reveals repeated references to his concern with the experientiality of architecture and, in particular, to the intrinsic meaningfulness that he considered our direct bodily experiences of built form to process.... These concerns exhibit an implicit correlation with the theoretical framework of phenomenology, especially that contained within philosopher Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* [1945], which articulates an ontology that considers meaning to arise from our direct bodily perceptions of the environment. Merleau-Ponty's work therefore posits a 'pre-reflective' mode of understanding similar to that with which Aalto was concerned. Accordingly, this thesis investigates conditions in his buildings that can be considered to communicate his architectural intentions at a pre-reflective level.

Trajan Boughan is an architect who, after decades of working in Pacific Asia, recently returned to the United States. She is employed as an architect for the State of Missouri and, under Dr. Benjamin Schwarz, is working on her doctorate in the University of Missouri's Department of Environmental Design. Her dissertation focuses on architectural-design manage-

ment at the construction site. Boughan received her M.Arch. at the University of California at Berkeley, and received a MBA at the University of Hong Kong. She has a Hong Kong architectural registration and is an alumna of Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki's "visiting foreign students" to his Tokyo studio. 802 Washington St., Fulton, MO 65251.

Geographer **Len Evenden** sends news of a recent article (see "citations received") and writes: "I do enjoy *EAP* and encourage you to keep it coming, even though I know it must be one of those difficult 'extra miles'. It is, I'm sure, making a real contribution, drawing together as it does a readership that forms a clear community of interest." Geography Dept., Simon Fraser Univ., Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6.

Daan Hoekstra is an artist, muralist, and founder of *Classical Realism Quarterly*, a journal focusing on the techniques of traditional painting. He writes that he appreciated the winter 1998 *EAP* issue that focused on Goethean science, in which he has a strong interest. He explains: "My interest is due to my very traditional training in fine art. I recognized that the principles of the tradition-principles about the general structure of nature distilled from centuries of observation-seemed to apply to everything, every field of knowledge." He hopes to establish what he calls "The Center for the Study of Nature," which would be a research facility based on Goethean science. 3130 Mayfield #E312, Cleveland, OH 44118.

Renée LeStrange recently completed her dissertation in Clinical Psychology from the Pacifica Graduate Institute, a Jungian-oriented program in Carpinteria, California. The title of her thesis is "Psyche Speaking Through Our Place Attachments: Home and Journey as a Process of Psychological Development."

She writes: "I enjoy the newsletter very much and would like to contribute some of the findings from my research. I have hesitated composing something, not certain that my perspective as a clinical psychologist would fit in with *EAP's* more architecturally minded readership. However, the aspect of my research that readers might be able to relate to was my focus on how place affects our psychological development and contributes to the formation of the particular individuals we become.

"I began my study with an interest in investigating the phenomenon of place attachment from a depth

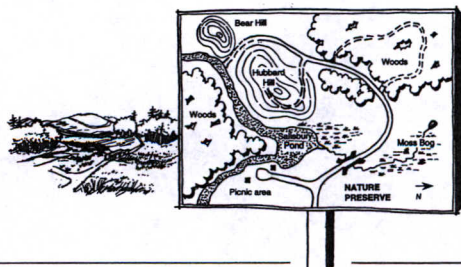
psychological perspective and what it means psychologically that certain places we live in or visit feel like 'home' while others remain alien territory. I interviewed five people a number of times each, discussing the places they've lived in or visited that had had a particular impact, their ancestral places, and dreams they have had that relate to the individual's relationship with these places." 35 Lafayette St., Pawtucket, RI 02860-6121.

Paul Krapfel sends word that his newsletter, *Cairns of Hope*, is now available on the Web. Krapfel is a naturalist and writer concerned with a "hands-on" phenomenological ecology. We presented two of his essays in the spring 1998 issue of *EAP*. Krapfel's home page address is: http://www.enterprise.k12.ca.us/chrysalis/Paul_Krapfel/Paul_Krapfel_home_page.html. To receive his newsletter, e-mail him with the request at: pkrapfel@enterprise.k12.ca.us

Below: Drawings from People in Mind (p. 65) illustrating the pattern, "Which way is north?"—i.e. "Align a posted map with the viewer's position."

Upper: "Orient fixed maps to viewer's perspective regardless of the cardinal direction."

Lower: "The bottom of a posted map should show the area nearest the viewer, while the top shows more distant views."



BOOK REVIEW

Rachel Kaplan, Stephen Kaplan, and Robert L. Ryan, 1998. *With People in Mind: Design and Management of Everyday Nature*. Washington, D. C.: Island Press.

Written by two psychologists and a landscape architect, this book is an innovative effort to apply psychological research on the human experience of nature to environmental design. By "nature," the authors do not refer to wilderness or environments entirely natural. Rather, the concern is much broader and involves:

the everyday, often unspectacular, natural environment that is, or ideally would be, near by. This includes parks and open spaces, street trees, vacant lots, and backyard gardens, as well as fields and forests. Included are places that range from tiny to quite large, from visible through the window to more distant, from carefully managed to relatively neglected (p. 1).

Intriguingly, most of the research findings from which the authors draw their design and policy recommendations is quantitative, yet their model for presenting these recommendations is intuitive and qualitative—viz., architect Christopher Alexander's *Pattern Language* (Oxford University Press, 1977). Thus, the core of *People in Mind* is 45 patterns that the authors "consider particularly important in the context of a people-oriented approach to the design and management of natural environments" (pp. 3-4). Format-wise, each pattern is numbered and titled, then justified and illustrated in 2-4 pages of text, drawings, and photographs that include design suggestions and examples. To give the reader a sense of a typical pattern, a portion of "Enhancing familiarity" (pp. 35-36) is presented in the box on the next page.

In organizing their 45 patterns, the authors break their discussion into three major sections. The first set of patterns highlights design and policy means for making natural environments that appeal to people and allow them to feel safe and "in place." A major focus of these patterns relates to ease of orientation and the possibility of getting lost. For example, the first pattern on way-finding, "Regions," states that "coherent regions are helpful in way-finding" (p. 51), while the pattern, "Orientation for the new visitor," says that "key decision points need to be easily identified" (p. 57).

The second group of patterns involves environmental elements like entrances, vistas, trees and water—all of which are said to support central human needs like locomotion, stimulation, and a sense of well being. For example, the chapter on "Views and Vistas" incorporates four patterns: (1) "Enough to look at," which says that "a vista is more engrossing if it has extent;" (2) "Guiding the eye"—"a captivating view provides information about where to look;" (3) "More than meets the eye"—"A vista engages the imagination;" and (4) "Think view"—"Consider opportunities for providing views" (pp. 101-08).

The last group of patterns focuses on user participation in the planning and design process. A central question is how the different strengths and concerns of experts and laypeople can be balanced and become the basis for practical design and policy decisions. For example, "The art of inviting feedback" states that "the format for getting feedback has to be friendly and appropriate" (p. 134), while "Opportunities for participation" says that "permitting local involvement needs to be an ongoing part of management" (p. 137).

For some readers, many of the guidelines in this book will seem obvious and without the need of the copious list of supporting empirical studies provided in the bibliography. On the other hand, the frequent failure of landscape architects and other designers to invest ordinary places with a sense of nature indicates the value that such simple conclusions might have, both for professionals and the lay public.

The main emphasis of *People in Mind* is the human dimension of the person-nature relationship, thus the authors emphasize that their concern is "designing and managing natural areas in ways that benefit the tranquility, the reasonableness, and the effectiveness of the people who come in contact with them" (p. x). In this sense, the 45 patterns are extremely broad and, eventually, need extension and amplification, especially in regard to variations in geography, natural region, and specific site. One

concern is that the type of natural environment the authors emphasize as ideal seems to be a North American temperate landscape with plenty of trees, views, and water features. Can the authors' patterns be translated to other locales and cultures and, if so, what sorts of specific landscape features and design qualities would be needed?

In this regard, one thinks of landscape architect Sherry Dorward's *Design for Mountain Communities* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990—see *EAP*, winter 1991), which also draws on the "pattern language" format but uses essential qualities of mountainous environments themselves to derive experiential possibilities and constraints for design and policy. At some point, there is a need to balance the human environmental needs highlighted in *People*

in Mind with the particular ways that specific environmental, regional, and geographic qualities of a place support or stymie those needs.

People in Mind is an excellent start for thinking about and making natural places in the everyday world. In this sense, the book is important as a primer for beginning design students, and perhaps, more so, as a book that public leaders and concerned laypeople should be introduced to when planners, designers, and policy makers seek to improve communities and places. On the other hand, the guidelines of the book are only a beginning and need, especially, amplification as they can be applied to the specific landscape, region, culture, and people that face change.

David Seamon

F2 Enhancing familiarity

► FAMILIARITY HELPS PEOPLE FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE

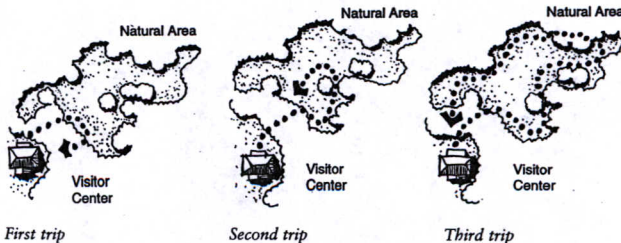
When one is going to an unfamiliar metropolis that is reputed to be high in crime, others' reassurances that "it is really a safe place" often do not ring true....

How can we encourage initial experiences despite such fears and concerns? Visual access [pattern F1—"Visual access increases confidence"] certainly helps, so does being sure that finding one's way will not be a problem. It can also be useful to remind the individual of prior outings that proved enjoyable.

Taking small steps into unknown territory increases familiarity.



Familiarity is not gained instantaneously; it is the result of many small increments. Some such increments can be achieved by having a more experienced person lead the way. Short interpretive trails provide another means of enticing the visitor into an unfamiliar landscape. Having such trails within easy reach of parking and providing self-guiding brochures or posted material can also help.



Enhancing familiarity means taking those first, timid steps into unfamiliar territory. Repeating the adventure is less risky and beckons one to venture farther.

Nan Ellin (editor), 1997. *Architecture of Fear*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.
 Sharon Sloan Fiffer and Steve Fiffer (editors), 1995. *Home*. New York: Pantheon.
 W. Scott Olsen and Scott Cairns (editors), 1996. *The Sacred Place*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
 Leroy S. Rouser (editor), 1996. *The Longing for Home*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press.

These four anthologies, filled with a collective array of 118 essays, stories and poems, constitute four parallel explorations of particular aspects of home: home as fortress, home as place of active care, home as imagined perfection, and home as a stage for our stories. As you might imagine, these four themes don't hold up equally well under examination.

Architecture of Fear looks at home as fortress, a tenuous outpost in a hostile world. In this collection, the concept of "neighbor" is couched in personal rather than collective terms: sometimes in isolationist architecture such as bamboo plantings and gates and alarm systems, sometimes in more active deportment. In response to a machete-brandishing crack addict climbing the chain-link fence, one essayist calmly notes, "Meanwhile Dominic had gone in and slipped his forty-caliber Sig Sauer semi-automatic loaded with illegal Black Talon bullets into his belt..."

There are a few calm and reasoned essays in this collection. Editor Nan Ellin opens with an astute analysis of "retribalization and nostalgia" as elements of the Postmodern landscape. Ed Blakely and Mary Gail Snyder create a typology of defended communities and explore what each offers its inhabitants. Fred Dewey offers a careful examination of the place-diminishing characteristics of cyberspace.

But more often, Ellin assembled narratives and ersatz analysis from the most paranoid and sensationalist writers she could find, substituting a lurid sensibility and edgy, labored hipness for emotional attachment or clear thinking. One of her contributors, John Chase, admits after twenty-five pages of recounting disastrous (sometimes near-lethal, as in the opening example) relationships with places and neighbors, "I think that I have been so strongly affected by paying attention to the aspects of the neighborhood that threaten me that I have poisoned my soul, and I now need to make peace with my surroundings." Indeed so, but I fear that his unyielding focus on the threats has left him poorly equipped to make such a peace.

What we should concern ourselves with may in fact not be the threats from those others, but that our own responses are so cynical. Charles Jencks describes a Los Angeles house by architect Brian Murphy in which a windowless corrugated steel façade is located behind an "ironic" white picket fence at sidewalk's edge. Irony is the response of the emotionally diminished, the expression of detachment and alienation; it is the opposite of home.

There is no room for irony in W. Scott Olsen and Scott Cairns' *The Sacred Place*. Subtitled "Witnessing the Holy in the Physical World," it is a collection of poems and essays that demand slow going, like good places themselves. You can't appreciate work like Kathleen Norris' "Getting to Hope" by breezing over the surface like a tourist, taking snapshots; you've got to get inside it, to dwell, to surrender. Listen to Norris' pace as she talks about her religious community in South Dakota:

Hope's people are traditional people, country people, and they know that the spirits of a place cannot be transported or replaced. They're second-, third-, and fourth-generation Americans who have lived on the land for many years, apart from the mainstream of American culture, which has become more urban with every passing year. Hope's people have become one with their place: this is not romanticism, but truth. You can hear it in the way people speak, referring to their land in the first person: "I'm so dry I'm starting to blow," or "I'm so wet now I'll be a month to seeding..." You're still in America in the monastery, and in Hope Church—these absurd and holy places—you're still in the modern world. But these places demand that you give up any notion of dominance or control. In these places you wait, and the places mold you (p.166).

The editors have a clear love of writing and of wild places; their selections reward patience and care. The list of contributors down the front cover includes well-known literary names like John McPhee, Annie Dillard, Sydney Lea, and Carol Bly. But co-editor W. Scott Olsen holds his own in the concluding essay on the experience of the sacred in nature:

Few things are more welcome among people than a good story, and good stories shared with others is what creates friendships,

communities, security and love. But there are these other places where we have no personal history, no personal or community story to color the landscape for us in advance. And it's in those places we can regain a sense of the wild... When I am at home, my sense of where I am holds years of history, years of community and people and politics and the thousand concerns of a social life. Here, looking at a mountain I've never seen before this morning, my sense of where I am holds nothing more than rock, than water, than birds and trees and bush. Here, apart from the insistence of others, I am able to catch a breath of the Other. There is no past in this place today, and no future. Just a tremendous present-filling eternity... There are places on the planet that are sacred to me—not because they have been sanctified by ritual, but because they have not (p.337).

The third collection, *The Longing for Home*, is just as earnest but far less effective. Where *The Sacred Place* is richly detailed and emotionally resonant (as literary work tends to be), *The Longing for Home* is broadly conceptual and disattached from any real landscape (as analytical work tends to be). The idea of dwelling is explored at a distance, even by writers like Erazim Kohák who insist that place is always characterized by specificity:

Life seeks reality by entering into space and time in ways as tangible as the stone fences, the red-boarded barns, and the cows, the beautiful cows who know their people. To become actual, life has to commit itself to the tangible, vulnerable particularity of the moment (p. 34).

But this particularity is only seen through the eyes of a metaphoric construct called "the ploughman, a dweller on the land and a tiller of the good earth, deeply rooted in the land of his ancestors, tending it with callused hands and passing it on to his descendants. That is what I wanted to be."

And here we come to the central difficulty of the book: home, for these essayists, is not any real place but rather a pining for homeland lost or imagined. Home is what is remembered by the uprooted after the Diaspora (whether Jewish, Indian, Native American or Palestinian); home is the New Jerusalem established by Christ after the Apocalypse; home is nostalgia for an America gone by; home is longing for an ecofeminist community yet to come. Home is not a material place, nor the human relationships and

cultural meanings that make it resonant; rather, it is a shining abstraction against which our real homes can never measure up, oppressive in its vague perfection.

As an antidote, I turned to a vivid and concrete book, and was profoundly rewarded. *Home: American Writers Remember Rooms of Their Own* is a collection of extraordinary stories by writers who realize that home, if it important at all, is not a concept but a narrative. For Colin Harrison, the master bedroom is a liturgy of shared lives, and not just those of the current occupants:

We were in our twenties then and had been married a mere five months. We inspected the bedroom solemnly, trying to imagine ourselves sleeping and living in what was only a vacant room in a vacant house in Brooklyn, the floors dusty, the air stale. The building dated from 1883, but the old horsehair plaster was newly patched and painted around the Victorian mantle and walnut window moldings. My wife and I stood on the oak parquet, thinking of the unknowable lives lived in that room. Perhaps, in addition to babies and children and the cry of pleasure, there had also been malaise, suffering, death. It seemed only likely (p. 91).

In this collection of rooms, real people argued and fought and learned and fitted themselves and each other into families. Home is the space that holds stories and rituals; the narrative place and the material place are each unthinkable without the other. W. Scott Olsen may claim the term "sacred" for those places without story, places that are experienced innocent of past and future; but "home" can be nothing other than the stage upon which we perform our human scripts of devotion and frailty.

In the two best of these anthologies, then, we see Edward Relph's elements of "place:" experiences and relationships imbedded in landscapes toward which we exercise active care. In the other two, we see Relph's "placelessness" in the form of abstraction, irony, and distancing of self from surroundings. I know which pair I'll keep.

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Thomas Erickson

Erickson is a telecommuter who lives in Minneapolis but works for IBM's research division in upstate New York. His major research interest is designing computer systems that "fit gracefully into peoples' lives." He believes that "computers ought to enable people to focus on their work rather than on technology and ought to simplify life rather than add complexity and stress."

Erickson wrote the following sketches when he worked for Apple Computer. At the time of the meeting described in the first essay, he had been telecommuting to his job at Apple in California from his home in Minneapolis for a bit over three years. This meeting is also mentioned in the second essay, which discusses the significance of working from one's home.

1. ON THE EXPERIENCE OF REMOTE MEETINGS

I had a curious experience today. It changed the way I think about meetings and brought a number of things I appreciated at a tacit level into focus.

I was attending a meeting of people involved in user experience work at Apple Computer. I was "sitting in" by phone. The only thing that made this meeting unusual was the combination of people, of whom there were about twenty. Although most of these workers knew each other, this particular group had come together just for this meeting.

The important background knowledge about this event involves the mechanics of participating in meetings by phone. The principal difficulty is the impossibility of being subtle. I can't catch the speaker's eye, raise a finger to reserve a turn in the conversation, or reliably predict when another speaker is about to stop. I can only blurt out what I have to say and hope to insert my comment into what I hope will be a gap in the conversation. It is easiest to be a phone participant in meetings that are relatively small and with a group accustomed to meeting together. I mention all this to make a simple point: this meeting met neither of these "ease of participation" criteria. Consequently, rather than participating in the meeting, I observed and reflected upon it.

What caught my attention was the way the meeting ended. The majority of the meeting consisted of open discussion. One person would say something, another would respond, someone else would inject a new topic, and so forth. In general, the meeting was well focused with only one thread of dialogue. As the appointed end drew near, the leader wrote down a few last points, made a call for final comments, and concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for coming.

Normally, at this point I'd say goodbye, or someone in the meeting would say goodbye to me, and the

phone conversation would end. However, that didn't happen. Instead, I got to experience the "after-meeting" from a rather unusual vantagepoint: the remote end of a speaker phone with very good, omnidirectional microphones.

As the organizer of the meeting was thanking everyone for coming, I was reflecting on some things that had been said and thus missed the "blurt gap" into which I could have said goodbye. Indeed, the blurt gap was short because no sooner had the organizer "ended" the meeting than there was a swell of conversation. And I don't mean just two or three conversations. It sounded to me like everyone in the room burst out talking at once. I was struck by the change in the—for lack of a better word—"energy" in the room.

As I listened, I made up a story about what had happened. As the official meeting progressed, one person talking after another, various issues were raised without being entirely resolved, and various smaller groups began building up a set of potential conversations. When the meeting "ended" and the one-person-at-a-time constraint was released, the pent-up conversational potential was released in a babble of conversations. Indeed, as I listened, I heard people arranging meetings and clarifying points.

In fact, I heard something quite relevant to me. I caught a colleague starting to describe an earlier meeting in which I was very much interested. But I couldn't quite follow the thread of the conversation—there were too many competing voices. And I didn't feel sure that it was proper for me to listen without being visible, even though the conversation was in a crowded room. I wondered how I could make my "presence" known?

If finding a blurt gap among the turns of a serial conversation in an orderly meeting is difficult, joining one of the many parallel conversations is impossible when you're on the other end of the phone line. About

the only option is the virtual equivalent of jumping up on a table in the midst of a cocktail party and shouting at the person with whom you wish to speak.

What I noticed about my situation was fascinating on at least two levels. First, it struck me that this after-meeting was enormously productive—promoting the interchange of ideas and the coordination of activities. Probably more interactions happened (or were arranged) in the five minutes after the meeting than in the previous week.

This is not to say that the meeting itself was not worthwhile; to the contrary, it brought together people and raised the conversational potential to make the after-meeting exchange possible. This is really just the micro-analog of the truism about professional conferences: all the good stuff really happens *between* the presentations.

A second interesting aspect of the after-meeting was how engaging and relevant the fragments of the conversation seemed. I wished I had been able to record the babble and play it back later. It seemed to me that a transcription of the after-meeting would provide a good summary of both the meeting itself and the state of the work community for those who knew the participants and understood the context. (Of course, privacy stands in the way of any general implementations of such ideas; even though all these conversations happened in a public space, transforming ephemeral conversation into persistent recording is a fundamental shift).

The moral of this story has to do with the interaction of language and technology. First, note that, normally, thanks to technology, I would have missed all that I happened to see. I usually "arrive" when the meeting "begins" and "depart" when the meeting "ends. I miss the after-meeting and pre-meeting.

In reality, groups coalesce gradually and disperse gradually and many interesting things happen in these "ends" and "beginnings." Technology, on the other hand, is all or nothing. It doesn't support the gradual ebb and flow that characterizes groups—nor does it do well when suddenly everyone begins talking at once!

It's not just technology, however, that's to blame. The notion of a meeting as a discrete entity with clear beginnings and endings is embedded in our language, depicted in our calendars, and assumed in our work practices. Normally this isn't a problem because the mundane artifacts to which we are accustomed can be shifted and redeployed to accommodate new circumstances. The problem here is that technology has a

peculiar rigidity that makes it much poorer in accommodating the unremarked ambiguities that permeate our daily lives, and until we understand how to make technology that is more pliant, we must take great care about how our words are reflected in our designs.

2. WHEN ONE WORKS AT HOME

This essay describes Erickson's experience as a teleworker at Apple Computer from fall of 1993 through summer 1997. He wrote the piece for a panel on telework in which participants were asked to address three questions: (a) What are the consequences of working from one's home; (b) what are the consequences of extended separation from one's colleagues; and (c) what is the future of telework?

a. Consequences of working from my home

One of the most prominent features of my life as a teleworker is the rhythmic nature of my work. I travel to Cupertino [California] and have a week of intense social interaction—both planned and spontaneous. This interaction results in a bunch of informal agreements: to read someone's paper, critique a prototype, develop an idea that came up in discussion, or just talk more over the phone.

When I return to Minneapolis I shift into focused work mode, in which I have time to read, reflect, write, and carry out other work tasks. The informal agreements made during my social week now partially structure my remote time. I don't mean to imply that remote work is calm and uninterrupted—far from it. Even at a distance I am still interrupted by phone or email, I still experience radically rearranged priorities, and I still participate in the occasional, bureaucratically induced, "fire drill." The degree of interruption, however, is considerably less than when I am on site. Though it's not all-or-none, there is a real rhythm to my activity that I find extremely energizing and productive. This was not something I had anticipated before starting telework.

Tied in with this work rhythm—both as a cause and consequence—is the fact that wherever I am inhibits some activities and facilitates others. For example, spontaneous conversations with colleagues are easier on site; time to write and think is easier to find at home or on the plane. And, naturally, the nature of many of my activities shifts to accommodate my work rhythm.

Probably the chief consequence of working from my home is the softening of the boundaries between work and home life. For years pundits have predicted the merging of work and leisure, home and office. But before I became a teleworker, when I worked full time at Apple in Cupertino, it felt to me like work was infiltrating leisure but not the opposite. Now, my situation feels more balanced. A big part of this difference is that, for the first time in my adult life, I live and work in the same place. I can shovel snow while a large file downloads or go upstairs and work at midnight if I can't sleep. For me, this is pleasant. I can imagine, however, situations-when work or home life isn't going well-where this merger could be a considerable drawback.

Overall, I find that the rhythmic nature of my work life, the softer boundaries between work and home, and the ability to live and work in the same place-all conspire to increase my quality of life.

b. Consequences of extended physical separation from colleagues

One problem with digital technology is its inability to deal gracefully with the periphery. Somehow the all-or-nothing character of bits—1 or 0 and nothing in between—permeates many of the processes that the technology supports. Thus, as I described in the first essay above, meetings are treated as though they have sharp beginnings and endings. Similarly, as a remote participant, I can either be the center of attention (when speaking) or completely invisible (when silent).

This invisibility has important consequences: it becomes difficult for me to signal for a conversational turn or to provide the speaker with feedback about my degree of interest or understanding. While I have occasionally tried to remedy this invisibility by occasional coughs, throat clearings, or other similar sounds, I fear that my efforts only contribute a tubercular cast to the mental images my colleagues form of me.

While adding video technology into the mix might partially remedy this awkwardness, note that there is still the same problem: video images also have sharp boundaries as becomes all too apparent when either the person or the camera moves. Video images are also flat, and I—in the guise of a disembodied head projected onto the wall—am either the center of attention (if people are looking at me) or virtually invisible (if people are looking elsewhere).

In addition, the flatness of the image makes physical tactics—e.g., raising a hand or standing up—far less effective.

While this local invisibility renders interactions in meetings cumbersome, it also contributes to a more severe problem: the loss of longer-term organizational visibility. I am often not physically present when my group's work is presented to management, other groups, or outside visitors. Even if I am connected by phone, I am still less able to participate in the spontaneous banter, and I still miss the pre- and post-meeting interactions. While technology supports direct intentional interactions, it is much weaker at sustaining spontaneous interactions—in part, because it can't capture the periphery where spontaneous interactions often occur.

At the moment, the solutions to these sorts of problems are, for me, primarily in the social realm: I get support from my colleagues, who, for example, may call me back if the after-meeting conversation becomes important. Also, although spontaneous interactions are fewer for me, they're more intense and energizing exactly because of their rarity.

So, for example, on my week at Apple I have lots of hallway conversations because my colleagues and I know it's a rare opportunity. In fact, I engage in "planned spontaneity"—I wander the hallways on purpose to bump into people. I also have a set of customs-people I regularly breakfast with, for instance.

In this way, I maintain my social network. And at home in Minneapolis, I have a local network of colleagues with whom to gossip, toss ideas around, and banter. They serve as a substitute for that aspect of work place life.

c. The future of telework

I think we're likely to see an increase in telework in the future. An organization that needs less physical office space has an economic advantage. The cost of telephone and network infrastructure for my remote office and of the monthly weeklong trips to California is considerably less than the cost of providing a physical office in Cupertino. At the same time, the number of professionals who experience some form of the "two-body problem" shows no sign of decreasing. An organization that can readily accommodate telework has a wider pool of talent from which to draw—another advantage in a time and industry where highly specialized and skilled employees play a vital role. And, for me at least, the little benefits like

living with my wife, actually inhabiting a neighborhood, and having more focused work time, vastly outweigh the inconveniences.

I began teleworking with low expectations, in part based on previous experience as a "teleporter" (writer Victoria Bellotti's term for a person who works at home one day or more a week). But my experience as what Bellotti calls a "telepath" (a person who is remote for extensive periods of time) has been very different, in part because the permanence of the telework arrangement required my colleagues and me to shift our work practices. These shifts had their costs but also their benefits.

The principal moral I take away from my telework experience is that the social is more important than the technical. Telework practice has to be learned by the participants (both local and remote) and supported by the organization. This is nothing new: people and organizations have had to learn how to incorporate everything from telephones to copiers in their work practices, and I see nothing unusually daunting about telework.

Finally, it's interesting to speculate on new teleorganizational forms. I imagine that organizational

activity might take on a more rhythmic character. Suppose there were lots of remote workers who would periodically converge for a period of intense socialization, exchange, and synthesis. This is not unlike the way professional organizations work. It's evident how the annual rhythms of such associations catalyze various professional activities, and it seems likely to me that the quicker rhythms of teleorganizations might produce benefits similar to those that I've described in my case. I expect that there are a lot of apropos cultural models and practices—from nomadic or migratory cultures, for instance—that might be adopted to telework organizations.

If this shift toward telework comes about, it's also interesting to speculate about the coevolution of civic life driven by people living and working in the same neighborhood. It's easy to construct visions—taking our cue from urban critic Jane Jacobs—of a neighborhood renaissance driven by full-time occupancy of what were once bedroom communities. I don't mean to claim that telework is a panacea of any sort. Such a scenario would doubtless come with its own associated set of problems, but in my experience the benefits have largely outweighed the costs.

SONGS OF THE SACRED: A THIIS-EVENSEN INTERPRETATION OF LE CORBUSIER'S RONCHAMP CHAPEL AND WRIGHT'S UNITY TEMPLE

Ian Lambert

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Two of the most intriguing 20th-century churches are LeCorbusier's Ronchamp Chapel and Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple. Both buildings strike the visitor as powerful statements of architectural mastery yet both envision the sacred realm in different ways.

This essay explores the contrasting expressions of these two churches by drawing on the phenomenological theory of architectural archetypes developed by Norwegian architect Thomas Thiiis-Evensen, specifically, his presentation of the wall, which he interprets in terms of three existential expressions—*substance*, *weight*, and *motion*.¹ First, substance speaks to the building's material qualities—for example, hardness, softness, warmth, or coldness. Second, weight relates to the building's sense of lightness or heaviness in the presence of the downward forces of gravity. Finally, motion refers to the sense of a building's movement—for example, does it seem to contract, expand, or remain in place.

SUBSTANCE

To interpret the two buildings, I chose walls that offer a strong contrast: The south wall of Ronchamp and the west wall of Unity as they appear to the experienter from *outside*.² First, consider the two walls in terms of substance. Ronchamp's stark white body and organic curves evoke a feeling of warmth and purity. At a distance, the surfaces seem smooth to the touch, but, moving closer, one finds a rough surface made by sprayed concrete—an homogenous surface that unifies the building, enhancing its monolithic qualities. The impression is a building sculpted from a sin-

gle stone block (in reality, the structure is in-filled post-and-beam overlaid with concrete).

In contrast, the east wall of Unity temple is made of *smooth* gray poured concrete, which suggests qualities of hardness and immovable strength. While

both buildings are of similar materials, therefore, their sense of substance is experienced in contrasting ways: Ronchamp is an organic and fluid body that visually ebbs and flows about the visitor. Unity temple is a more powerfully monumental structure, impressing its visitors with sturdiness and strength that *stands before* the visitor.

WEIGHT

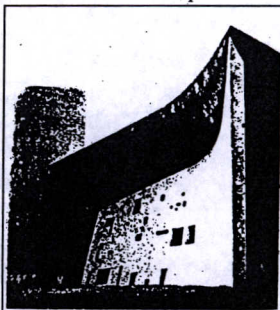
Closely related to substance is the buildings' weight. Ronchamp's south wall seems to challenge and balance against the massiveness that it should otherwise have. On one hand, the deeply set windows, inward sloping wall planes, and concrete materiality generate a feeling of heaviness and immovability. On

the other hand, a fluid quality and organic undertone sweep the wall upward into the roof and allow light and visitors to flow inside. In this sense, Ronchamp is light and with a certain nimbleness.

In contrast, Unity temple evokes an immediate sense of weight that cannot be escaped. This heaviness is relayed through the building's blank concrete base as well as through thick, truck-like pillars and horizontal planes that connect the building's mass mentally and visually with the ground (patterns).

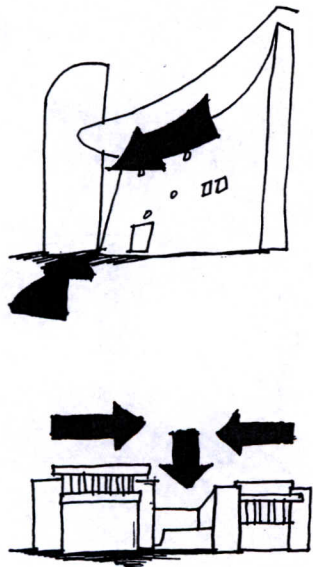
MOTION AND BREADTH

Finally, the two walls can be considered in terms of motion, which Thiiis-Evensen examines in terms of three different expressions: First, *breadth*, the wall's



horizontal sense; second, *height*, the wall's vertical sense; and, third, *depth*, relating to the spatial dialectic between inside and outside.

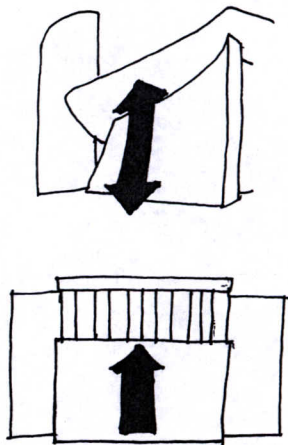
LeCorbusier's Ronchamp has a dynamic and almost ethereal quality of motion. Considered in terms of breadth, the wall involves what Thiis-Evensen would call a *side motif*—in other words, the solidity of the chapel's side tower gives weight to the southwestern corner. This emphasis draws the visitor's attention, both visually and physically, to the recessed main entrance sheltered by the tower.



When we examine the breadth expression of Unity Temple, we note a contrasting sense of motion. Wright's church expresses what Thiis-Evensen would call a *split motif*. The building form has been shaped into two concrete masses that channel the visitor into a gap between. In this sense, the entrance is suppressed, giving prominence to the much stronger masses on either side. The seeming tightness of the entrance suggests a separation between inside and outside and offers a sense of seclusion for the world of worship within.

MOTION AND HEIGHT

Thiis-Evensen would also consider the buildings' sense of motion in terms of height. Ronchamp's vertical expression is best described as an *open motif*—in other words, the wall seems to extend itself up and down (as well as left and right), evoking a sense of expansion and freedom. Anchored by the strong and dependable tower, the wall joins with the roof to stretch skyward and suggest a quality of flight.

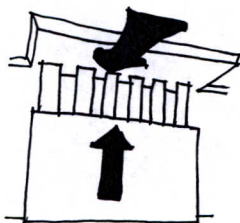
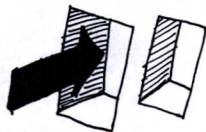
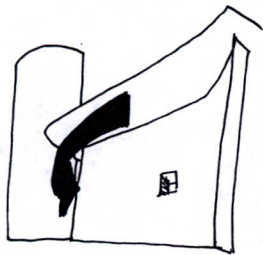


In contrast, there is conflict expressed in Unity Temple's sense of vertical movement. On one hand, the wall can be said to express a *squeezed motif*. If one stands at ground level and looks upward, the long, overhanging roof plane generates a powerful downward movement. The building's physical reality, however, tells a different story. Here, the wall's lowest division pushes the windows of the wall's second-story division upward, leaving only the thin plane of the roof at the top. In this sense, the wall seems to push itself upward, expressing what Thiis-Evensen would call a *rising motif*.

MOTION AND DEPTH

Finally, we can consider the two walls' expressions of motion in terms of *depth*—the relationship between inside and outside. Ronchamp's south wall gently sweeps inward towards the side-positioned entrance, drawing the visitor toward the inside. Also

important here are the south wall's unusually placed windows, which vary in terms of the depth they are sunk. Those windows placed near the surface of the outside wall suggest the inside's pushing its way out. On the other hand, the windows that are deeply set suggest the outside pressing its way in. In addition, these deeply set windows far behind the plane of the wall evoke the thick walls of a fortress. The result is a sense of security countered by the fluid, uplifting vertical expression of wall and roof.



In Wright's Unity temple, the sense of depth is also defined in part by window placement. But in contrast to Ronchamp, Unity's expression of depth is one way only: the outside seems to push its way in. Unlike Ronchamp, where this expression happens because the walls are punched directly in the wall plane, Unity's western wall seems to allow the outside

in because the windows are placed in deeply set panels between powerful square columns. In addition, the sense of depth is enhanced by the "floating" roof that casts a shadow obscuring the window plane, which falls into darkness.

The western wall of Unity also amplifies the sense of security and closure from the outside by raising the windows above street level and replacing potential ground connections with an expanse of concrete. The overall heaviness of the wall, however, is countered by the force of a powerful horizontal roof plane, which seems to hover in place and give the building a certain amount of lift.

SOUNDING IN DIFFERENT WAYS

Thiis-Evensen's theory helps to understand the different expressions of sacredness evoked by Ronchamp and Unity. Ronchamp's south wall suggests, on one hand, feelings of security yet, on the other hand, a sense of spiritual freedom. In contrast, Unity's west wall seems to harbor its worship space within from the outside world as a mother may protect her children. Like Ronchamp, Unity evokes a feeling of security but, here, the search for spirituality is turned inward to the soul of the building, through the sturdy and deeply set seclusion that the outer walls bring.

Architecture may be thought of as a musical chorus to which architectural parts are set. Thiis-Evensen provides one valuable way to discriminate and read these architectural parts so that the chorus might be better "heard" and thus better understood. LeCorbusier's Ronchamp Chapel and Wright's Unity Temple are both deemed remarkable architectural masterpieces yet each sounds in a different way. Though using similar materials, the two architects have composed vastly different music and to great effect.

NOTES

1. T. Thiis-Evensen, *Archetypes in Architecture*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1987.
2. In *Archetypes*, Thiis-Evensen considers buildings only as they are experienced from *outside going in*. Clearly, there is also a phenomenology of architecture that probes the building as it is experienced from *inside going out*. This topic, however, would require its own detailed phenomenology, which one hopes Thiis-Evensen or someone else will eventually provide.

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