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Adapting the Research Tradition of Phenomenology to the Ecovillage Design Studio

The Ecovillage Design Studio is situated as the culmination of an Ecovillage Design Course (EDC). The EDC is a systematic opportunity for participants to explore and engage with the multidimensional, multidisciplinary knowledge bases required of competent ecovillage designing. As such, the Design Studio may be considered the ‘applied’ component of the EDC, the place where it all comes together, where participants get a chance to apply all they’ve learned in actual site-design scenarios. Mare (2007) has succinctly articulated the stages of the ecovillage design process within such a format.

Village Design Institute, an educational non-profit based in the State of Washington, has pioneered the development of the Ecovillage Design Studio, adapting what is a traditional element of architecture education to the particular requirements of a ‘sustainable community design and development.’ “Sustainable” refers explicitly to the long-term health and vitality of human and ecological communities (Berry, 1988, 1999; Bowers, 2010; Capra, 2002; Orr, 1992, 1994). This express focus on contributing to “long-term health and vitality” is what distinguishes the *Ecovillage* Design Studio from its architectural counterparts, which have become increasingly technical and abstract in character, often relying exclusively on computer-aided drawing (CAD) programs (Mallgrave, 2011). In these modern studios, students typically sit at a

desk while gazing into the screen of a laptop, clicking a mouse through the various pop-up windows that will eventually produce the design of a virtual building.

It's important to realize that the designs produced in this manner stand in isolation, not connected to any real, living ecological context. In effect, an individual isolated ego has produced an individual isolated building. What's more, the cognitive processing was entirely 'in the head,' that is, a very limited portion of the total available perceptual apparatus of the integrated 'body-mind' (Dychtwald, 1977; Gallagher, 2005; Johnson, 1987) will have been accessed by this method. Thus, it would be fair to characterize the digital design experience of a modern architectural Design Studio as 'bodiless' or 'incorporeal' (which is the same as saying 'virtual'). How could such practice ever contribute to "long-term health and vitality?" This is as much a critique of the legacy of a techno-scientific order based upon the epistemology of Cartesian dualism – which famously posits mind and body to be separate 'substances' – as it is a critique of modern architectural practice; indeed, one could aver that the Cartesian mind/body split is the very *essence* of the sustainability problem, for it results, ultimately, in objectifying a world 'out there' that can be rationalized as disposable (for well-pointed analyses on the effects of "Cartesian anxiety" and its sociological consequences, see Bernstein, 1983; Bordo, 1987; Mare, 2004; Rozemond, 1998).

That's why the Ecovillage Design Studio, preparing the way for a sustainable community design and development, is organized to be an expression of 'whole body awareness.' The Ecovillage Design challenge is not simply to produce a single building in isolation; rather, the challenge is at *settlement* scale. Here, designers will include in their considerations the placement of *assemblages* of buildings, of varying forms and functions, along with their associated circulation patterns, nodes, and ancillary units. Additionally, since the ecovillage is, by

definition, an effort at self-reliance (Context Institute, 1991; Jackson, 2003), designers will need to consider the beneficial placement of gardens, orchards, timber lots, water storage and distribution systems, renewable energy systems, waste and disposal systems (including human waste and wastewater), the integration of animals, economic opportunities, recreation, etc. All these various systems will need to be positioned not only in mutually-supportive relationships with each other, but the entire built human environment will need to be optimally integrated into the existing landscape ecology. Such a multi-perspectival design challenge requires heightened sensitivity to what Gibson (1966, 1979), in his language of “active perceptual systems,” describes as “affordances.” As such, participants in the Ecovillage Design Studio are summoned to open their senses as never before.

This is where Phenomenology comes in, for Phenomenology is (in my languaging) a philosophy of the direct perception of lived experience. Within its broad exposition, there are many useful concepts that can be adapted to the Ecovillage Design Studio; other concepts will have limited value, so it will be necessary to be selective. What follows, then, is a critique of the research tradition of Phenomenology based on its relevance to a ‘sustainable community design and development.’

While it was Hegel who wrote the first *Phenomenology of Mind*, an idealist aspiration “toward the absolute knowledge of the Absolute” (Kockelmans, 1967, p. 24), nonetheless, it is Edmund Husserl who is given credit for initiating the modern project of Phenomenology. The purpose of Husserl’s phenomenological philosophy was to position philosophy as a “rigorous science” (ibid, p. 26), with the intention that “this philosophical science is to provide the foundation for all other sciences” (Hammond *et al.* 1994, p. 15). Husserl believed there was a crisis in the human and

physical sciences that derived from their reliance on what he called the “natural attitude:” “In the natural attitude...one takes it for granted that there is an external world of (various kinds of) objects, which exists independently of one’s experience of it, and that knowledge of this world is possible” (ibid, p. 41). And so scientists go on gathering, testing, and accumulating knowledge about this external world *without ever bothering to question underlying assumptions about how this knowledge is even possible*. This latter concern is the domain of a phenomenological philosophy. McKenna (1989, p. 182) helps to clarify this position:

In the development of modern European thought a critical function of ensuring genuineness arose in the form of a “philosophical” activity, one that did not itself generate scientific results but which attempted to clarify the basic concepts and presuppositions of the sciences and to test and secure their validity by relating them to more evident and more fundamental cognitions.

The astute reader will have observed that this was in fact the Cartesian project, to discover an absolutely unshakable foundation for knowledge (Descartes, 1960); and indeed, one of Husserl’s earliest publications was entitled *Cartesian Meditations*, in which the author exclaims: “one might almost call transcendental phenomenology a neo-Cartesianism” (1977, p. 1). As the treatise unfolds, however, Husserl insists that if Descartes had pursued his method to its ultimate conclusion, he would have arrived at some very different premises than he did. “In particular, Husserl refuses to accept the doctrines of what he terms ‘Objective Nature’ and ‘the duality of finite substances’ [i.e.] the existence of a subject-independent world, populated by two kinds of entities, minds and bodies” (Hammond *et al.* p. 14). Thus, although the two thinkers embarked on a similar project, whose purpose was establishing an “absolute foundation” for knowledge, and while they both relied on non-empirical subjective analysis, one was led to an

inherent dualism, “mistakenly ascrib[ing] to the pure Ego the status of an object in the world” (ibid, p. 31), while the other was led to a nondual “transcendental subjectivity,” “transcendental” precisely because of [the Ego’s] presuppositional relationship to the world, its providing the basis for the world’s ‘existential status’” (ibid, p. 29).

In a passage in one of his later publications, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Husserl reveals the sort of science that philosophical Cartesian dualism legitimates:

For Galilean natural science, mathematical-physical nature is objective-true nature; it is this nature that is supposed to manifest itself in the merely subjective appearances. It is thus clear – and we have already pointed this out – that nature, in exact natural science, is *not the actually experienced nature*, that of the life-world. It is an idea that has arisen out of idealization and has been hypothetically substituted for actually intuited nature... The conceptual method of idealization is the fundament of the whole method of natural science (i.e., of the pure science of bodies), the latter being the method of inventing “exact” theories and formulae and also of reapplying them within the praxis which takes place in the world of actual experience (1970, p. 221, added emphasis).

This last sentence reminds me of using CAD programs on laptops to design individual isolated buildings; that is, idealizations without context being applied to the real world of actual experience. Yet, to be fair, the entire modern built environment conforms to this interpretation: “an idea that has arisen out of idealization,” a set of Cartesian coordinates in space lacking any relationship to a living underlying ecology – and so the essence of unsustainability once again reveals itself.

With this brief introduction to Husserlian phenomenology, enough of the main points have been presented to begin making adaptations to the Ecovillage Design Studio.

Let's begin with the notion introduced by McKenna, that of the "genuineness" of relating concepts to "more evident and more fundamental cognitions." Husserl invested a lot of energy in this effort for this was the way of overcoming the "natural attitude." "In the First Meditation, Husserl introduces the key phenomenological procedure of 'bracketing', the *epoche*" (Hammond *et al.* p. 16), which is a procedure for willfully doubting and suspending presuppositions or prior conceptual categories upon entering an intentional act of perception.

The attempt at doubting sets up a neutral attitude toward the conviction in question. It does not change the modality of the conviction, but suspends it for the time being and brackets the object of belief... We put our acts out of action and we bracket the things, facts, attributes, and ultimately the world, which are the objectives of our acts... [Husserl] also introduces the term "epoche" as a name for neutralization (Sokolowski, 1974, pp. 172-3).

Elsewhere (e.g. *Ideen I*), the *epoche*, as the most basic phenomenological procedure, is introduced as "phenomenological reduction." Wagner (1983, p. 42) does a great job of presenting this procedure in a way that reveals its relevance to Ecovillage Design:

[Husserl] designated it "reduction" because he wanted to reduce the observed phenomenon to its own features, instead of observing it in the light of preconceived interpretations and evaluations. Distantiation from preconceptions became the first condition of *seeing things as they actually were* (emphasis added).

Recall the critique of natural science, a procedure where nature is perceived and described in terms of mathematical idealizations, not as it is actually experienced. Thus, with the reduction Husserl is getting closer to “fundamental cognitions.” Wagner continues:

To practice reduction you had to look at what you found retrospectively in your consciousness as if it were something new. You had to put aside reminders of earlier involvements with similar objects, and the standard interpretations such an object might invoke in you. You had to take a ‘neutral’ stance, observe, and suspend judgment, including judgment concerning the reality of the object. Prior knowledge of objects of a similar kind, of their general characteristics, of their ontological status, were not to be discarded, but rather to be “put in brackets” (ibid).

As an ecovillage designer, I approach a landscape in its wholistic entirety, as a *gestalten* (Kohler, 1947). I want my perception to be clear and open, uncluttered by prior prejudices, so that I may perceive subtle nuances of distinction, that which Bateson (1972, p. 381) made famous as “differences which make a difference.” In order to achieve the desired results, I practice the phenomenological *epoche* and temporarily suspend any pre-conceived notions I may have about such a landscape, *this* landscape, its purpose or potential. I am looking for Gibson’s “affordances,” what the environment offers, “what it *provides* or *furnishes*, either for good or ill (1979, p. 127, original emphasis). I may have made preliminary determinations about where certain elements should fit into the landscape (this is especially true of owners, the people with “title” to the land), yet as the Design Studio commences I purposely “bracket” these pre-determinations so that I may approach the project afresh, neutral, wide open to possibilities. Prior determinations, conceptions, ideologies, idiosyncrasies, etc. act as blinders to the nature that is actually there, waiting to be revealed, waiting to be engaged in participatory co-evolution.

McKenna (1989, p. 186) claims “The point of the epoche is to exercise a control over reflective experience in order to keep within the bounds of what is indubitable.” I shall have more to say about this later because I doubt such indubitability is possible, or even desirable, when approaching a 4-dimensional “living landscape” (Steiner, 1991).

Another important concept introduced in the overview to Husserlian phenomenology was that of the “life-world.” The life-world was mentioned above as that nature which is actually *experienced*, as opposed to that which is idealized for scientific evaluation. Husserl employed the concept of the life-world rather late in his career, and this largely in response to the popular upsurge of an *Existenzphilosophie* being worked out by his protégé Martin Heidegger. The translator David Carr (1970, pp. xxv-vi) places this development in perspective: “existentialism had given needed expression to something real: a deeply felt lack of direction for man’s existence as a whole, a sense of the emptiness of Europe’s cultural values, a feeling of crisis and breakdown, the demand that philosophy be relevant to life.” The arising of the concept of the life-world, then, was an attempt to make phenomenological philosophy germane to actual lived experience; and in *The Crisis* (1970, pp. 103-89) Husserl devotes the entirety of Part IIIA to the explication of this life-world, the “intuitively given surrounding world” (p. 104), and its position within the rest of his philosophy.

It was, however, a student of Max Weber, Alfred Schutz, and Schutz’s student Helmut Wagner, who would utilize and expand the potential of the life-world to its fullest in their *sociological* theories. What follows, from Wagner’s book *Phenomenology of Consciousness and Sociology of the Life-world* (1983, p. 2), is an excellent introduction to this perspective. After

acknowledging that Husserlian phenomenology is a movement “from inner consciousness to outer world,” he establishes Schutz’s contribution:

[I]n his later, decisive work, Schutz agreed with others who insisted that we immediately experience not our consciousness as such, but its content. He showed that this content is eminently social from the start, and is naively understood and interpreted in socially given terms. In other words, we know the common sense, everyday world first: it is given to us. By reflecting on our awareness of this world, we discover ourselves. Therefore, a common sense way of proceeding, different from that of phenomenological theory, would be to move from the group to the person, from the social to the individual, from the outer world to inner consciousness.

This may be an interesting exercise, yet what about the “everyday world” being the origin of the unreflective “natural attitude” of preconceptions and presuppositions, of unthinking conditioned response? How are we ever to arrive at pure perception, pure “transcendental subjectivity,” while dallying in such a realm? Once again, phenomenological sociology forwards an explanation by noting the dual movement of consciousness, both from inner to outer and from outer to inner: *consciousness requires context*:

The sciences that would interpret and explain human action and thought must begin with a description of the foundational structures of what is pre-scientific, the reality which seems self-evident to men remaining within the natural attitude. This reality is the everyday life-world. It is the province of reality in which man continuously participates in ways which are at once inevitable and patterned (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973, p. 3).

I have to admit, this sounds a bit dull to me, like accepting a ‘herd mentality,’ a sort of reduction to the least common denominator. Is this what we want our ecovillage to be? Schutz

and Luckmann, I believe, address this concern resolutely: “only within this realm [of the life-world] can one be understood by his fellow-[citizens], and only in it can he work together with them. Only in the world of everyday life can a common, communicative, surrounding world be constituted. The world of everyday life is consequently man’s fundamental and paramount reality” (ibid).

It would seem that a phenomenology of the life-world is addressing a recurring critique of traditional Husserlian-oriented phenomenology: that it is so personal, private, and inaccessible – and thus lacking credibility as scientific data. As a research tradition, phenomenology is considered *first-person methodology* (Varela & Shear, 1999), what is often considered to be unreliable (even subversive) *introspection* whose input has been thoroughly prohibited by third-person behavioral psychology (Vermersch, 1999; see Overgaard, 2004, for resolution with second-person perspective). An account from the life-world, then, gives recognition to social – as well as ecological – structures of consciousness while maintaining the intimacy and ‘lived experience’ of a first-person perspective. “Lived experience is the starting point and end point of phenomenological research. The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its *essence*” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 36, added emphasis).

Participants in the Ecovillage Design Studio will benefit immensely from this understanding. The manifestation of a full-featured ecovillage is a broadly social affair – it is, after all, sustainable *community* design and development. Each ecovillage could be considered a unique life-world of its own. There are internal social and ecological – as well as *processual* – structures which help to shape and define the identity of this particular life-world. Since organism and environment co-evolve “in a history of structural coupling” (Maturana & Varela, 1998), the structures of the life-world could be considered reflective of the structures of

consciousness, such that each individual life-world will be constitutive of a unique corresponding structure of consciousness, resulting in a distinctive way of perceiving the world for those inhabitants. This certainly would be an expression of the motive “unity in diversity;” yet could it go so far as to propose that the structuring of each individual ecovillage life-world will be constitutive of a corresponding isomorphic neural substrate? This would be entering the province of *neurophenomenology*, which, two decades since its inception, is still an experimental research program (for sample, see Bayne, 2004; Laughlin *et al.* 1990; Lutz & Thompson, 2003; Roy, *et al.* 1999; Van de Laar, 2008).

At this point in the ruminations, I always wonder if it is possible to *design* for consciousness; that is, with enough research into the effects of the life-world on consciousness, could designers not selectively choose structures, patterns, processes, morphologies, relationships, etc. which may in fact contribute to the *enhancement* or *expansion* or *evolution* of consciousness? That potentiality will need to remain speculative in this paper; for now I wish to close this section by mentioning that Schutz & Luckmann’s two-volume work *The Structures of the Life-World* reads as a veritable set of design criteria to the sensitive ecovillage designer.

Now that a couple of the main features of Husserlian phenomenology have been made adaptable to the Ecovillage Design Studio – to the point that it could be asserted that Phenomenology serves as an *epistemological foundation* for the Studio – I would like to highlight a couple prominent features which are not so well adapted. This is so that the student of phenomenology may be alerted to some languaging which will *not* contribute to a sustainable community design and development, though it may be applicable elsewhere.

One of the first features I noticed when reading Phenomenology was the ubiquitous use of the word ‘object.’ One can turn almost randomly to any page in a phenomenological textbook and notice its usage. Here I open to pages 206-7 of Husserl’s *Logical Investigations, Vol. 1*. (first edition published in 1901) and read:

It is plainly an undertaking of great scientific import to show up the psychological ways and means through which the idea of a world as an object of experience...

Is “a world” best conceived as “an object?” Surely it is more multidimensional than that. And then on page 182 of Sokolowski’s *Husserlian Meditations*, admittedly after some searching, I find the statement:

Husserl elaborates this by showing that in the awareness of any higher-level object or sense, like value, beauty, or person, we must distinguish between the full object of awareness and the part of the full object that is “seized.”

This statement seems to be saying that even immaterial notions like “value” or “beauty” can be reduced to “objects,” albeit at a “higher-level.” Surely there must be more appropriate language to represent the author’s intent. Once again completely at random, I open *Husserl’s Phenomenology: A Textbook* at page 331 and find in an article written by Forrest Williams in which the author explains:

Despite the undeniable fact that sense perception is essentially never a completed process – there is always another “profile” of the object that is appresented and hence still presentable...

That should be enough to make my point; for, despite the fact that Husserl set out to debunk Cartesian dualism by situating “Ego and its cogitations” not as just another substance *in* the world but rather as existing transcendently “prior *to* the world,” I fear that objectifying

everything by using the word ‘object’ will only serve to maintain the status quo. And even though we are assured that the use of the word ‘object’ is just a convenience, that it’s not meant to refer only to ‘things’ but also to include processes and ideas (I even saw consciousness *itself* once referred to as an ‘object’), I am not convinced of its neutrality. In an over-objectified (i.e. hyper-materialistic) society such as ours, the continued use of the word ‘object’ may serve to perpetuate the practice of individual isolated egos producing individual isolated buildings – objectively of course. I can imagine Husserl sitting at his desk, making a keen study of perception by gazing thoughtfully at a vase, perhaps, or some other ‘object’ in the room and assiduously recording his subjective processes – *but that is not how perception developed from an evolutionary perspective.*

Once again, J.J. Gibson (1966, 1979) led the way here with his “ecological approach” to visual perception. Turvey & Carello (1986) elaborate on Gibson’s ideas in an important “pictorial essay,” and note:

Terrestrial animals encounter prosaic ‘problems’ in the everyday course of locomoting. As Gibson (1979) put it: ‘What animals perceive are the substances, places, objects, and events of the environment instead of objects in space. What animals discriminate are the meaningful properties of substances, surfaces, etc., instead of the primary and secondary qualities of physical objects. What they move around in is the medium instead of space. What they see is the layout, the dihedrals and curves that surfaces make to one another, instead of depth in space’ (p. 134).

One might call this an active ‘phenomenology of motility’ as contrasted with a passive ‘phenomenology of objects;’ yet, this is exactly how the dynamic “perceptual systems” of humans evolved, by locomoting through a living landscape scanning for “affordances,” not by

sitting at a desk or staring into a computer screen. These same ideas are contained within the “enactive approach” to cognitive science, a term first introduced by Varela, Thompson, and Rosch in 1991, and sometimes referred to as an “ecological” or “embodied” approach (Gallagher & Varela, 2001). Fundamental to this approach is the idea that “cognition is a form of embodied action. Cognitive structures and processes emerge from recurrent sensorimotor patterns of perception and action. Sensorimotor coupling between organism and environment modulates, but does not determine, the formation of endogenous, dynamic patterns of neural activity, which in turn inform sensorimotor coupling” (Thompson, 2005, p. 1). Once again, a neural substrate could be conjectured, which means that all these paths eventually lead to neurophenomenology.

Another important contribution elaborating Gibson’s work, and thus advocating an enactive phenomenology of perception, comes from M.J. Braund (2008) of Brock University in Canada:

Gibson’s theory of direct perception states that the environment contains all of the information needed to specify its properties. Hence, perceiving these properties is a matter of detecting the information available in the environment (p. 123)... Perception is inherently active and exploratory. It seeks out alterations in the vast flow of information enveloping it. These alterations are detected when the perceiver *moves through the environment* and probes it with a pair of glancing eyes (p. 124, added emphasis).

In the Ecovillage Design Studio, then, these understandings will be realized by conceiving exercises in which participants get a chance to practice the *epoché* while actively surveying the landscape *while moving through it*. Reference will be made to the fact that this is how the nervous system – *the very same nervous system that is doing the perceiving* – evolved and refined itself over millennia. In this way, traditional phenomenology, a phenomenology of

discrete ‘objects,’ is being modified to adapt to the purposes of a dynamic sustainable community design and development.

Another feature of traditional phenomenology that will need to be modified to adapt to the Ecovillage Design Studio is the emphasis on ‘transcendentalism.’ Husserl was formulating his phenomenological philosophy with explicit reference to the continental tradition of thinking in terms of ideal or pure “absolutes.” Originating in the Enlightenment with the seminal works of Kant and Hegel, there seemed to be a burning desire to arrive at an absolute foundation for truth and knowledge. For example, earlier in this paper it was shown that Hegel’s incipient *Phenomenology of Mind* was an exploration into “absolute knowledge of the Absolute” – whatever that may be. In a commentary, Kockelmans (1967, p. 183) characterizes Husserlian phenomenology as: “Genuine Phenomenological Philosophy as Transcendental Idealism.” This sort of language assumes an aura of the otherworldly, not quite grounded in the life-world. In Husserl’s own words (1970, pp. 97-8, original emphases):

I should like to note the following right away: the expression “transcendental philosophy” has been much used since Kant... I myself use the word “transcendental” *in the broadest sense* for the original motif, discussed in detail above, which through Descartes confers meaning upon all modern philosophies, the motif which, in all of them, seeks to come to itself, so to speak – seeks to attain the genuine and pure form of its task and its systematic development. It is the motif of inquiring back into the ultimate source of all the formations of knowledge... This source bears the title *I-myself*...

I wish to note here that all this is not as anachronistic as it might at first appear. As was shown on back on page 8, a modern scholar like McKenna is still searching “within the bounds

of what is indubitable” And then, among the impressive collection of writings assembled in the 1999 volume *Naturalizing Phenomenology*, there is a recurring and ongoing tendency to reference Husserl as a font of credibility. There is even a Paris Husserl Archives which boasts “research affiliates” and Husserlian scholars – so his influence cannot be underestimated. Zahavi goes so far as to say, in reference to “an unbridgeable gap between the neurophysiological level and the experiential level,” “the most likely candidate for the role of closing the explanatory gap is *Husserlian phenomenology*” (2004, p. 332, original emphasis).

It could even be argued that the Enlightenment project of transcendental idealism itself has not yet expired. I’m thinking here of its manifestation in terms of the sterile and lifeless – though absolutely geometrically pure – spatial arrangements of a modern metropolitan downtown grid. Nobody is expected to live there (except the homeless); it’s just a place for conducting abstract business (like finance). Or I’m thinking in terms of a modern end-of-quarter exhibition at a university architectural program. The presentations are really spiffy since they were created and printed with up-to-date CAD software. Some of the effects are quite remarkable – though the studies themselves often appear to lack context, as if they existed in some pure, transcendental virtual realm. If you look closer, you may notice some of the textures and patterns, like certain cloud formations, are used over and over again across all the presentations, since these were the limits provided by the CAD program.

An Ecovillage Design Studio is likely to seem very messy by comparison; that is, it is not so transcendently ideal. Since participants are actively exploring the landscape, it is possible that some of them might get mud on their shoes. Since all the drawing is done by hand, through a series of thematic overlays, smudges will inevitably appear. Since participants are actively engaged in a ‘group design process,’ disagreements or varying opinions often arise as to most

optimal placement or priorities of usage. Someone will need to prepare the food and clean the dishes. And then again, the topic of how to recycle the human waste must be addressed. Oh, the lifeworld can be so un-transcendentally un-ideal sometimes...

I think that's the very reason why Heidegger set out on his project of *Existenzphilosophie*. That's why in his opus *Being and Time* (1962) he explores such mundane realities as the phenomenology of using tools or what happens to the stream of consciousness when something of everyday usage gets broke? Heidegger's is truly a phenomenology of "being-in-the-world" – or, in the more erudite words of a scholar, "In his major philosophical work, *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger defines his philosophy as universal phenomenological ontology which takes its point of departure from the hermeneutics of human being (*Dasein*)" (Schrag, 1967, p. 277).

Another major development along this trajectory of Existential Phenomenology was the contribution begun in the 1940s by the Frenchman Maurice Merleau-Ponty. His *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962) outlined a perspective that could be considered even more grounded in the life-world, since it was a *phenomenology of embodiment*.

A striking feature of the *Phenomenology of Perception* is that its philosophical arguments are conducted largely through the detailed examination of substantive theories about human action and perception; and that consequently the writings of psychologists and physiologists are given equal prominence to those of philosophers (Hammond *et al.* p. 127).

In my opinion, this was a major advancement out of the transcendental realm and into a discussion that could have real practicable value for people forging a sustainable lifeworld. The sustainable lifeworld so envisioned will be created by healthy bodies living in attunement to a healthy ecology far into the indefinite future, by definition. The inputs of psychologists (non-

behavioral) and physiologists are most welcome – in fact, if I had to write a fourth Comprehensive Assessment, I would focus on adapting *embodied* phenomenology, or Somatics, to the Ecovillage Design Studio. This integration could be rightly described as a form of yoga.

[I]t would be precisely the development of a self-referential, human symbolic capacity that reaches back into body schema, postural tone, and tactile kinesthesia for the spatial metaphors necessary for both abstract thought *and* for these more directly embodied felt meanings of Being-in-the-world. Their further intensification becomes mystical experience (Hunt, 2007, p. 213).

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