

# HUMAN SPATIALITY: A CULTURAL PHENOMENOLOGY OF LANDSCAPES AND PLACES

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*The paper applies phenomenological method to the analysis of perception of landscapes and other spatial formations. A spatial formation is seen as a region of space, or a territory, with its specific meaning that is experienced by the subject who views it. Husserl's theory of meaning-formation is used to clarify how spatial formations obtain meanings that define them as landscape, home, or country. It is suggested that besides the subject's position and the series of perceptions of objects, the decisive element that determines the meaning of the specific spatial formation is what Husserl calls a "grasping sense" (Auffassungssinn). It defines the gaze specific to a particular spatiality. When the "grasping sense" becomes intersubjectively valid and institutionalized, it obtains the status of a cultural form which functions as a meaning-bestowing automaton for interpreting the world for entire societies. Finally it is argued that the spatiality specific to human Umwelten serves the purpose of creating and maintaining meanings that would otherwise disappear in the flux of time.*

**Keywords:** perception of landscapes, spatial formations, phenomenological method, grasping sense, cultural form.

The human being is an *animal symbolicum*. He makes sense of the world by creating spatial and temporal unities, and borders between them – borders that can include doors and gateways from one spatial unit to another, or walls never to be crossed. Spatial units form the sites and places we live in. A home, for example, is a space surrounded by walls of the house which mark the border between what is mine and what belongs to others, what is ordered according to my will and what is not. I can leave the space of my home through the door that leads to the corridor of a storied house: and by doing so, I am entering into

the space with quite differently structured meanings, horizons of possibilities, codes of behaviour, aesthetic norms, ownership rights, power-relations, etc.

Some places are extraordinary and provoke us emotionally, such as landscapes that open up for a touristic gaze at special "points of interest", as they are called, – the places where one can travel by submitting himself to tourist industry. Another type of emotionally significant location includes the sacred places of churches, memorial places of funeral sites, ceremonial places, and others. There are virtual places created *ex nihilo* by particular human beings – such

as the imaginary landscapes and fantasy worlds in literary fiction or in painting. There are also virtual places created by collective imagination, such as the physical universe presented to us in scientific theories, nature presented to us in photographs in *National Geographic*, the promised land of the Old Testament, hell and purgatory, the ancient land of a people, the sacred place that can be found inside me according to some esoteric traditions, etc. Some of these locations can be entered at any moment in time, some of them never. Some of them have to be avoided – like prison or hell, others can constitute the objects of desire, such as tourist sites, sanatoria, or paradise. We experience such spaces as relatively coherent unities, each with its own distinct sense. Within the limits of a single place several meaning-structures may conflict, as most obviously in the case when partners argue about the arrangement of their home, or when citizens argue about common public spaces, but even then all participants are probably in agreement about the spatial unity within which their ideas conflict. There is a sense of the place that they share and the conflict of meanings is only possible on the basis of it.

From the phenomenological point of view we can ask three different questions concerning the spatial formations that we encounter in our daily lives. First, how are the meaningful spatial formations brought into existence? Here I am obviously not asking for the physical account of how the corresponding materials have obtained the shape they have and how they are brought into this configuration. Rather, I am asking about how they are created as phenomena

that are meaningfully experienced, i.e., how are certain meanings attached to territorial three-dimensional extensions, either physical or imaginary, and how do they come to define our experience of these territories. Secondly, we can ask how a spatial sphere that is defined by a certain meaning can influence our understanding of things that are placed or take place in it. How does the meaning of a thing depend on its spatial background or spatial reference? Why is a pile of automobile tires so out of place in a natural landscape, and why do the old ruins fit in so well? Or why is the Bronze Soldier monument in Tallinn so much more satisfying when placed in a graveyard rather than at the city centre? And third, we can ask a more general philosophical question about why do we create meaningful spatial formations? What is the function of investing places with meanings?

Let us start from the first type of questions: how are the spaces, places, and landscapes formed? How, for example, does a terrestrial area become a landscape? How do we cut off a certain terrain from its surroundings and give it a meaning that is constricted to, and does not apply, beyond that terrain? Obviously the phenomenological answer does not lie in the set of objects that inhabit a spatial formation. In other words, a landscape is not constituted by geomorphologic complexes of physical elements that lay on the surface of the planet Earth. If it was, an Estonian geographer Tõnu Oja argues, “then a landscape is nothing but complex of the piles of gravel and bush growing on them. On the territory of Estonia, then, mostly glacial sediments and what is on or beneath them” (Oja 2008:

124b). Cultural geographers, such as Oja have proposed that landscape is a cultural, and not natural, object. Many of them have adopted a phenomenological approach to this matter. Thus Tim Cresswell argues that landscape is a culturally coded *subjective representation* of a portion of the earth's surface that can be viewed from a certain spot, rather than the mere physical object of this representation (Cresswell 2004: 10, my emphasis). Similarly, according to Denis Cosgrove landscape is a way of seeing, rather than the object that is seen (Cosgrove 1989: 121). Both Cosgrove and Cresswell are talking about landscape in the status of a phenomenon – as a content of subjective experience. In terms of Husserl, landscape is seen as an intentional object (*Gegenstand*) of experience – that which exhibits itself in an individual consciousness during the act of a landscape experience. The physical objects on a terrain just are there; but they can be meaningful as belonging to something that is called a landscape only if somebody views and understands them in such a way.

Let us look at Husserl's phenomenological account of experience more closely by applying it to an act of landscape experience. Experiencing something like a landscape must be a complex act of consciousness, consisting of several part-acts (*Teilakte*) (Husserl 2009: 415–417 (V, §17–18))<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A part-act (*Teilakt*) should not be confused with a part of an act (*Teil des Aktes*). Unlike the latter, each part-act is a structured whole that has its distinct object (*Gegenstand*). If such structured wholes belong to another whole of a complex act (*komplexe Akt oder Gesamtakt*), they are called part-acts in relation to the whole of the complex act (See Husserl's explanation in Husserl 2009: 415-416 (V §17)).

First there has to be a series of perceptions of physical objects of a specific type. The typical physical objects constituting a natural landscape include mountains, valleys, trees and other vegetation, the sky, clouds, houses, roads, pathways, people, etc, or pictorial or discursive images of the same objects. As Husserl points out, it makes no difference whether the objects of experience are real or imagined, whether they correspond to how things are in nature, or misrepresent the natural order (Husserl 2009: 378 (V, §11); 439 (Beilage zu §§ 11 und 20)). The set of objects can, of course, vary to a great extent, but it is clear that a single tree or two bicycles or the inside interior of a pencil box do not constitute a landscape. Thus we can conclude that there is a normative scope and range of objects, real or imaginary, needed for experiencing a landscape. The experiencing of a landscape must include the perception of such objects as its part-acts.

Now, the way in which the objects are perceived is partially determined by the position of the perceiving subject. The physical objects constituting a landscape must be perceived from a certain distance and angle, not from above as in aerial photos, and normally also not from the height of human eyes. We are accustomed to see a landscape from a mountain hill, or from a higher building, or what is most peculiar to experiencing landscapes; from special sight-seeing sites and platforms, or sight-seeing towers, which are built with a specific purpose of creating a publicly accessible site from where a perspective that is necessary for a landscape view can be attained. The normative distance to the

objects has a certain range. If an object is put in front of my eyes so close that I see nothing besides it, then what I see is usually not called a landscape, even if the object “objectively” belongs to it. And at the same time the objects cannot be too distant; a view towards the Earth from the Moon does normally not count as a landscape either.

Thus in order to experience something as a landscape we do not just need a certain scope and range of objects, but also a very specifically determined point of view towards them that enables us to create a *perspective* specific to landscape experience. It is an interesting fact that the normative (or desirable) height of the perspective constitutive of landscape experience is often set considerably higher than human eyes are from the ground, suggesting that a way of seeing that defines a landscape does not belong to our ordinary day-to-day experiences. And indeed, the landscape experience often belongs to the extraordinary moments of life that have to do with tourism, leisure, or sublimity. Viewing a landscape is usually not a part of the daily routine even if one lives in picturesque surroundings. Cosgrove argues that the gaze necessary for creating landscapes was developed during the Renaissance when a new relationship between humans and their environment became established (Cosgrove 1989: 121–122). It was a time when several theoretical discourses emerged (cartography, astronomy, linear perspective theory in landscape painting and architecture) that started to construct the relationship between humans and nature in a new way – by imposing rational order on it and making it accessible and manageable to a human being, who, in pur-

pose of getting a better overview of things, was lifted from the ground and put at the position from which the perspectival view was created. It was not the position of daily routine, nor was the sight that opened up from there meant for everyday use. Rather, it was a position of a majestic sovereign of nature who soon started to exploit and shape it according to his will. Formerly such an over-viewing position was reserved for God. Cosgrove concludes that “landscape is thus intimately linked with a new way of seeing the world as a rationally ordered, designed and harmonious creation whose structure and mechanism are accessible to the human mind as well as to the eye” (Cosgrove 1989: 121).

However, as important as the point of view is for constituting a landscape experience, it is not decisive. Landscape is not just a set of certain type of objects perceived from a normative perspective and distance, even though these features are the necessary conditions of landscape experience. The new position of a human being towards nature and the idea of nature itself as a rationally or aesthetically ordered scene could not have been created by the position of the viewer alone. As Gosgrove indicated above, a sense of whole was needed in which the perceived objects belong – the sense of the whole which defines the scene as a landscape.

According to Husserl in the *Logical Investigations*, if we are talking about any complex act of consciousness, then there is always a specific part-act that dominates over the rest of the part-acts. This dominating part-act is the act of sense-bestowal (*sinngebende Akt*) that gives to the whole

complex of perceptions a meaning that applies to all of them and binds them together (Husserl 2009: 421–422 (V §19)). This binding function is performed by the “objective sense of grasping (or: comprehending)” (*Sinn der gegenständlichen Auffassung*) or put shortly, the “grasping (or: comprehending) sense” (*Auffassungssinn*) (Husserl 2009: 430 (V §20))<sup>2</sup>. The “grasping sense” is that which allows the intentional object to be perceived *as* this intentional object. The “grasping sense” is also called the “matter” (*Materie*) of an act in the *Logical Investigations* (Husserl 2009: 432 (V §21)), and later Husserl termed something similar *as noema*.

Accordingly, experiencing a landscape as a whole must include a part-act that consists of unifying sense-bestowal upon the set of objects situated there. In my view the idea of the “grasping sense” can be approached by answering the following question: what is the difference between experiencing the mere sum of objects (perceived from a certain distance and from a certain perspective), and experiencing the very same objects (perceived from the same distance and from the same perspective) *as* a landscape? The answer, as Husserl suggested, lies in a particular grasping sense which unites the objects into a whole in the latter case. Thus the “grasping sense” is that which determines the whole of a landscape. I could see the objects at my sight as not belonging to any particular whole, or I could see them as

belonging to a different whole, to the whole of somebody’s estate, or to the whole of a prospective site of agricultural production, etc. But in order to see the objects as belonging to the whole of a landscape, one needs a specific “grasping sense” that defines the gaze toward natural objects that is peculiar to the landscape view.

However, it is difficult to be more specific than that by means of Husserl’s theory, for most of his examples in the *Logical Investigations* include single propositions or empirical objects, such as a table or dice. What is more, his phenomenology is designed for discovering logical essences that are not cultural products. But the “grasping sense” of a landscape has obvious historical and cultural origins, as we saw above. The “grasping sense” necessary for creating a landscape view has a complex nature that includes a certain understanding of what is seen, how and from where it is seen, and in what purposes the gaze is executed. The “grasping sense” must also be influenced by the position of people who are dealing with landscapes, their regime of truth, perhaps even their profession, and their aesthetics capabilities to enjoy landscapes. Thus the “grasping sense” of landscape functions as a cultural form that structures our landscape-related theoretical, practical, legal, leisurely and aesthetic activities. It has become an institutionalized cultural formation with its own (sometimes conflicting) regimes of truth and power.

Even though the cultural form of landscape was invented in the European Renaissance, by now it has become a meaning-bestowing automaton, because we cannot help but to see a certain scene *as* a landscape. That is,

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<sup>2</sup> English translator of the *Logical Investigations* J. N. Findley has translated the term *Auffassungssinn* as the “interpretative sense” (Husserl 2001, p.122), which conveys indirectly the same idea: it *interprets* the objects of part-acts as belonging to a whole of the complex act. I will, however, use here a more direct translation.

what can be grasped as a landscape, will be; for when we face a particular set of objects normatively belonging to landscapes from a certain point we already see a landscape and do not consider whether we wish to interpret these objects as belonging to a whole of a landscape or not. We are so accustomed to the landscape gaze that landscapes have become for us a part of the natural and commonsensical order of the world.

As in our everyday experience we are not aware of the fact that for seeing anything a complex process of meaning-creation takes place – a meaning-creation that is defined by a specific “grasping sense”. Similarly, we are usually not conscious of the fact that the “grasping sense” of landscape is a historical and cultural achievement and has to be learned to be used as any other means of interpreting the world. We have to teach our children to appreciate landscapes, as we must cultivate people how to preserve them. Once we succeed, cultural forms start to function in the natural attitude as meaning-creation machines that work on the periphery of our conscious attention, producing the results that are at its focus.

Landscape as a cultural form has to be distinguished from a particular landscape that is the direct object of experience created by using the cultural form of landscape. The latter is a structure that organizes particular contents of experience in a specific way, and the first is the structured concrete material that is experienced. The difference is similar to the one between language (*langue*) and speech (*parole*) from structural linguistics. The first is the structure that enables a particular speech act. Normally we are aware of the meanings of particular speech acts, and

a special investigation is needed in order to reveal the structures that enable to form them. We could say that the “language” that forms our gaze of spatial objects consists of cultural forms that provide grasping senses to scenes, places and territories that we perceive and live in. Thus the cultural form of landscape pre-defines what kinds of objects are normatively appropriate to a spatial formation that we are dealing with. In the case of a landscape, for example, when we see a pile of automobile tyres among objects forming a natural landscape, it strikes us as something out of place, as something destroying the pleasure that we would otherwise receive from the view. In this case the cultural form of natural landscape produces the sense of non-fitting to the scene.

Thus far we have considered the spectator position mainly from the point of view of how it defines what is seen, but as we have seen above, the grasping sense defining a particular space does not just determine how things are perceived, but also how they are practically dealt with. Denis Cosgrove uses an example of a typical municipal park of an English provincial town to demonstrate how a park landscape forms not just the sense of objects belonging or not belonging to it, but how it also regulates the behaviour of people entering it:

Anyone entering the park knows instinctively the boundaries of behaviour, the appropriate codes of conduct. In general one should walk or rather stroll along the paths. Running is only for children and the grass for sitting on or picnics. Ducks may be fed, but the pool neither paddled nor fished in. Trees should not be climbed, nor should be music played .... In sum, behaviour should be

decorous and restrained. When these codes are transgressed, and they are, by music centres, BMX bikers, over-amorous couples or bottle-doting tramps, then the fact is observed, and disapproval clearly registered by those who ... have the moral symbolism of the whole designed landscape on their side (Cosgrove 1989: 125).

Thus the idea of the municipal park functions as a cultural form when it provokes the reaction of disapproval towards the listening of music, bicycling, or caring – these are the activities that the particular *Auffassungssinn* rejects as not being appropriate in this place. It is important to take notice that a cultural form is not derived empirically from a given situation, but is prior to the particular experience and thus enables a normative judgment and an emotional disapproval about the empirical situation.

Normative landscape representations are often used for ideological reasons and branding purposes, as for example, the images of Estonian rural landscape that appears on the Estonian banknotes and in propagandistic photo albums. These images of 19<sup>th</sup> century farmhouses and juniper tree fields represented there are actually non-representative of the actual physical terrain of Estonian countryside, but this fact does not make them less commonly accepted iconic images of Estonia (Sooväli 2008). Here we are again dealing with a landscape representation that is normative rather than descriptive; these images suggest how one should see Estonia, or how one wants it to be looked at, rather than how Estonian countryside actually opens up for a gaze of a visitor. In this case the cultural form is pictured directly in its iconic form.

Thus we can conclude that from the phenomenological point of view we can distinguish between the following elements of landscape experience: (1) a series of perceptions of objects that belong to a landscape; (2) a certain spectator-position that is created by a distance and a viewing angle that is normative to landscape experiences; (3) a specific “grasping sense” that gives to the series of perceived objects a unified meaning and makes possible the conceptual judgments and aesthetic feelings about the whole spatial domain. The grasping sense provides both the regime of knowledge, determining what is right or wrong concerning a particular landscape, as well as the commonly accepted emotional pathways for aesthetic enjoyment and any other feelings about them. We make use of those emotional pathways when we say that a landscape is beautiful or when we are touched by its sublimity, as in the Romanticist mode of seeing the landscapes. Or, we can experience national pride when viewing a landscape that resembles the standardized idyllic and nostalgic views of old farm-house or seaside areas that have become iconic for a collective national consciousness. Once the “grasping sense” and the normative spectator-position have become a part of cultural heritage they become (4) an institutionalized cultural form that functions as meaning-automaton in the consciousness of people belonging to this particular cultural tradition, and the spectator-position becomes simultaneously a position of power. Thus the cultural form of landscape, in spite of being a historical achievement, functions as a transcendental condition of possibility that makes the landscape experience possible.

Most of what we have said about landscapes is probably applicable to any spatial formation if we understand it as a place or a territory with its distinct “grasping sense”. Cultural geographer Tim Cresswell calls the spatial formations that are defined by some specific grasping sense “places” and distinguishes them from the mere “spaces” that do not have any meaning that can be applied to the things occupying it: “Space, then has been seen in distinction to place as a realm without meaning.... When humans invest meaning in a portion of space and then become attached to it in some way (naming is one such way) it becomes a place”, Cresswell argues (2004: 10). Needless to say, most of the spatial formations that humans inhabit, such as home, university, or the nations’ original territory – their farther or motherland, are heavily invested with meanings that define people’s attitudes and the sense of things belonging to it. But can we agree with Cresswell that there is a meaningless universal space behind places which hosts all the particular spaces with their distinct meanings – something like the universe, or the world?

Husserl could be seen as supporting this view, for he sees the world as the widest external horizon including all particular spaces: “The thing is one out of the total group of simultaneously actually perceived things; but this group is not, for us, for consciousness, the world; rather the world exhibits itself in it; such a group, as the momentary field of perception, always has the character for us of a sector “of” the world, of the universe of things of all possible perceptions” (Husserl 1970: 162). However, the universe of all things possible seems to

exclude impossible things (centaurs, for example), and we can consequently speak of a specific, even if a very abstract, grasping sense of the world as a whole. But what about the spatial emptiness that has no objects in it, such as void, Newton’s *sensorium*, or the geometrical space? Husserl sees the latter as a cultural accomplishment that is achieved by means of idealization and construction. According to him we do not encounter such spaces normally in the life-world, except in the “ideal praxis of ‘pure thinking’” of theorists: “If we are interested in these ideal shapes and are consistently engaged in determining them and constructing new ones out of those already determined, we are ‘geometers’” (Husserl 1970: 26). But even the geometrical space is not completely meaningless. It has a certain nature that determines what kind of objects can be placed there and what kind cannot. Thus even abstract spaces seem to have their own “grasping sense” and are to be seen as places in Cresswell’s sense of the word, even if places of a specific kind.

There is an important difference in the constitution of the everyday and the idealized theoretical spaces, however. It consists in the presence of our body and the perspective related to the location of it. In the 1907 lecture series that are published in the 16th volume of *Husserliana* under the title *Thing and Space* Husserl argues that what makes the contents of our experiences spatial, is actually our bodily existence, or to be more precise, the possibility of bodily motion that gives rise to kinaesthetic sensations: “The constitution of the Objective location and of the Objective spatiality, is essentially mediated by the movement of the Body, or,



in phenomenological terms, by the kinaesthetic sensations..." (Husserl 1997: 148). It follows, however, that unlike the abstract space of geometers which has no centre and is homogeneous throughout its extension, the space that is given through my bodily presence is necessarily centred around me. Thus the phenomenological sociologists Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann explain: "The place in which I find myself, my actual "here" is the starting point of my orientation in space. It is the zero-point of the system of coordinates within which the dimensions of orientation, the distances and perspectives of objects, become determined in the field that surrounds me. Relative to my animate organism, I classify the elements of my surroundings under the categories left, right, above, below, in front of, behind, near, far, etc." (Schutz & Luckmann 1973: 36–37). Another phenomenologist and cognitive scientist Shaun Gallagher shares this insight about the necessarily structure of the space that is given empirically: "Perception organizes spatial distributions around an egocentric frame of reference that is implicitly indexed to the perceiving body, and things appear near or far, to the left or right, and so forth, only in relation to the body" (Gallagher 2006: 352). Thus the spatiality that characterizes everyday human life differs in its structure and uneven density from abstract spaces known to us by means of mathematical or philosophical theories. The difference between the empirical and abstract places does not lie not in the fact that the latter lack meaning. Rather, they differ in what their particular grasping sense is, and in the spectator-position.

Here we can turn the third type of questions that I raised in the beginning of the essay. Why do human beings create meaningfully constituted spatial formations? What is their existential function in our lives? Heidegger has argued in the *Being and Time* that human life as such has to be defined spatially: to be a human is always to be placed somewhere. In other words, to be a human means to be in a situation in which one necessarily relates *to* the world from the place that is given to him *in* the world. Now, being in the world, as Heidegger points out, is not just a theoretical construction: "Dasein is 'in' the world in a sense of caring and trusting dealing (*besorgend-vertraute Umgang*) with the beings within the world" (Heidegger 1993: 104). Thus the existential spatiality (*Räumlichkeit*) (Heidegger 1993: 56) of *Dasein* is defined by his daily activities that are in turn determined by his spatially determined situatedness in the world.

In the manuscripts from between 1913 and 1917 that are included in the 4th volume of *Husserliana*, Husserl defines the place of daily activities as the surrounding world (*Umwelt*). As Heidegger has done after him, Husserl also emphasizes that the surrounding world is not the physical world (constructed in the theories physicists) but "the thematic world of my own and our joint intentional life" (Husserl 1984: 49). It means that it is the world which is consciously attended by me, and *as* it is attended by me. Maija Küle explains: "*Umwelt* is the world perceived in the person's acts, existing in his memories and thoughts, felt, evaluated, subjected to action, technically formed by him; the world which is being

thematically experienced and reflected upon in connection with the things appearing in it. *Umwelt* is the world for me as a person” (Kūle 1997: 99–100).

The phenomenological idea of *Umwelt* according to which the world is defined via the situatedness of its inhabitant is also known from biosemiotic *Umwelt* theories, according to which all living organisms capable of moving themselves around have a certain type of relationship to their exteriority – a certain relationship to the outward extension in which they can move around and which they can signify and memorize for better orientation. This must be the reason why the *Umwelten* are structured around the subject, for without this feature, they would be less helpful for the organism. From the point of view of phenomenological analysis, a similar point can be made: the creation of spaces with their specific sense allow for creating and holding to particular meanings that are existentially important for a human being. Imagine a life without spatial formations – in this case we would only have the flow of time that structures our experience. Any stability and sameness would be achieved by repetition. And sometimes it really is the case that we experience timely cycles as repetitions of the same. Thus we can experience days or years or more artificially created timely intervals, such as the driving time from home to work or reading time of a novel, as frames of the events during which the same is repeated. But in most cases the frames of time tend to provide new contents. Usually every new moment of time brings about something that has not been before. Spatial frames, in contrast to that, function quite differently. They tend to provide stabi-

lity and sameness in the Heraclitian flux of time. In our daily lives we repeatedly return to certain places, such as home or the workplace, and these spatial formations support us with the stability of meaning that that would not be possible otherwise.

Obviously my home is meaningful for me only if I find it in the same place and *as* the same place as the one that I left there in the morning. This sameness must be created by the same sense. Finding a place with a completely different grasping sense when I return home would destroy the very possibility of this action. Similarly, one can work at his working-place only if there is a certain stability of meaning that defines this place and his position in it, both literally and symbolically. Certain aspects and details of the sense that defines one’s home can, of course vary. And as we know, the meaning of home and workplace does change over the years. And yet there must be a sense that is responsible for identifying this particular place, and not any other, as one’s home or a work-place

The sense defining a working place is not just a practical matter of having utensils at hand, nor is human home just a place with a mere biological and pragmatic function of giving us a shelter. Maija Kūle in her phenomenological analysis of home argues that home is an ordered place that has certain meanings attached to its established order in such a way that it influences even the identity of a person living there. This explains why people care about their homes and why they dream about and work hard for beautiful homes, for it provides them (even if deceptively) with a harmonious frame in their self-assertion and existential self-interpreta-

tion (Kūle 1997: 110–111). And in contrast to that, as Cresswell points out, in public places “the homeless are not simply people without a roof over the head but people who are evaluated as being in the wrong place” (Cresswell 2004: 122). Homeless lack this ordering quality about their personal identity that “normalizes” people in a given society, and that, not the mere fact of not having a shelter, makes them outsiders.

Thus we can conclude that spaces constructed by humans both individually and socially serve as seats of meaning – as *topoi* where meanings are cultivated and preserved. We could call the process of space formation a process of placing meanings. Already ancient rhetoric theories knew about places as mnemonic devices; and the connection between memory and places has also been confirmed by current phenomenological research (see Casey 2000). Besides individual memory, social memory is also heavily dependent on places. Cresswell argues that “one of the primary ways in which memory is constituted is through the production of places. Monuments, museums, the preservation of particular buildings (and not others, plaques, inscriptions, and the promotion of whole neighbourhoods as ‘heritage zones’ are all examples of placing memory” (Cres-

swell 2004: 85). Humans cannot stop the flow time, but they can create places where meanings persist to changes for long periods of time. That must be the reason for creating sacred and memorial places, for example. What is the function of monuments for our experience? – They attempt to eternalize a meaning that would otherwise vanish too quickly. Why do the images of eternity in collective imagination, such as Paradise for example, have to be determined spatially? – It is because spatiality serves as a stabilizing feature of human consciousness by providing the flow of time with the seats of meaning. Thus what Heidegger termed existential spatiality has to do with the ways in which the world is meaningful for human beings, and here lies the answer to the question of why does the *animal symbolicum* create landscapes and any other spatial formations? – It is not because we find them existing out there in the objective reality. Rather, it is because of our need to makes sense of the world around us, and in order to do that we need an architectonic of meanings that is achieved by creating spatial formations<sup>3</sup>.

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## ŽMOGIŠKASIS ERDVIŠKUMAS: KRAŠTOVAIZDŽIO IR VIETOS KULTŪRINĖ FENOMENOLOGIJA

### Tõnu Viik

#### S a n t r a u k a

Straipsnyje fenomenologiniu metodu analizuojamas kraštovaizdžio ir kitų erdvinių struktūrų suvokimas. Erdvinė struktūra suprantama kaip erdvės sritis ar teritorija, turinti specifinę prasmę, kurią patiria stebintis subjektas. Aiškinant, kaip erdvinė struktūra įgauna prasmę, kuri ją apibrėžia kaip kraštovaizdį, namus ar šalį, remiamasi Husserlio prasmės konstitucijos teorija. Teigiama, kad, be subjekto pozicijos ir objektų suvokimų sekos, konkretaus erdvinio darinio prasmę lemiantis elementas yra tai, ką Husserlis vadino „suvokimo prasme“ (*Auffassungssinn*). Ji apibrėžia

konkrečiam erdviškumui būdingą žiūrą. Kai tokia „suvokimo prasme“ tampa intersubjektyviai galiojanti ir institucionalizuota, ji įgyja statusą kultūrinės formos, kuri funkcionuoja kaip visoms visuomenėms prasmę perteikiantis pasaulio interpretavimo automatas. Galiausiai tvirtinama, kad žmogiškųjų aplinkinių pasaulių (*Umwelten*) erdviškumas leidžia kurti ir palaikyti prasmes, kurios antraip išnyktų laiko tėkmėje.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** kraštovaizdžio suvokimas, erdvinės struktūros, fenomenologinis metodas, suvokimo prasme, kultūrinė forma.

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