Examining Presence of Place through Three Worldviews

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Abstract

Concepts of place are complex in architectural discourse as much as the term "place" encompasses multi-layered facets in philosophy. This article aims to review the notions of place in environmental place-making in relations to those in three philosophical stances: *neo-structuralism, phenomenology, and embodied realism*. By an impartial view, these frameworks become legitimate and make contributions to knowledge of place by extending its boundaries and constructing layers of place into three forms of *presences* in architectural concerns: *"ethnic domains," environmental connectedness, and embodiment*. To culminate into meaningful, living environments, place-making is obliged to systemically consider environmental worldviews inclusive of presences pertinent to cultural symbols, existential-spatial authenticity, and bodily engagements.

Keywords: Place, Spatial Presence, "Significant Form", Environmental Symbols, Authenticity, Metaphor

บทคัดย่อ

แนวความคิดของ "สถานที่" มีความซับซ้อนในวาทกรรมทางสถาปัตยกรรม เช่นเดียวกับ
ทางปรัชญาที่คำว่า "สถานที่" ประกอบด้วยความลึกซึ้งในหลายมิติ บทความนี้มุ่งหมายที่จะ
ตรวจสอบและทบทวนองค์ความรู้ของ "สถานที่" ในการสร้างสรรค์สภาพแวดล้อมในความสัมพันธ์
กับสามแนวความคิดเชิงปรัชญาของ "สถานที่" คือ โครงสร้างนิยมแบบใหม่ ปรากฏการณ์ศาสตร์
และสัจนิยมเชิงตัวตน โดยความเสมอภาคทางแนวความคิด กรอบความคิดของปรัชญาทั้งสาม
แนวทางได้รับการยอมรับ และนำไปสู่การก่อเกิดองค์ความรู้เกี่ยวกับสถานที่ โดยการขยาย
กรอบความคิดและมิติของสถานที่ในสามโครงสร้างของการ*ปรากฏตัวตนทางสถาปัตยกรรม* คือ
"พื้นที่เชิงชาติพันธุ์" ความสัมพันธ์ทางสภาพแวดล้อม และปฏิสัมพันธ์ของการก่อกำเนิดตัวตน
เพื่อบรรลุถึงสภาพแวดล้อมแห่งชีวิตและความหมาย การสร้างสรรค์สถานที่จะต้องพิจารณา
เชิงบูรณาการของแนวความคิดในการปรากฏตัวตนทางสภาพแวดล้อม ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการสร้าง
อัตลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรม แก่นแท้เชิงวิถีแห่งสถานที่ และการเกี่ยวพันของตัวตน

Introduction

> "Places are spaces that you can remember, that you can care about and make a part of your life….We think it should be otherwise, that the world should be filled with places so vivid and distinct that they can carry significance. Place that are memorable are necessary to the good conduct of our lives; we need to think about where we are and what is unique and special about our surroundings so that we can better understand ourselves and how we relate to others."[1]
>
> Lyndon and Moore in *Chambers for a Memory Palace*

The milieus of the term place are important for and engaged with architectural realms. Places have been established as they announce themselves identifiable environments in space, which manifest themselves *potentials for spatial presence*. Places are concerned with presence that conveys environmental tangibility, "Significant Form" allowing for sensibilities, experience, and engagement. Due to experienced presence, places disclose a sense of embodied reality or *authenticity* opposed to reappearance or re-presentation. Places can therefore come to being through their expression of presence as living forms.

Places, viewed through diverse standpoints of neo-structuralism, phenomenology, and embodied realism, encompass three thematic categories: an "ethnic domain," environmental connectedness, and embodiment. Place as an ethnic domain conveys a symbol of human environments in a cultural bound. Authentic modes of place-making derive from a sense of being-in, the essence of place. A sense of being-in cultivates human-environment relationships, thereby raising a particular location to be a place. As being-in-place, people as embodied beings are engaged with the environmental presence; in this vein, a place contains an embodied presence. The embodiment metaphorically experiences a place as being inside the concentrated domain due to perceived boundaries.

"Significant Form," and Presence

"Significant Form", as Langer introduces in *Feeling and Form*, is the *presentational form*—that is, non-discursive, non-linear correlation—a logical,

1 Donlyn Lyndon and Charles Moore, *Chambers For A Memory Palace* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), p. xii.

holistic content: an articulate form characterized by the integral, expressive images with a sensory phenomenon.[2] Parts of the articulate form maintain a degree of separate existence. The sensuous character of each element is affected by its functions in the complex whole; "its internal structure is given to our perception."[3] In other words, "Significant Form," which has symbolic import and is perceived as a quality rather than organized as a function, becomes the complex sensuous entity or the identified body by asset of its dynamic structures that can "express the forms of vital experience."[4] Langer also proposes that "Significant Form" can be applicable in all works of art as essential quality inasmuch as all arts and all cultures can convey the symbol and its import. For instance, a painting presents its significant visual scene and holistic, multi-layered, and meaningful content to us if it conveys its essential substance.

In general, "Significant Form" manifests its *presence as a living image with meaningful impacts.* In "The Modes of Virtual Space," Langer explains that architecture is an art of created space—"a space to be lived with", its basic concept is to create a significant domain, "a place made visible, tangible, sensible."[5] A place has its own functional and symbolic properties—that express an image of human environment—allowing us to understand its nature and capture its domain. A place becomes a captured domain because it *presents* its "Significant Form" to us through its experiential character: visual form, space, movement, sounds, aromas, and texture. In this sense, "Significant Form" contributes a place to the entire being, *the body* of a symbolic quality of environmental expressions, articulated in the living structure. The "Significant Form" of place must retain a lived sensibility of the environmental presence. For architecture, "Significant Form" acts as the identification of place, like a living form—a symbolic expression of a cumulative process of life, growing, and continuity[6]—of the embodied entity that presents its environmental import and illuminates the vital reality, *authenticity* that it defines.

Ontological Presence versus Representation

In a view of environmental concerns, *presence:* being-in-reality is unnecessarily opposite to absence, rather opposed to *re-presentation:* reappearance out-of-context. Kenneth Frampton suggests in *Studies in Tectonic Culture* that the

2   Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form; A Theory of Art developed from Philosophy in a New Key* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), pp. 31-33.

3   Ibid.

4   Ibid., p. 32.

5   Ibid., pp. 94-95.

6   Ibid., pp. 66, 82. Langer defines living form in terms of the organic form of life, "expresses life... everything that characterizes vital existence. "Living form is the symbol that articulates "the idea of vital reality."

representational form is opposite to the *ontological form*. The representational form refers to symbolic elaboration of the masking as a decorative means for enhancing form in order to *re-present* its status and significance. On the other hand, the ontological form *presents* the symbolic expressivity that articulates its essence: fundamental structure and materiality of form as an entity itself.[7]

An entity or a body obtains its presence in a definite temporal mode of the ontological, as Heidegger introduces in *Being and Time*.[8] The presence and the ontological are congruent and assimilate each other, thereby so called *the ontological presence* in this context. A distinction between the representation and the ontological presence are intended to relate to environmental forms of settings, that is, between the symbolic camouflage of settings as re-enactments and iconographic referents and the environmental presence as a whole entity on its own, respectively. The environmental *presence* reveals itself validity of being, *authenticity* as "tautness, attentiveness, assertiveness" as Michael Benedikt notes:

> "A building with presence, for example, is not apologetic, but asserts itself as architecture, having right to be here, to bump off a few trees (and defer to others), to take up its position as a new entity in the physical world. A building with presence is not one that would wish to disappear (as do underground, camouflage/contextual, and some mirror-glass buildings); nor is it coy, silly, gabled, embarrassed, referential, nervous, joking, or illusory—all attempts at getting away from here now.

An object or building (or person) with presence has a shine, a sensuousness, a symmetry to it. Well-constructed, though perhaps as temporary as a bird, clean, though its paint may be peeling, its presence is experienced not only visually, but also by coherent appeal to other senses: to touch, movement, sound, smell. Edges are distinct just as contours are distinctive. Articulated parts are not so much adjacent or linked as mutually poised, just as the whole does not shamble, fill, and butt, but stands precisely where it needs to be and end there. Every material and texture is fully itself and revealed."[9]

7   Kenneth Frampton, *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), p. 16.

8   Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1962), p. 47.

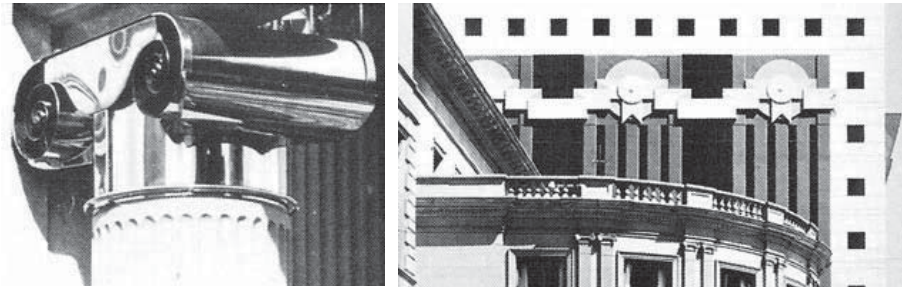9   Michael Benedikt, *For an Architecture of Reality* (New York: Lumen Books, 1987) pp. 34-36."

Figure 1: Examples of representational forms of Postmodernism. On the left: Charles Moore's a chromed Ionic column at Piazza d'Italia, New Orleans. On the right: Michael Grave's postmodern design of Public Service Building, Portland, Oregon. (Source: Michael Benedikt, *For an Architecture of Reality* [New York: Lumen Books, 1987], p. 17)
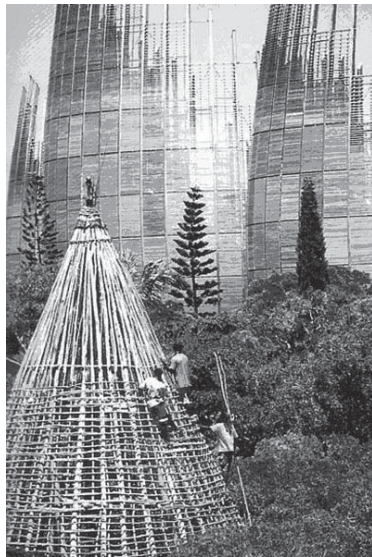
Figure 2: A formal comparison between unconscious, existential space of the traditional Kanak hut and the conscious creation of the *Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Center*, New Caledonia. (Source: Paco Asensio ed, *Renzo Piano* [New York: teNeues, 2002], p. 25.)

In this sense, representational form merely appears as a filling-in-surface image or illusory setting that *conceals* the reality of the forming process: fundamental structure and elements as well as its place. Architectural exemplars of representational forms are manifest in postmodernist-style buildings that seems to be merely a design of the elaborate and decorative skins enveloping the buildings (Figure 1). In contrast, presentational form or "Significant Form" *reveals* vital reality of the environment as being-in-place as a holistic, symbolic entity. For instance, the *Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Center,* New Caledonia discloses its symbolic form, that is, not folkloric imitation but reinterpretation from the vernacular Kanak hut. Its presentational form is articulated through structural and building-skin tectonic and a symbol of the specific place. The center, existing as a tangible, living entity inserted in the location to which it belongs, makes a place presence (Figure 2).

By which presentational form is construed as a whole of integral quality of complex parts, an environmental living form reveals "Significant Form" of place that allows for sensibilities. With modes of assertive revelation, "Significant Form" of place induces the ontological presence, then contributing environmental forms to be authentic. Authenticity, as to Heidegger, indicates presentational modes of the entity that make its active potentials possible.[10] *Authenticity* of the entity or environment, based on its revealing, presentational mode, is therefore recognized as "Significant Form" of the entirely living body. In this respect, authenticity of place takes place when an environment; natural and built, embodies "Significant Form" by means of presence.

If presence is mainly about perceptual revelation of an entity as a whole, the authentic environment is to present its "Significant Form" of place. To be authentic, an environment must itself express the ontological presence of living forms as a place that has "Significant Form." This contributes a place to be meaningful. A relation between a space and place can be therefore resolved in a prospect of the ontological presence of environmental settings. If a space conveys its environmental presence and tangible form, it can turn into a place. In other words, disclosing the presence of "Significant Form" makes an environmental realm possible for a place as an authentic entity of its own which enables its potentials.

Place

Realms of place encompass several subject matters from many points of view. From a cultural standpoint, a place can be viewed as an environmental symbol articulating a particular functional setting of a human world, as Langer calls this an ethnic domain. An ethnic domain is a tangible entity in so far as it conveys its semblance of environmental atmosphere. The concept of atmosphere is similar to Norberg-Schulz's conception of place that is comprised of aspect of space and character; in this way, a place manifests itself as the environmental whole. By presence of place and its relations to humans, a place is a fixed location as Yi Fu Tuan makes an analogy of place as a pause in space. A place as a human-environment bond must be created by authentic modes: unselfconsciously and self-consciously, according to Relph. As being-in-place,

10 See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1962),pp. 312-13. Authenticity and inauthenticity become modes of possibility. Being reveals and presents itself by authenticity, which contributes to potentiality of the entity, and conceals itself by inauthenticity.

relationships between humans and environments embody our realization of the spatial presence, that is, experience of place as being inside. In this way, a place is metaphorically conceived as a container.

Principles of place reflect cultural, captured images, senses of cultivating in locations, and bodily dimensions. Realms of place, within this line of thoughts, are organized in three following themes: presence of an ethnic domain (a symbol of human environments); presence of connectedness; and embodied presence.

Place as Presence of an "Ethnic Domain": From a Neo-Structuralism Approach

Every place has its own perceived identity. In this way, a place announces itself an expressive form and meaning. The relationship between a symbolic form and significance becomes an underlying goal of what a neo-structuralism approach searches for a realm of place.

On a neo-structuralist stance, the objective of inquiry is to uncover formal structures of symbolic expression. Its ontological assumption is based on the fact that a search of significance relates to the requisite understanding of symbolizing, inventing, and investing meaning, use of symbolism in culture.[11] *In Philosophy in A New Key*, Langer points out that meaning of a thing, a place, and an occasion is articulated by a symbol formulated by the relations of associative elements. In fact, a complex symbol is an expressive form: the relations between form and meaning are conveyed in two kinds of logical, expressive forms: *discursive* and *presentational*. Discursive forms such as a language express meaning through relations of its elements, by employing linear structures and logical syntax. Presentational forms, on the other hand, convey its symbolic meaning as a sensible image with complex layers and combinations of experienced elements. They present themselves as a whole entity.

The neo-structuralist inquiry of place emphasizes "Significant Form" of place, which presents itself as a symbolic significance of particular human environment. "Significant Form" of place, in other words, articulates a meaningful, environmental import. Within an architectural context of created space—"space

11 Howard Gardner, *Art, Mind & Brain: A Cognitive Approach to Creativity* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), p. 50.

to be lived with, experienced, and omnipresent", "Significant Form" is related to create an *ethnic domain* which is an actual realm of the functional impacts as Langer points out.[12] An ethnic domain articulates an autonomous, characteristic entity, regardless of simply restricted conditions of geographic locations. An ethnic domain is culturally defined as a *contained place with presence of particular virtual and tangible environments*.[13] The created place has its own organization as the sphere illustrating present human environments through characteristic functional patterns which constitute a culture. If a culture is a system of on-going functional patterns made out of human activities, the created place becomes a cultural domain demonstrating the geographically virtual *semblance*. The whole semblance of the environment constructed by architectural elements makes a place: an environmental totality, the sphere of "Self"—collective communal or personal world—visible in actual space.[14] The architectural elements and alterations can convert the whole semblance of the virtual place. A semblance of an ethnic domain indeed impacts landscaping locations in that it creates the *atmosphere* of human domains in actual locations. If a place is removed or obliterated, a living image and the visible expression of its location disappear and alternate.[15] As a tangible form, an environmental semblance expresses a perceptual image of life, the virtual created place. As a real environment is created for life and functional relations, the created place sustains a *symbol of humanity and functional existence.* A place symbolizing counterparts of life embodies the vital significance of functional patterns, thereby possessing a living entity. An ethnic domain or created place, which is articulated by "the imprint of human life", enables for a living form that intrinsically characterizes the vital *symbol of human-environment*.[16]

In the milieu of a neo-structuralism, a place is self-contained image—a culturally created domain—in non geographical context and circumstances. A neo-structuralism path thus views a place as self-expression of the human-environmental symbol and meaning. Analysis of environmental forms and significance can lead to understanding of symbolic presence of place. But, it cannot explain dynamic interactions between place and humans in everyday-life context. In this view, a place is merely an expressive, image-based realm of physical forms without people acting in place.

12 Susanne Langer, pp. 94-95.

13 Ibid., p. 95.

14 Ibid., pp. 96-98.

15 Ibid., pp. 99-100.

16 Ibid.

Place as Presence of Connectedness: From a Phenomenological Approach

All places we experience lies in the mode of the active-based engagement and connectedness or "readiness-at-hand"[17] in Heidegger's term, rather than an image-based appearance of a thing or a place. For instance, in order to understand underlying structures and meaning of a place, it is necessary to seek how it ontologically functions, how it is essentially connected and interacting to the environment, and how it is engaged with phenomena: events and people, not as an isolated realm. In fact, a phenomenological paradigm aims to discover the notions of what makes the environment a place or what makes a piece of earth to be a significant landscape.

As a semblance, the atmosphere of place results from qualitative characters of spatial presence, as to Norberg-Schulz. Moreover, the constituent aspects of space and character are the structure of place manifesting as the environmental wholeness—a "figure-ground relationship" in terms of settlement and landscape.[18] A place as an entity in a location and their relationships fundamentally pivot on Heidegger's phenomenology. The concept of "being-in" has been ultimately developed to be a sense of dwelling and cultivating in the environment; human-environment relationships contribute to *authentic spatiality* of place. As Yi Fu Tuan and Edward Relph have developed phenomenological-based approaches to the idea of place and have come to the similar conclusion, a place emerges out of an affective bond between people and the environment. By comparing with space, for Tuan, a place is the result of a pause in space which allows movement and action. Each pause creates an opportunity of attachments to the environment, that is, possibilities to transform space/location to become a place.[19] Relph also separates a place from a simple location that is not an adequate condition of place by the essence of place: "being-in-place". Places are defined "by the focusing of experiences and intentions onto particular settings."[20] A concentration of intentions, attitudes, purposes, and experiences sets places apart from surrounding space.[21]

Modes of being-in or dwelling, that is, how humans react in their contexts, only occur in places[22] and establish meaning for places. From Heidegger's term of dwelling, an architectural interpretation can be made as the experience of dwelling

17 See Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*, p. 98. Heidegger points out that to understand the existence of the thing is necessary to discover its readiness-to-hand active-based properties of thing-ness, rather than its appearance.

18 Christian Norberg-Schulz, "The Phenomenon of Place," in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*, Kate Nesbitt ed. (New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), pp. 418-22.

19 Yi Fu Tuan, *Space and Place; The Perspective of Experience,* 9th edition (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 6.

20 Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion Limited, 1976),, p. 141.

21 Ibid., p. 43.

22 Robert Mugerauer, "Introduction: Learn to Dwell," *Center Journal, Dwelling: Social life, building, and spaces between them,* Vol. 8 (1993): pp. 5-7.

refers to the ways we act in the environment to realize the *presence* of spaces. This interactive process of realization becomes aware of contexts and engaged with making built environments as presence as "a coherent system of reality."[23] The environmental presence of place has to be created by authentic spatiality: unselfconscious and self-conscious, according to Relph.[24] Unselfconscious place-making emphasizes using conventional solutions responsive to habitual problems such as vernacular architecture. Through unselfconscious modes, places arise from the interplay and reflections of contextual, social, aesthetic, cultural values. Meanwhile, self-conscious place-making involves a creative-design process to seek innovative solutions to design problems. Built places by means of self-conscious modes need to give *genuine significance* to someone and their vicinities through which to live in the environments possessing internal synchronization and corresponding to their context.[25] Authentic spatiality thus lies in the processes of making built forms to give rise to places that come into *presence or disclosedness of the whole*. This notion of place corresponds to which Heidegger notes the concept of a location given its place by the bridge.

> "...The location is not already there before the bridge is. Before the bridge stands there are of course many spots along the stream that can be occupied by something. One of them proves to be a location, and do so *because of the bridge*. Thus the bridge does not first come to a location to stand in it; rather, a location comes into existence only by virtue of the bridge."[26]

By this view, the bridge contributes the landscape to be disclosed with it, and thereby the location that is enlightened by the bridge is so-called a place. The presence of built-forms (the bridge) discloses active characters and potentials of locations, which in turn obtain their revealed existence by which built-forms situate in the sites (Figure 3). The notion of place, in this standpoint, is the integral entity, the congruent relationships between built-forms and the given environment.

23 Enrique Larranaga, "On Patios and Fireplaces: Building, Dwelling, and Order," *Center Journal, Dwelling: Social life, building, and spaces between them,* Vol. 8 (1993): pp. 22-32.

24 Edward Relph, p. 67.

25 See Michael Benedikt, pp. 39-40. Significance is suitable to importance and has "the existential import." Real architecture with significance is to illuminate its true history over formal matters; that is, to reflect "the history of its site and the circumstances of its construction."

26 Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1971), pp. 151-52.

Figure 3: The Sydney Harbor Bridge. The bridge is affirmative with its surroundings: the ships, the harbor, the city buildings, and the water. The bridge is part of them; indeed, it makes its location become meaningful presence. The bridge and its locations are immersed into each other as a place. (Source: Christopher Alexander, *The Nature of Order: Book Two, The Process of Creating Life* [Berkeley: Center for Environmental Structure, 2002], p. 120.)

A phenomenological view to place aims to reveal the underlying significance and meaning between the environment and human experience. However, it is committed to a structural interpretation of place in such a way that does not address complexity of the bodily functions making sense of places reality. If the body responds to place as an embodied medium inhibiting a place, it sustains qualities of place by means of the active participant in the particular locale.

Place as Embodied Presence: From an Embodied Realism Approach

With the context of attachments and connections, places can vary in several forms. However, each place shares the common ground of bodily engagement and accommodation. We can intellectually know about a given place from many mediums, but a living, "Significant Form" of place is merely perceived through a medium of the *embodiment in place*.[27] As "being-in-place", senses of dwelling, cultivating, and belonging are sensate experiences as well as an existential understanding. The nature of our existence is an embodied experience, through all our senses that extend beyond the body through metaphoric referencing. The embodiment indicates bodies' relationship to environments. In fact, we act in the environment to realize the presence of spaces as the embodiment experiences the environment or place as being inside a particular domain. This also suggests that a place is conceived as the containment. By this view, a place is an *embodied* state because it is, in fact, considered in terms of a physical body.

27 The thought of the statement came up while a personal conversation with Dr. Frances Downing. I am grateful to her for pointing out this comprehension.

In this sense toward place, humans are united to the environment through embodied interactions as Lakoff and Johnson propose an embodied realism paradigm in *Philosophy in the Flesh*. Embodied realism refers to the fact that "our bodies contribute to our sense of what is real."[28] We consider "the world in terms of our bodies' relationship to the environment," experiential based of "bodies-in-the-world."[29] This results in understanding of *conceptualized spatial schemas*. The embodied nature of spatial-relation concepts: *a container schema, a source-path-goal schema, and bodily projections*, is based on bodies to comprehend the environment. Spatial-relations are fundamental embodied concepts which allow humans to understand how spatial form exists and how spatial inference is defined. Humans indicate nearness and farness of objects by referencing them with landmarks: they discern one entity as in, on or across from another entity.[30] Moreover, humans perceive readily in three and four-dimensional conceptual schemas. The container schema consists of an interior of varying scales of place, a boundary or landmark identified as being between interior and exterior conditions, and one of existence of outside.[31] If humans travel from one container toward another container, the source-path-goal schema is logically built (Figure 4). The source-path-goal schema is comprised of following elements: a moving object, a starting location, an intended destination, a path from the source and the goal, the actual trajectory of motion, the object's position at given time, the object's direction at that time, and the actual final location of the object.[32] Path from the source and the goal is alternatively topological: it relies on many chaotic factors: the object's motion, direction, position, and what lies in its path, all of which could lead to different experiences before reaching final location. As moving toward some place, humans generally interact with place utilizing frontal vision considering anything they pass along the way behind them. The concepts of front and back are basic spatial-relations related to the human body: bodily projection which humans project relationships by using basic body metaphors. Humans employ their bodies and their positions/locations to create fundamental spatial orientations in both orienting themselves and perceiving relationships between objects.[33] These forms of embodiment are namely "phenomenological embodiment."[34]

28 George Lakoff and Johnson, Mark, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), p. 30.

29 Frances Downing, *Remembrance and the Design of Place* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), p. 75.

30 Ibid., pp. 30-31.

31 Ibid., p. 32.
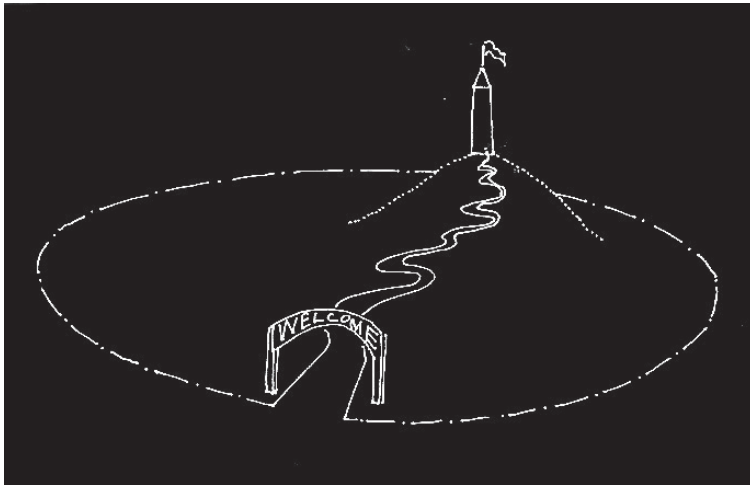
32 Ibid., p. 33.

33 Ibid., p. 34.

34 Ibid., p. 36.

Figure 4: An embodied schema of containment and source-path-goal. In a domain, a boundary identifies a location setting apart from surroundings, according to a container schema. A path links between a gate as a starting point and a landmark as destination, related to the source-path-goal schema. (Source: Kent Bloomer and Charles Moore, *Body, Memory, and Architecture* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977], p. 78.)

In philosophy, Edward Casey intends to separate issues of place from space, by employing the body as the critical divergent. Drawn from Kant to Merleau-Ponty, place is connected to the body because humans exist as embodied beings inhabiting places, locating, and creating an intensity and intimacy to them differentiating from expansive space.[35] The measure of place thus arises from the body as the crucial distinction through which interactive "qualities of directionality, fit, density, contiguity, and interstice" are defined.[36] The body as flesh initiates environmental engagement through nearness, orientation, and comprehension, that is, what Heidegger calls that which comes to meet a "region" holding its active character.[37] The body is existing and inherent in a regional domain as an *embodied presence,* that is, the consequence of interpenetration of place through the active presence of the body.[38] The embodied presence emerges out of the bodily acts of being—engagement and interaction—in the environmental presence in a sensible way. In other words, the embodied presence is experientially a presentational unification of the participating body and place (Figure 5). The environmental engagement acknowledges the reality of place; therefore, the embodied presence becomes the constituent of place that characterizes the felt quality of place.

Through an embodied presence, we fully sense: see, hear, move, smell, and touch the tactility and presence of place. This idea is similar to that of Lakoff

35 Edward Casey, The Fate of Place (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 202-42.

36 Ibid., p. 199.

37 Ibid., pp. 248-49. Also see Yoko Arisaka. A region, always having active character on its own, offers the possibility for spatial engagement with respect to context of activities. For instance, the Heidegger's example of the house we live in holds different regions; by their locations in the house, regions and their arrangements introduce the spatiality of two important regions: the "sunny side" and the "shady side" of the house. By means of places, we are aware of a region surrounding us.

Figure 5: The embodied presence. Just being in environmental presence of place as living bodies results in an embodied presence to emerge. (Source: Paul Oliver, *Dwellings: The Vernacular House World Wide* [New York: Phaidon, 2003], p. 142.)

38 Joseph Grange, "Place, Body, and Situation," *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World,* ed. David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer (Melbourne: Krieger, 2000), p. 82. Also see Thomas Schubert, Frank Friedmann, and Holger Regenbrecht, *Embodied Presence in Virtual Environments*, http://www.presence-research. org/papers.html (accessed 15 March 2007).

39 J.G. Davies as quoted in Thomas Barrie, *Spiritual Path, Sacred Place: Myth, Ritual, and Meaning in Architecture* (Boston: Shambhala, 1996), pp. 38-39.

40 See Frances Downing, pp. 75-79.

and Johnson: bodies are instruments for considering places we live in through metaphors. According to Downing, metaphors are employed to convey meanings; especially, conduit metaphors are utilized to describe characteristics of places. Conduit metaphors relate one kind of thing to another, different kind of thing; for instance, the phrase "Time is like the river" articulates continuous progression. *Container* metaphors of place commonly come out because each place has an emphasized focus as a comprehensive form with "pronounced boundaries,"[39] that is, capable of being experienced as being inside. Conduit metaphors also illuminate places as meaningful phenomena—"light as drama, the geometry of light, place as solace, and place as color."[40] All these exemplars relate *places as metaphors* to elucidate experiential meaning and the inclusive significant import of place.

Through an embodied realism, place meaning is given by the lived body that generates intimate spatiality through movement and orientation that differentiates a "fixed or closed-in" domain from expansive space. But, a place as a definite, symbolic entity in character lies not in the main interest from an embodied realism point of view. An embodied realism helps identify image schemas of places but does not delineate complex, living place-forms. Rather than a simple container, each place presents itself as concrete and symbolic domain that can be sensible.

A Triangulation of Three Perspectives of Place

The notion of *place* turns out to be complex examinations in philosophy as well as in architectural discourse. Complexity of place in architecture and philosophy is intertwined in critical and theoretical levels for illuminating the environmental creation. Proposed here is to *complement* three philosophical points of view so as to make insights *about* places' essence.

Investigations of theories of place based on three frameworks are emphatic on distinctive directions but interrelated to a great extent. Embracing only one standpoint cannot lead to systemic understanding of place-making and its essence. Acceptance of three standpoints does not refer to compete each world view to the others but to culminate in a comprehensive examination and construct of place-forms through a triangulation of three frameworks.

With three thematic views of place, a place is the domain: either natural or created environments with meanings. When an environmental realm is invested with given meaning and value, it becomes a place. The process of investing places with meaning entailing human attachments and experiences through embodiment and environmental manifestations makes place come to being. Places are the whole entities as living forms; syntheses of identifiable, physical forms of fixed natural or built environments, features, activities, functions, and meanings given by experience and intention, all of which characterize those places.[41] In this regard, places are embodied entities in nature which manifest themselves as tangible presence responsive to our sensibilities and contexts so that they can be identified as a distinct realm with authenticity. Environmental presence strengthens a symbolic image of a domain, that is, "Significant form" of place.[42] Architecture of place-making requires environmental creation with lived sensibilities and imports that give rise to connectedness, relationships, and bodily interactions. Architecture of place, in this context, must *sustain living forms of environmental presence* so that places surrounding us as embodied beings enable for engagements and being fully lived-in.

41 Edward Relph, pp. 42-43.

42 Frances Downing, Upali Nanda, Narongpon Laiprakobsup, and Shima Mohajeri, "An Embodied Architecture" in *ARCC Journal* [*Architectural Research Centers Consortium*] Volume 5:1 (2008), pp. 23-24. www.arccweb.org/journal

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