

Towards an Interdisciplinary Theory of Place: Expanding Norberg-Schulz' *Genius Loci* with Concepts from Environmental Design Research and Philosophy

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INTRODUCTION

In the architectural literature, the writings of Christian Norberg-Schulz are largely regarded as the source for the theoretical explication of "dwelling." This word may be defined as *a positive feeling of attachment, or a sense of "belonging," an individual feels with respect to a given physical environment.* "Dwelling" is therefore a subjective reality. This subjective dimension needs to be appreciated for what it is: Norberg-Schulz' work is one of the first explicit reactions against the machined sterility of Modernism. Modernist dogma invested heavily in the proposition that an "international style" should prevail over any regional expression, and today's steel and glass boxes the world over attest to the influence which this message wielded. Norberg-Schulz' emphasis on *genius loci*, or the spirit of place, directly opposed this view. As Venturi/Scott-Brown¹ and the Krier brothers decried Modernism's inhuman reductionism, Norberg-Schulz was lamenting the same thing, and he was connecting it to a sense of "a loss of place":

...The *character* of the present day environment is usually distinguished by monotony. If any variety is found, it is usually due to elements left over from the past. The "presence" of the majority of new buildings is very weak. Very often "curtain-walls" are used which have an unsubstantial and abstract character... In general, the symptoms indicate a *loss of place*. Lost is the settlement as a place in nature, lost is the building as a meaningful sub-place where man may simultaneously experience individuality and belonging...²

All of this is laudable critique, and Norberg-Schulz' writings have spawned whole literature seeking to return attention to the subjective, perhaps the sensual,³ side of the experience of the built environment. Certainly what we know of today as Critical Regionalism, with its emphasis upon an architectural theoretical framework sensitive to indigenous expressions of built forms, could at least in part be traced back to Norberg-Schulz' brand of "phenomenology" – a connection which clearly deserves further research, perhaps in our future work.

Here, however, we propose that Norberg-Schulz' emphasis upon positive-subjective feelings of attachment to physical places contains a curious, and we argue serious, flaw. And because of this flaw, his theory of place would be helped by an expanded interdisciplinary explication of *genius loci*, the outlines of which we will propose in this paper. The flaw in Norberg-Schulz' argument is this: *for all of his emphasis upon subjective feeling, Norberg-Schulz nevertheless exhibits an implicit dependence upon objective forms to predictably cause these positive-subjective feelings of belonging. On the other hand, the actual workings of how the experiencing subject comes to feel attachment to physical locales is not explained.* The most

revealing example of this may be found in his penchant to categorize what he calls the existential sense of dwelling into *typologies*. These types emerge from three constructs of human experience: 1) the exchange of ideas, products and feelings, 2) the ability to come to agreement with a common set of values, and 3) the creation of "...a small chosen world of our own." These are then assigned the architectural form-equivalents of urban space (the collective, the settlement), the institution (public buildings), and the house (private retreat).⁴ And so the existential sense of dwelling is somehow inexplicably reduced to three *types* of architectural forms. How this reduction is actually made is *consistently* not clear, and is perhaps one reason for the frequent vagueness which comes out of a close reading of much of Norberg-Schulz' texts. Here for example is his analysis of why the city of Prague satisfies the above criteria:

The architecture of Prague is cosmopolitan without ever losing its local flavor. Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque ... live together as if they were variations on the same theme. Mediaeval and classical forms are transformed to make the same local character manifest ... The catalyst which made this process possible was the *genius loci* proper, which ... consists in a particular sense of earth and sky... Evidently Prague is one of the great meeting-places where a multitude of meanings are gathered.⁵

What *does* this mean? This is a typical example of the author's use of vague terminology (e.g., "earth and sky," "multitude of meanings," etc.), as if couching fundamentally unclear theoretical concepts in poetical language is somehow itself able to open a gateway to "phenomenological" analysis. The problem, as Wang has argued elsewhere, is in part due to Norberg-Schulz' inaccurate dependence upon Heidegger, importing the affective ideas of Heidegger's description of phenomenological experience, but without utilizing his methods. The result is an untenable dualism in which, implicitly, certain external forms (public buildings, settlement, etc.), take on the responsibility of, as it were, *guaranteeing* certain subjective responses.⁶ No room is made for the contingent inner workings of the subject as having anything to do with the possibility of these feelings for Prague. What if the subject is very sick? What if she is returning to a city which, *for her*, is filled with horrible memories of the Nazi occupation? Somehow the actual subjective dimension matters very little in the Norberg-Schulz accounting of attachments to place.

This emphasis upon physical forms and lack of emphasis upon the actual subjective workings of the experiencing individual is not limited to Norberg-Schulz, but is very prevalent in the architectural literature of this genre. Due to space, two brief citations here must suffice. Christopher Alexander's theory of "pattern language," in which 253 physical configurations are given as able to bring about positive feeling, is clearly an example.⁷ And Alexander also matches

Norberg-Schulz in vagueness. In explaining *why* a pattern of his works, he merely says this: “we sense that something is working here, something is right, something feels good...”⁸ Again, the objective form is given, while the subjective workings which result in the “good feelings” are merely assumed. Another example may be found in a curious article by Francis Violich, in which he assesses “sense of place” in four Dalmatian towns. The analysis was based purely upon the writer’s own subjectivist responses to certain physical details of the various towns – and yet the “results” are given as having universal validity. Here is Violich comparing two of the towns:

... The steepness of (town A’s) site and the firm enclosure of its harbor ... have affected patterns of class distribution and intensified a sense of belonging for residents and a sense of outsidership for visitors. On the other hand, (town B’s) linear townsite has a role in promoting greater social equality and sense of openness for the outsider...⁹

There is nothing in the article, in the form of data, that backs up these claims as true. The only method discernible in the author’s analysis is this: given physical configurations this-and-that, subjective responses must be such-and-so.

In what follows, we propose two ways that Norberg-Schulz’ emphasis upon localized *genius loci*, itself a commendable notion, could be strengthened theoretically by coupling it with concepts from literatures that are close neighbors to the architectural literature. First, we will briefly outline the place theory of the environmental psychologist David Canter, whose *Psychology of Place* (1977) appeared two years previous to Norberg-Schulz’ *Genius Loci*. We will argue how Canter’s theory *individualizes* Norberg-Schulz’ theory by recognizing the universal reality of human positive-subjective feelings of attachment to physical locales, while at the same time accounting for the great variety of those feelings as dependent upon a subject’s individual sense of identity and role in relation to those environments. Second, we will look to the field of philosophy, specifically the aesthetic philosophy of Kant, to delve even deeper into the subjective workings of the experiencing individual. The goal is to answer why positive-subjective feelings of attachment occur at all, and also to account for why one physical locale (say, Prague) may mean “dwelling” for one, while meaning nothing of the sort for another. We will conclude by arguing that this interdisciplinary approach to “place theory” is a worthwhile endeavor, not only because it results in a potentially more unified and stronger theory of place, but also that crossing disciplinary walls is a way of tackling the problem which just might yield answers closer to “reality.”

CANTER’S THREE-FOLD THEORY OF PLACE

Unfortunately not often cited in the architectural literature, David Canter’s theory of place is well known among environmental psychologists who also study human positive-subjective attachments to physical locales. His *Psychology of Place* (1977) outlines a three-fold framework consisting of physical locality, activity, and conception (or meaning) as the key “constituents of places.”¹⁰ This could be diagrammed something like this:

This conceptual structure is useful in that it not only addresses the external physical make-up of an environment, but also recognizes the experienter’s subjective workings as essential in the human process of transforming brute spaces into meaningful places. And so, in his more recent writings, Canter has called his overall research into issues of place one of studying “person-place transactions.”¹¹ The “person” component of the term, that is, the subjective workings of the experienter, Canter places under the umbrella of “cognition.” Later, he admits difficulty, in the practical realm, with delineating between cognition and mere “perception.”¹² Below, we will suggest how Kant’s philosophy could help clarify this uncertainty and, by

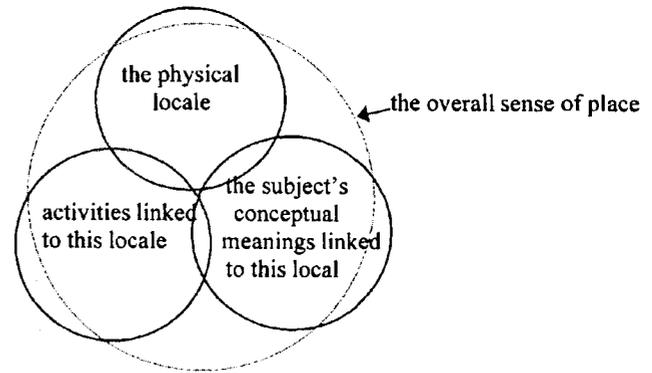


Fig. 1. Canter’s three-fold diagram of place.

mapping a fuller scope of what “cognition” really means, lend greater explanatory strength to Canter’s theory.

The affective-sensual dimension of the experience of places in Norberg-Schulz’ thought couples well with Canter’s work. In other words, Canter’s and Norberg-Schulz’ theories of place could potentially work together as two strands of an amalgamated theory of place. For his part, Canter is very much concerned with delineating the bounds of his thought according to the standards of theory-making which meet the traditional demands for generalizability and “testability.” In the more recent article cited above, Canter is particularly careful to note that his ideas are “open to empirical test.”¹³ He is concerned about scientific rigor, at least to the degree expected for theories of environment-behavior. Hence, even though his approach accounts for the reality of subjective human preferences for physical places, his concern for a rigor of this kind may nevertheless take away from an ability to capture the subjective immediacy of a “spirit” of place.

Norberg-Schulz’ “phenomenology,” on the other hand, strives to break free from this deference to scientism.¹⁴ For him, the sense of “belonging,” as an ephemeral but nevertheless universal signature of positive-subjective human relationships with physical environments is more fundamental than any reductive “scientific” analysis is able to capture. And this may be a *favorable* reason for why his “theory” of place, as such, is hard to summarize in propositional terms. Thus, Canter’s empirical positivism and Norberg-Schulz’ openness to subjective affection has potential to be regarded as two sides of a single theoretical coin – the former’s predilection for proposition and the latter’s inclination for ephemeral affection working together, as it were, as a kind of ying-yang pair which together explains *genius loci* to a clearer degree.

Consider an example. In the following passage, Norberg-Schulz describes our positive-subjective experience as we arrive upon the material form which he calls “settlement”:

When we approach a settlement ... what we perceive is a figure which rises from the ground towards the sky in a certain way. It is this standing and rising which determines our expectations and tells us where we are ... When we travel through a landscape, we are “tuned” in a certain way, and the settlement ought to offer an answer to our expectations....¹⁵

In his typical vagueness, we are not given what “a standing and a rising which determines our expectations,” or a landscape which “tunes us in a certain way” really means. Certainly it would depend on an infinite number of considerations *having to do with the specific individual*. Is the person returning to her childhood home? Or is this a convict coming to serve a prison sentence? The difference in subjective “feeling” would be immense. But again, Norberg-Schulz’ account, because it leaves the “experiencing I” vacant, leaves this issue unaddressed.

Canter's emphasis on the "person-place transaction" fills out this "vacant experiencing I" in at least two ways. First, his theory includes the very important concept of *environmental role*. This is the idea that an individual's dealings with one particular environment will cause him to have a particular sense of that locale different from the sense another individual would have.¹⁶ The individual returning to his hometown and the convict coming to the same place to "do time" would therefore have profoundly different environmental roles – causing their respective sensings of place to be very different as well. And this difference is accounted for in Canter's theory. This leads to the second contribution to Norberg-Schulz' theory: cognition. For Canter, this term is perhaps the single most complex in his theory of place. It covers concepts ranging from simple perception,¹⁷ to "internal maps,"¹⁸ to abilities for differentiating spatial qualities.¹⁹ Rather than to explain each of these terms in depth, more to the point for our purposes would simply be to recognize that, for Canter, the idea of cognition is the key connection to the immaterial (non-physical) subjective side of the experience of place. In short, it provides, to the extent that it does, the workings of Norberg-Schulz' "vacant experiencing I."

Canter's theory, then, offers a balance between the external object and the subject's internal workings, subsumed under the word "cognition." This balance is not found in Norberg-Schulz, where there is more of a presumption that certain external forms *just do* cause internal feelings. However, with Canter's and Norberg-Schulz' theories placed together, a question still remains: why are there positive-subjective attachments to place at all? We argue that environmental psychology, by dint of the fact that its primary modes of inquiry depend upon empirical evidence, does not offer a basis to access the contents of the mind itself, in terms of how those contents predispose preference to certain external (empirical) environments. Edmund Husserl, largely considered the founder of philosophical phenomenology, objected to the methods of empirical psychology precisely for these reasons, to wit, that they could only explain the instances, and not the foundations, of experience.²⁰ And so for Canter, the mind is essentially regarded as a "black box": it is recognized as a key player in "person-place transactions," data is fed into it, and the empirical results which are observed coming out of it become the bases for theory formation. This in part explains why, for example, Canter does not have the tools to clearly delineate between perception and cognition. And we argue that clarifying this distinction could further the task of defining *genius loci*.

**ADDING THE A PRIORI:
KANT'S IDEA OF COGNITION (AND ITS
RELATIONSHIP TO "BELONGING" TO NATURE)**

Kant makes the following distinction: perception is the immediate sense-reception of external stimuli (external, that is, to the mind – and this is usually regarded in Kant as the empirical realm, as opposed to the transcendental realm, which is the *a priori* structure of the mind itself). This reception of an external stimulus is enabled by the *sensibility* of the mind. However, the perception does not become cognition until the *faculty of understanding* imposes its *a priori* categories upon it. And in what for us will be a crucial distinction, Kant holds that the contents of the faculty of understanding are both pure (that is, the categories before any empirical experience) as well as empirical (that is, the concepts which accrue as a result of empirical experience). For example, a person from the tropics seeing snow for the first time would not have an empirical concept "snow," but he would still be able to cognize the snow as *many* (in the case of the flakes), *cold* (in the case of the temperature), and so forth, by dint of the categories. After the experience, of course, he would have an empirical concept of "snow" in his faculty of understanding, and the next encounter with it would be a more "informed" one.

Kant calls an instance of perception coming to cognition by means of the categories of the understanding a *determinate* judgment. It is

determinate because it is propositional, precise and concise, every such judgment excluding other possible determinations (e.g., snow is not rain, etc). Kant holds that it is determinate judgments which frame scientific thinking. In the broadest sense, this actually means the propositional way we process all external stimuli (e.g., it is morning, it is snowing outside, I should wear a coat, etc).

However, Kant argues that determinate judgments go hand in hand with indeterminate judgments. When seeing the snowy morning, in addition to knowing that he will need a coat, a subject may well also "know" that it is a *beautiful* snowy morning. This identification of beauty, Kant points out, is not determinate, and a sure sign of its indeterminacy is that Person A cannot *quantify* his assessment of the beauty of the snowy morning in such a way that Person B could know *exactly* what he means. What is happening in the cognitive apparatus to "determine" indeterminate judgments of beauty? The external perception is still received by the sensibility, but here, Kant argues that the categories of the understanding do not play a role. Rather, the received sense is referred to the faculty of imagination, and the end result is an aesthetic judgment, involving aesthetic pleasure. The following diagram illustrates both determinate and indeterminate judgments made by the subjective cognitive apparatus:

At (1), a determinate judgment involving the faculty of understanding and the sensibility is made (this is a residence). However, at (2), the same residence is determined to be a beautiful one when the same "sensed intuition" is referred to the imagination. This simultaneity of both determinate and indeterminate judgments in Kant's philosophy is already an advance, in that it seems to reflect what we experience in real life (that is, the ability to determine that X is X and, at the same time, "enjoy" X). But before we could see how it also provides a piece of the puzzle lacking in both Canter's and Norberg-Schulz' theories of place (namely, the ability to answer the question of how we experience positive feelings of belonging at all), we must ask how Kant theoretically explains all of this.

In a greatly simplified way, Kant's argument may be summarized by two points. First, from his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he shows that our internal cognitive faculties are continuous with the external nature because they are interconnected in the same fundamental web of space and time.²¹ Second, from his *Critique of Judgment*, Kant argues that by dint of this continuity, the human being is able to sense himself as a *member* of the "vast array" of nature.²² It is this sense of membership in nature that is the basis for all indeterminate judgments of beauty and which, in turn, yields aesthetic pleasure.²³

This has tremendous relevance for the question of *genius loci*. By connecting aesthetic pleasure to "membership in nature," Kant not only provides an understanding of what enjoyment of the beautiful consists of, but also situates that enjoyment *in spatial terms, specifically, as a continuity which the human being has with nature's "vast array."* At (3) in Figure 2, the *play* of the faculties is illustrated. This

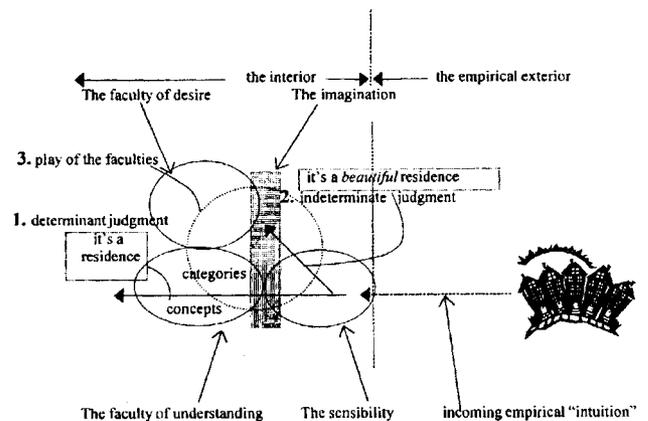


Fig. 2. The cognitive faculties of the experiencing subject.

is the condition which the faculties are in when experiencing indeterminate judgments of aesthetic pleasure, which is to say, when "membership in nature" is somehow being "sensed," at whatever level. Now, in this play, note that *all* of the faculties become involved and, because of this fact, *the empirical concepts which are in the faculty of understanding become involved as well*, albeit indirectly, in indeterminate judgments.

This in turn is the key for explaining why a locale could be "dwelling" for one person and not for another. Suppose, again, Prague is the site of an individual's comfortable childhood, filled with all the magic of a loving and warm upbringing. These experiences will all translate into empirical concepts in the subject's understanding, so that Prague, or even environments physically similar to it, may very likely lead to feelings of attachment (that is, to *genius loci*) for this subject. Conversely, if Prague for another individual means empirical concepts related to suffering and privation, perhaps in the War, it would not be at all surprising that *genius loci* would be harder to come by for this person at this locale. So see, therefore, that *genius loci* in Prague in fact has little to do with Norberg-Schulz' notion of "... *Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque ... (living) together as if they were variations on the same theme...*" and so forth. It rather has much to do with the specific workings of the mental faculties of the experiencing individual.

CONCLUSION

In integrating Norberg-Schulz' concept of *genius loci* with Canter's threefold theory of place, and then adding to the mix Kant's mapping of the human cognitive apparatus and its definition of "membership in nature," what results is a much stronger amalgamated theory. No longer is the concept of *genius loci* untenably dependent upon categorizations of material forms. Rather, in Canter's notion of the "person-place transaction," a balance is achieved in which an understanding of "sense of place" becomes individualized by accommodating a specific individual's environmental role and self-identity. Kant's explication of the human subjective faculties and its workings further explains the sense of attachment itself, thus providing a way by which we could understand why and how these positive-subjective feelings happen at all – rendering the whole reality of place a uniquely human reality.

We are stimulated by this method of researching how neighboring literatures addressing one theme (place theory in this case) may contain perspectives which, if integrated, could result in more persuasive theoretical explications for the issue in question. Certainly an argument could be made that such an interdisciplinary approach holds promise for a knowledge based on "wisdom in numbers." In this particular case, we are persuaded that integrating these diverse ideas on place has in fact resulted in a more "realistic" account of why humans feel attachments to places, one which, even though it required wading through much more literature, has resulted in accommodating a wider scope of the everyday experience of having "a sense of belonging."

NOTES

- ¹ "... Le Corbusier, co-founder of Purism, spoke of the 'great primary forms' which, he proclaimed, were 'distinct... and without ambiguity.' Modern architects with few exceptions eschewed ambiguity. But our position is different..." Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966, 1977), p. 16.
- ² Christian Norberg-Schulz, "The Loss of Place" in *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1979), pp. 189-190. Italics in text.
- ³ By sensual we mean to refer to the Greek notion of *aisthesis*, by which is simply meant sense perception. In the eighteenth century the German philosopher A. Baumgarten connected the word to the study of the beautiful (hence, "aesthetics").
- ⁴ Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling: On the Way to a Figurative Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985). The material referred to here are scattered throughout the book.

- ⁵ Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, op.cit., p. 83. Italics in text.
- ⁶ David Wang, "Seeing as Dwelling: An Alternative Interpretation of Philosophical Phenomenology for Architectural Theory" in *Architectural Research Centers Consortium 1997 Spring Research Conference* (Herberger Center: Arizona State University, 1997), pp. 75-85.
- ⁷ Alexander is usually not regarded as a phenomenologist in the intellectual tradition of Norberg-Schulz, but the connection has certainly been made. For example, see J.D. Sime, "Creating Places or Designing Spaces?" in *Readings in Environmental Psychology: Giving Places Meaning*, ed. Linda Groat (London and New York: Academic Press, 1995), p. 52.
- ⁸ Christopher Alexander, *A Timeless Way of Building* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 249.
- ⁹ Francis Violich, "Towards Revealing a Sense of Place" in D. Seamon and R. Mugerauer, *Dwelling, Place and Environment* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985), p. 118.
- ¹⁰ David Canter, *The Psychology of Place* (London: The Architectural Press, 1977), pp. 157-158.
- ¹¹ David Canter, "The Facets of Place" in Gary T. Moore and Robert Marans, *Advances in Environment, Behavior and Design* (New York/London: Plenum Press, 1997), p. 116. This particular article delves deeper into the consequences of Canter's diagram of place provided above. Specifically, Canter attempts to unite other tripartite constructs (Markus' function-form-space construction from a design point of view, and Saegert/Winkel's comfort-opportunity-significance construction from a psychological point of view) to further strengthen his initial three-part scheme. All of these emphasize subjective workings over the objective form. In other words, Canter is consistent through the years that it is the subjective composition of the individual which in turn determine what an external locale will offer in the way of "a sense of place."
- ¹² David Canter, *The Psychology of Place*, op.cit., p. 8.
- ¹³ David Canter, "The Facets of Place" in Moore, Marans. op.cit. p. 114.
- ¹⁴ Elsewhere, it is true that Wang has accused Norberg-Schulz of deferring to positivism in the midst of his attempts to be "phenomenological." The point was that his endless penchant for categorizing positive-subjective feelings of attachment to physical locales by indexing those locales to different types of "dwelling" renders him, albeit unwittingly, some kind of empiricist taxonomist. But we think the emphasis in this case should be on the word "unwitting." The tendency towards taxonomy in Norberg-Schulz' is more of a weakness, in his attempt to escape the positivism of his day, than anything he was explicitly aiming for (as is the case in Canter). Norberg-Schulz' clear aim was to touch upon the subjective fluidity of human affective response to physical environments – and that this reality is beyond the ability of "science" to measure (his own scientific methodology notwithstanding). See Wang, op.cit. pp. 75-85.
- ¹⁵ Norberg-Schulz. *ibid.* 33-34. As for the comment on "earth and sky," this is a phrase from Heidegger's *Building Dwelling Thinking* which, for Norberg-Schulz, becomes a kind of "trump card" phrase which, once employed, is assumed to have a certain kind of capacity to cause us to touch the truth of dwelling – even though the idea of a landscape being determined by "its gathering of earth and sky" is not explained in any detail. See Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking" in *Basic Writings*, trans. D.F. Krell. (New York: Harper Collins, 1977, 1993), p. 351.
- ¹⁶ "The word 'role' is being used here in a rather special sense, and refers only to that aspect of a person's role which is related to his dealings with his physical surroundings, that is, his 'environmental role.' A particular person's role will, in large part, cause him to be found in a particular place. Thus roles are singularly appropriate social differentiators for linking people to places..." Canter. *The Psychology of Place*. op.cit. p. 128.
- ¹⁷ Canter, *The Psychology of Place*. *ibid.* pp. 8-9.
- ¹⁸ Canter, *The Psychology of Place*. *ibid.* pp. 43-44, 49.
- ¹⁹ Canter, *The Psychology of Place*. *ibid.* p. 139.
- ²⁰ Edmund Husserl, "Philosophy as Rigorous Science" in *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, trans. Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper Torch books, 1965). p. 79-86.
- ²¹ Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. trans. N.K. Smith. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965). See "Transcendental Deduction of the Universally Possible Employment in Experience of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding." B158-B169. It is because of this commonality of time and space in the first *Critique* that allows Kant to often use the phrase, in the third *Critique*, "the nature outside of us and the nature in us..." Kant. *Critique of Judgment*, 1790. trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987), Sec. 82, 429. The rubric "nature outside as well as within us appears numerous times in the final sections of the third *Critique*. See also 430, 431, 433, 435.

²² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (1790), op.cit., Sec. 67, 380.

²³ Space does not allow for the needed further explanation of this claim, but perhaps some of it could be provided in the footnotes. Kant posits that pure aesthetic pleasure occurs not when the sensed intuition is any particular object. Rather, aesthetic pleasure occurs when the object is all-of-nature-as-object, writ large. When this is the case, the order of our internal faculties (which, recall, is a continuous part of this nature) finds a harmony with the orderliness of nature-as-object, and the result is the play of the internal faculties. And this *play* is the source of aesthetic pleasure.

Now, according to Kant, for fine art to qualify as fine art, it *must be received by the cognitive faculties as having an appearance of "natureliness."* ("In dealing with a product of fine art we must become conscious that it is art rather than nature, and yet the purposiveness in its form must seem as free from all constraint of chosen rules as if it were a product of mere nature...") Kant. *Critique of Judgment*, op.cit. Sec. 45, 306). That is to say, for an art object to qualify as such, it must not appear to the faculties as *merely* a determinate, utilitarian, thing, to be cognized by the understanding in league with the sensibility. Rather, it must possess the ability to send the faculties into indeterminate play, just as nature-as-object is able to do. And this is when the sensed object is referred to the imagination, without engaging directly with the concepts of the understanding.

All of this strengthens the dwelling discourse in the following way. Kant's theory of aesthetic pleasure as rooted in the nature-ness of the art object explains why architectural theory has always been obsessed with explaining architectural form in terms of its compatibility with "nature." Now, of course, how "nature" is defined in various theories differ greatly. In Kantian terms, this is because the empirical concepts of the understanding

change through time, as developments in the external empirical realm evolve. These ever-changing empirical concepts, in turn, cause the subject to have differing definitions of what (the external) "nature" is. And as the faculties engage in reflective play, these empirical contents of the faculty of understanding become indirectly involved in the process, and emerge when the subject attempts to express his pleasure in determinate theoretical accounts. For example, for Alberti, "nature" was very much complicit with the pure geometries. And this influenced the architectural forms of the Renaissance profoundly. For the Abbe Laugier, "nature" in architecture must necessarily conform to the literal formal gestures of the primordial hut. (Marc-Antoine Laugier, *An Essay on Architecture*, trans. Wolfgang and Anni Hermann (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc, 1977), pp. 11-38). But then, barely half a century later, after the Revolution, "nature" for Durand meant expressions of economy and function. For Viollet-le-Duc, "nature" was complicit with the rational reduction of Gothic forms to their structural essences, and then expressed as such by new materials, such as iron. But for Ruskin and Pugin, "nature" was found in those same Gothic forms, but without any suggestion of the evils of mass production, such as the production of iron would imply. Even in the case of Tschumi, we could now understand his insistence that the forms of the *Parc* reflect the larger context of "urban madness and schizophrenia." This larger context is really Tschumi's definition of "nature," and his architectural forms are just following suit in order to fit in.

The point is this: when the architectural form is able to fit in to a subject's definition of "nature," positive-subjective feelings of attachment ensue. But explained in this way, the problem of the objective form as the *cause* of this positive-subjective feelings is negated. Instead, we now understand that such feelings are determined by the reflective play of the *a priori* cognitive faculties internal to the subject.