

DIALOGIC SPACE AS PLACE OF ENCOUNTER: HERMENEUTICS AND THE  
DESIGN PROCESS PROPER TO LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

by

BYRON BRIGHAM GEORGE

(Under the Direction of Douglas Pardue)

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to gain an understanding of how philosophical hermeneutics, a branch of philosophy concerned with the art of interpretation, can aid in the design process proper to landscape architecture. This research is driven by the question of how hermeneutics might orient and help to construct a creative framework that enables the landscape architect to articulate an understanding of the site through the process of design. The claim that the thesis makes is grounded in the notion of dialogic space. Dialogic space constructs a framework for the creative understanding the design of a site embodies. This is accomplished by interpreting the living traditions found within a site and bringing them into conversation with client, user, landscape architect, and ecosystem, in order to create a design that creates conditions for the possibility of calling the user, the other and world into question.

INDEX WORDS: Hermeneutics, Design Process, Landscape Architecture, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Bernard Lonergan, James Corner, Landscape Architectural Theory

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by

BYRON BRIGHAM GEORGE

BA, Seattle University, 2007

MA, Boston College, 2011

MTS, Boston College, 2011

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER  
OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2014

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BYRON BRIGHAM GEORGE

Major Professor: Douglas Pardue

Committee: Katherine Melcher  
Stephen J. Ramos  
Paul Kidder

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso  
Dean of the Graduate School  
The University of Georgia  
May 2014



## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated first and foremost to my wife Sarah. Without her unceasing support and encouragement I would have never been able to embark and complete this degree and thesis. I am forever grateful for the love, feedback, and insights she has given to me throughout this endeavor.

I would also like to dedicate this thesis to my grandmother Eleanor Cotton. Without her instilling such a profound love of the land in me I would have never found landscape architecture.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first acknowledge my thesis committee: Douglas Pardue, Katherine Melcher, Dr. Stephen Ramos, and Dr. Paul Kidder. Without their time, input, and expertise this endeavor would have been impossible. A special debt of gratitude is owed to Dr. Kidder whose constant mentorship over these past seven years has profoundly impacted the understanding I have of myself and the world.

I would also like to thank Dr. Joe Balay for his untiring support of this project. Without his expertise and friendship this thesis would not have been possible.

I also wish to acknowledge my father, and the profound impact he has had on my intellectual awakening. Without his patience and immense love I would never be where I am today.

I am deeply grateful for the unwavering support and encouragement given to me by my beloved mother, whose consolation has helped see me through the most difficult moments of this project.

I would also like to express my great appreciation and thanks to Seattle University, most especially to Sari Graven, for her openness to this project and the extraordinary resources that she made available to me throughout my research.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Humans, since their inception, have had intention. The landscape has always had the power to both take and give life, and this elemental striving for survival has placed humans in a deep and continuously evolving relationship with the land. Meaning was born through this intending. Meaning has evolved by this intending. Humans have imbued the land with meaning as they have shaped it. From the Mound Builders of the Americas to the Tokyo's Shinjuku station, our relatedness to the environment is extraordinarily mediated by meaning.

#### Transformations of Meaning

This thesis is an inquiry into how meaning is transformed into the ways we shape the land. In Marc Trieb's essay, "Must Landscapes Mean?" the question is asked, "...*should* we try to reveal meaning in environments, and if so, why? Where does the audience enter the process?"<sup>1</sup> Trieb identifies five approaches to landscape design and subsequently, five ways landscape design engages meaning. Trieb first describes the Neoarchaic approach to design.<sup>2</sup> This modern era approach looks back to the forms that resulted when early humans expressed their cosmological outlook upon the land. Trieb notes, "...in neighborhood playgrounds and in suburban office parks, one began to encounter hills coiled with spiral paths, cuts in the earth aligned with the rising or setting sun (or the solstice), circles of broken stone and clusters of

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<sup>1</sup> Marc Trieb, "Must Landscapes Mean?," in *Theory in Landscape Architecture : A Reader*, ed.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 92.

sacred groves...One can almost hear designers saying, sotto voce: “If they meant something in the past (of course, we have to like them as forms...), then they will mean something to us today.”<sup>3</sup>

Another design approach identified by Trieb is *Genius of Place*. This approach looks for inspiration in the locale of the site.<sup>4</sup> References to the history of the site are made manifest in the design to the history of the site. In a critical tone Trieb remarks, “Buried within this approach to shaping the landscape is the belief that reflecting a pre-existing condition creates a design more meaningful to the inhabitants.”<sup>5</sup>

The third approach is that of the *Zeitgeist* or “spirit of the times.”<sup>6</sup> This approach focuses on what is au courant and compelling to society. This approach invokes modern or post-modern styles and creates distinctive features within the landscape that are repeated in the body of work of designers within a particular time frame. Trieb gives the example of the boulders found in Peter Walker’s Tanner Fountain at Harvard, which resemble those seen in Carl Andre’s Stone Field Sculpture, which further reflect the stonework of sculptor Richard Long.<sup>7</sup> All of these designers are producing work contemporaneously and are thus a reflection of the spirit of that particular time.

The fourth approach is the *Vernacular Landscape*. Trieb cites the work of Martha Schwartz and architects Robert Venturi and Frank Gehry as examples of this approach.<sup>8</sup> Trieb describes this approach as, “...a hip glance at the Genius of the Place, of course, but the genius is culturalized and the selections suave. The vernacular is a rich source of materials and forms;

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 92.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 92.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 92.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 94.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 94.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 95.



after all it constitutes the “real” world in which we dwell.”<sup>9</sup> Trieb uses the term vernacular here ironically. Designers working within this approach use the raw materials and vernacular artifacts of a given place, and transform them through formal manipulation into something that is “high design.”

The fifth and final approach Trieb cites is the *Didactic* approach. Trieb associates his work with this approach. According to Trieb, “The Didactic approach dictates that forms should tell us, in fact instruct us, about the natural workings or history of the place. This is related—as all the approaches are to some degree—to Genius Loci school, but the Didactic is usually more overt in its intentions. Not only should we consult the genius about its basis, but our resultant project should render an exegesis on what the genius told us.”<sup>10</sup> In this approach there is an appropriation of the past, but the design is then placed into context with the present time. Trieb cites the work of Alexandre Chemetoff’s sunken bamboo garden at Parc de La Villette, which uses the palimpsest of the post-industrial infrastructure existing within the site to enter into conversation with the vegetative design intervention, as opposed to being wiped clean.<sup>11</sup>

### A Hermeneutic Approach to Design

These five examples testify to the ongoing struggle that landscape architects have when transforming culturally created meaning into form. James Corner rightly points out that landscape architecture no longer becomes just a representation of culture, but an active shaper of it when designers begin this transformation process.<sup>12</sup> It is in this vein of thought that this thesis

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 95.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 95.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 96.

<sup>12</sup> James Corner, “Eidetic Operations and New Landscapes,” in *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture*, ed. James Corner (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999). 159.

responds to the question posed by James Corner's 1991 essay, "Discourse of Theory II: Three Tyrannies of Landscape Architecture and the Alternative of Hermeneutics."<sup>13</sup> In the essay Corner asks, "How might landscape architectural theory rebuild an existential ground, a topography of critical continuity, of memory and invention, orientation and direction?"<sup>14</sup> Form and meaning must be the materials considered and used as we rebuild the foundation of landscape theory. Corner's theoretical approach is opposed to a positivistic one that claims to scientifically extrapolate all of the pertinent data needed to design a site; it is opposed to a paradigmatic approach which attempts to force fit the variables surrounding a site into a predetermined formal model; and it is opposed to an *avant-garde* approach which seeks to be provocative just for the sake of being provocative. Corner suggests hermeneutics as an approach to design that, similar to the didactic approach advocated by Trieb, mediates the history of place by its formal adaptation to present issues.<sup>15</sup> Hermeneutics, as the theory of interpretation, allows for critical continuation of memory, invention, orientation and direction. Corner explains:

Thus hermeneutics differs from the approaches to theory described earlier in that it is primarily a contemplative and meditative practice, as opposed to an analytical and calculative "system" (positivism). It is also ontological and circumstantial rather than methodological and universal (paradigms). And it continually unfolds within a *process* of tradition, as opposed to the discontinuity of endless provocation and novelty (the *avant-garde*).<sup>16</sup>

Corner draws upon the thinking of Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics to suggest its relevance to the process of designing the built environment.

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<sup>13</sup> James Corner, "A Discourse on Theory II: Three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics," *Landscape journal* 10, no. 2 (1991).

<sup>14</sup> James Corner, "A Discourse on Theory II: Three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics," 116.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 116-124.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 127.

While Corner's article does show how the aspects of tradition, experience and situation, as understood within philosophical hermeneutics, have potentially powerful correlation to the process of design, he leaves many unanswered questions regarding its actual application in the design process proper to landscape architecture. How does the designer go about understanding, and interpreting, traditions that exist within a site? How does one formally articulate the found traditions in a way that speak to the present situation? How does the designer know when a correct interpretation has been reached? These questions are left largely unanswered by Corner.

### Research Question and Claim

The question that drives the research conducted by this thesis is how does hermeneutics orient and help to construct a creative framework that enables the landscape architect to articulate an understanding of the site in and through the process of design? It is the claim of this thesis that dialogic space, a term I have coined, creates a framework that embodies the creative understanding of the design of a site. This framework is built by revealing and identifying the dynamics, which fundamentally constitute a site, and by bringing those variables into conversation. The ultimate understanding of these variables is embodied in the design of a place, which, if successful, will have the conditions necessary to call the user, the other and world into question, thus giving a site an existential orientation and expression within the built environment.

What then does it mean to be called into question? We remember Socrates' statement in Plato's *The Apology*, "The unexamined life is not worth living." (*The Apology* 38 A). Questions are agents of transformation, spurring forth insight and understanding. It is this sense of being called into question that this thesis seeks to frame dialogic space in. The questions evoked by dialogic space are meant to instigate wonder and reflection of one's life, culture, society, and

environment. Therefore dialogic space has an existential dimension to it, providing an orientating force that cultivates authentic dwelling.

This claim will first be contextualized in the following chapter by introducing the reader to the tradition of philosophical hermeneutics, focusing especially on the thinking of Hans-Georg Gadamer, and then showing both architecture and landscape architecture's appropriation of the tradition. Next, the creative framework of dialogic space will be elucidated. In this chapter the constituent pillars of site are identified as client, user, landscape architect, and ecosystem. Their inter-relationships constitute site and create the dynamics that give momentum to the dialogic process of design. The thought of Bernard Lonergan, S.J. will be introduced in order to further understand our experiential engagement with the built environment. Lonergan's thinking on the ways we experientially pattern our world is placed into conversation with Gadamer's understanding of experience in order to create a unified framework for the process of design. The shift from the resulting process to the actual product of dialogic space—will then be explained.

In the fourth chapter the resulting hermeneutic framework will be applied to an actual site, the perimeter of Seattle University in Seattle, Washington. This site was selected due to my familiarity with it as a gardener for the university. The perimeter is a hermeneutically rich site to apply the creative framework of dialogic space to, insofar as the perimeter is where the host first encounters the guest. This primary interaction is essentially interpretive in nature.

Given that the centrifugal force driving the design process, as this thesis articulates it, is dialogue, the actual application of this project could only be partially implemented. Similar to the ancient device known as the hermeneutic circle, the initial germ of the design proposed by the designer is a part of a greater whole. It presents itself as a question instigating dialogue as to whether the entities that make up the site can see themselves in the design. The response back from the constituents of a given site represents another part leading to another step in refining the

whole of the design and eventually leading to the embodied understanding of the parts and the whole to form the completed design. However, the completed design is essentially open in nature. The construction of the design poses itself as another question, to which users' engagement of it, or lack thereof, is another form of response thus perpetuating the hermeneutic circle of the interplay of parts informing a whole. Therefore, the essentially ongoing process of design informed by hermeneutics limits its full implementation within the confines of this thesis. It will therefore be shown where in the design process the application of dialogic space to Seattle University's perimeter was taken, and then suggested next steps based on the initial application of the process will be given in the conclusion.

The final chapter will conclude with a meditation on the opportunity for hermeneutics to inform landscape architecture's ability to create works of art. Dialogic space plays an important role in this process, which is further explained.

### Research Strategies

Several research strategies were employed to complete the research of this thesis. I relied on the typologies provided by Deming and Swaffield's *Landscape Architecture Research: Inquiry, Strategy, Design* to identify these strategies.<sup>17</sup> Secondary descriptive research strategies were used to develop the theoretical approach used to answer the research question. Direct observation was used in the form of time-lapse photography and sketching, during two site visits to Seattle University, to which the creative framework of dialogic space was applied.

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<sup>17</sup> Elen M. Deming, Simon R. Swaffield, and ebrary Inc., "Landscape Architecture Research Inquiry, Strategy, Design," (Chichester Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons,, 2011).

Additionally, interpretive strategies were employed in the form of interviews with students, faculty, staff, and administrators of Seattle University and relevant organizations surrounding the area.

## CHAPTER 2

### PHILOSOPHICAL HERMENEUTICS AND ITS APPLICATION TO LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE.

In this section I introduce philosophical hermeneutics by giving a brief overview of its task in relation to the history of philosophy. Next, key themes in the thinking of Hans-Georg Gadamer are introduced and will be taken up again in the next chapter. Following, a section illustrating the application of hermeneutics to landscape architecture, gives examples of how thinkers and designers in both architecture and landscape architecture have gravitated toward this field of philosophy.

#### Introduction to the Philosophical Hermeneutic Tradition

Hermeneutics is generally defined as the theoretical orientation toward the art of interpretation.<sup>18</sup> It is an ancient phenomenon that was applied to understanding the texts of scripture, law, and rhetoric. David E. Linge explains the task of hermeneutics: "...hermeneutical has to do with bridging the gap between the familiar world in which we stand and the strange meaning that resists assimilation into the horizon of our world."<sup>19</sup> Hermeneutics takes its name from the Greek god Hermes whose vocation it was to deliver messages between the gods and mortals. Therefore, hermeneutics has traditionally concerned itself with understanding meaning.

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<sup>18</sup> Hans Georg Gadamer, "Hermenutics as Practical Philosophy," in *The Gadamer Reader: A Bouquet of the Later Writings*, ed. Richard E. Palmer, Topics in Historical Philosophy (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2007). 229

<sup>19</sup> David E. Linge, introduction to, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, by Hans-Georg Gadamer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), xii.

The discipline has historically wrestled with issues of how to interpret traditional texts in respect to its present day and age. Ancient Greek hermeneutics focused on how allegory was to be interpreted as the, “meaning behind the literal meaning,” in texts by Homer, and other ancients. In the Middle Ages, John Cassian developed a systematized form of interpretation through his use of a fourfold sense of meaning: literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical in scripture.<sup>20</sup> Later, the Reformation and its doctrine of *sola scriptura* called upon hermeneutics to restrict the multiple readings of scripture and focus a literal lens on the text.<sup>21</sup> Concurrently, according to Gadamer, “...a new methodological consciousness was awakened that wanted to be objective, object-centered, and free from all subjective arbitrariness...the aim was to get back to the correct interpretation of those texts which contained material that was authentic.”<sup>22</sup> The search for the *mens auctoris* was an essential concern during this time. This had been lost or distorted, according to the Reformation, by tradition in the Roman Church as well as the Latin of Scholasticism.<sup>23</sup> During the beginning stages of Modernity the, “...method oriented consciousness of that belonged to the new science,” a science rooted in mathematics and logic, and thus with objective universal truth, adopted hermeneutics.<sup>24</sup> Gadamer notes the role hermeneutics played in early Protestant theology under the development of Melanchthon.<sup>25</sup> During this time Melanchthon developed an approach to hermeneutics that drew from ancient

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<sup>20</sup> Hans Georg Gadamer, "Classical and Philosophical Hermeneutics," in *The Gadamer Reader : A Bouquet of the Later Writings*, ed. Richard E. Palmer (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2007). 46.

<sup>21</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Classical and Philosophical Hermeneutics," 46.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 46-47.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 47.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 47.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 48.



rhetoric's understanding of its work as the right reading of books, as well as seeing the whole in terms of the part.<sup>26</sup>

During the beginning of the Enlightenment, theological hermeneutics aimed to establish exegetical rules and historical criticism.<sup>27</sup> Reason was the hermetic lens applied to the scriptures. This was countered by what became known as pietistic hermeneutics, which according to Gadamer, "...closely linked the meaning of texts with their edifying application. Here the tradition of ancient rhetoric and its teaching with regard to the role of emotional impact enters in, especially with regard to their doctrine of the sermon, which in Protestantism had received a new, major role."<sup>28</sup> The sermon was a hermeneutical exercise of interpreting the scripture and suggesting its application in contemporary life.

Friedrich Schleiermacher's scholarship in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century ushered in a new era of hermeneutical interpretation. Gadamer summarizes Schleiermacher's approach to hermeneutics, "For him, understanding is a reproductive repetition of the original intellectual act of the author's production of the meaning..."<sup>29</sup> Schleiermacher introduced a major shift in thinking of hermeneutics as an aid in understanding. The assumption that hermeneutics was to assist in interpreting things that were not immediately understandable shifted to focus instead on how hermeneutics could be an aid in correcting one's misunderstanding of the text in question. David E. Linge summarizes this shift:

For Schleiermacher... what the text really means is not at all what it "seems" to say to us directly. Rather, its meaning must be recovered by a disciplined reconstruction of the historical situation or life-context in which it originated. Only a critical methodologically controlled interpretation can reveal the author's

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 48.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 49.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 49.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 51.

meaning to us. Thus the way was cleared for making all valid understanding the project of a discipline.<sup>30</sup>

Seeing the way in which the text speaks to the contemporary situation in which it is interpreted can only lead to misunderstanding according to Schleiermacher and a later successor to this line of thought Wilhelm Dilthey. The task as Schleiermacher and Dilthey articulated it was to reconstruct the life-world of the author, with as much scientific rigor as the natural sciences, in order to insure an accurate interpretation and understanding. According to Gadamer, Dilthey sought to, "...mediate on the theoretical level between "historical consciousness" and the scientific claim to truth."<sup>31</sup>

Martin Heidegger radically changed the tide within hermeneutics from striving to gain legitimacy through scientific rigor and methodological certainty to hermeneutics as ontologically disclosive. In doing so, understanding was no longer seen as a constant attempt to correct misunderstanding by scientifically reconstructing the world of the author. Heidegger's hermeneutics of facticity defined human existing as understanding *existenz*. Gadamer speaks of Heidegger's contribution:

Indeed, Heidegger interpreted *Existenz* and *Auslegung* [laying out, interpretation], and eventually defined *Existenz* as the self-projecting by the self of its possibilities..."Understanding" is no longer meant as one process of human thinking among others, a behavior that could be developed through discipline into a scientific procedure; rather, it means something that constitutes the basic being-in-motion [*Bewegtheit*, movedness] of the existing human being [*Dasien*].<sup>32</sup>

The self-projecting of self is seen in Heidegger's understanding of the hermeneutic circle. In the act of self-projecting we are in fact expressing a pre-understanding of the situation based upon

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<sup>30</sup> David E. Linge, introduction to, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, xii.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. 52.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 56.

our interpretation of it. Importantly, Heidegger does not speak of the hermeneutic circle consisting of the whole and its parts, but instead in terms of understanding (*Verstehen*) and its emergence by the interpretive process.<sup>33</sup> Gadamer describes Heidegger's influential understanding of the hermeneutic circle saying, "...every revision of the fore-projection is capable of projecting before itself a new projection of meaning; rival projects can emerge side by side until it becomes clearer what the unity of meaning is; interpretation begins with fore-conceptions that are replaced by more suitable ones. This constant process of new projection constitutes the movement of understanding and interpretation."<sup>34</sup>

### Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics

Understanding Heidegger's contribution sets us now up to introduce Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. Gadamer's seminal text *Truth and Method* is concerned with understanding the role hermeneutics plays in the human sciences. Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics seeks to correct hermeneutics attempt to find new legitimacy through scientific method, and restore the reflective, meditative, and dialogic process of coming to understanding through interpretation. Gadamer sought to critique Schleiermacher and Dilthey's view that the interpreter's viewpoint can only get in the way of the real process of understanding, which centers on reconstructing the psychological life-world of the text's author.<sup>35</sup> David E. Linge succinctly describes Gadamer's position:

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<sup>33</sup> Jean Grondin, "Gadamer's Basic Understanding of Understanding," in *Cambridge Companions to Philosophy*, ed. Robert J. Dostal, The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer (Cambridge ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>34</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, Joel Weinsheimer, and Donald G. Marshall, *Truth and Method*, 2nd, rev. ed., Continuum Impacts (London ; New York: Continuum, 2004). 269.

<sup>35</sup> David E. Linge, introduction to, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, by Hans-Georg Gadamer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), xiv.

What the interpreter negates, then, is his own present as a vital extension of the past. This methodological alienation of the knower from his own historicity is the precise focus of Gadamer's criticism. Thus Gadamer takes the knower's boundness to his present horizons and the temporal gulf separating him from his object to be the productive ground of all understanding rather than negative factors or impediments to be overcome.<sup>36</sup>

The vitality of the past's influence upon an interpreter, for Gadamer, is due in large part to tradition. Tradition is an incredibly important notion for Gadamer's hermeneutics. It is an active and dynamic connection we have to our past that is constantly having to prove itself in light of our present situation.<sup>37</sup>

Traditions form our pre-understanding or prejudices. Prejudice as a fundamental condition to one's understanding has been one of the most controversial issues in Gadamer's approach to hermeneutics. It is diametrically opposed to the scientific objectivism advocated by Schleiermacher and Dilthey. It is Gadamer's position that the events in life that have shaped an individual, one's personal history and view of history, must be acknowledged as the ground on which we approach our understanding. Gadamer notes, "The self-awareness of the individual is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life. That is what the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgments constitute the historical reality of his being."<sup>38</sup> Gadamer notes the pejorative understanding associated with prejudice has its origins in what he calls Enlightenment, "prejudice against prejudice..." which Gadamer concludes, "...denies tradition its power."<sup>39</sup> Prejudice can be a productive element in understanding because it allows us to acknowledge the fact that we do not approach understanding from a blank slate. Being informed

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<sup>36</sup> David E. Linge, introduction to, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, xiv.

<sup>37</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. 282, 285.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. 278.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 272-273.

by our ongoing encounter with tradition and an awareness of how that tradition has historically shaped our viewpoint, it allows us to enter into the conversation of understanding.

Tradition and our prejudice give us an awareness of how dramatically we are shaped our by history. Gadamer refers to this realization as historically effected consciousness. Linge shows historically effected consciousness' relationship to tradition and prejudice noting, "...the past is never simply a collection of objects to be recovered or duplicated by the interpreter, but rather what Gadamer calls an "effective history" (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) that alone makes possible the conversation between each new interpreter and the text or event he seeks to understand. The prejudices and interests that mark out our hermeneutical situation are given to us by the very movement of tradition—of former concretizations that mediate the text to us—and constitute our immediate participation in this effective history." Tradition, prejudice, and historically effected consciousness orient our engagement with interpretation.

Gadamer is very clear in acknowledging the potentially negative side of prejudice. He notes that prejudice becomes unproductive to the process of understanding when it refuses to question itself. Thus, for Gadamer the primacy of the question prevents our prejudices from completely determining our understanding. He contends that only through the question, which facilitates an encounter with our pre-understanding (prejudice) and the thing resisting immediate interpretation, can an adequate dialogue for authentic understanding emerge. In every event of understanding we must fundamentally put at risk our prejudice due to the understanding that emerges from the question.<sup>40</sup> Gadamer speaks of the priority of the question saying

In order to be able to ask, one must want to know, and that means knowing that one does not know. In the comic confusion between question and answer, knowledge and ignorance that Plato describes, there is a profound recognition of the *priority of the question* in all knowledge and discourse that really reveals

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 298.

something of an object. Discourse that is intended to reveal something requires that that thing be broken open by the question.<sup>41</sup>

Through the interplay of question and response our prejudices are foregrounded and put at risk by the event of understanding facilitated by the question. This points toward the importance Gadamer associates with notion of play in hermeneutics.

In his sections on play, Gadamer's overall goal is to illustrate the essentially medial character of play.<sup>42</sup> When one is playing, one is pulled out of oneself by fulfilling the spirit of the game—play is serious in that sense.<sup>43</sup> Within this to-and-fro movement the subject becomes the very play itself.<sup>44</sup> “The structure,” according to Gadamer, “absorbs the player into itself, and thus frees [the player] from the burden of taking the initiative, which constitutes the actual strain of existence.”<sup>45</sup> The example of play is instructive toward his view of dialogue—a dialogue that is instigated by the primacy of the question. As with play Gadamer notes, “To conduct a conversation means to allow oneself to be conducted by the subject matter to which the partners in the dialogue are oriented.”<sup>46</sup>

Within the structure of dialogue, question and answer interplay with parts of the issue at stake and determine if they can form a whole. Dialogue is then the movement whereby the hermeneutic circle of the interplay between seeing the parts in terms of a whole and the whole in terms of the parts is conducted.<sup>47</sup> Gadamer speaks of the hermeneutic circle:

The circle then, is not formal in nature. It is neither subjective nor objective, but describes understanding as the interplay of the

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 357.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 104.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 103.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 104-105.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 105.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 359-360.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 292.

movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter. The anticipation of meaning that governs our understanding of a text is not an act of subjectivity but proceeds from the commonality that binds us to the tradition. But this commonality is constantly being formed in our relation to tradition. Tradition is not simply a permanent precondition; rather, we produce it ourselves inasmuch as we understand, participate in the evolution of tradition and hence further determine it ourselves. Thus the circle of understanding is not a “methodological” circle, but describes an element of the ontological structure of understanding.<sup>48</sup>

In Günter Figal’s essay, “The Doing of the Thing Itself: Gadamer’s Hermeneutic Ontology of Language,” Figal further elucidates what is meant by the hermeneutic event and its “centrifugal understanding”<sup>49</sup> that the hermeneutical circle imparts saying, “...both question and answer in their belonging together is to be grasped as an event. Every accomplishment of understanding and interpretation *is* only in this event. The event is the movement (*Bewegtheit*) of language.”<sup>50</sup> Language is the medium of the question. Language is the medium of the answer. Language is the medium of the dialogue. Gadamer notes, “All human knowledge of the world is linguistically mediated. Our first orientation to the world fulfills itself in the learning of language. But not only this. The linguisticity [*Sprachlichkeit*] of our being-in-the-world articulates in the end the whole realm of our experience.” This is what Gadamer means by the ontological valence of language’s ability to bring into being our experience in and of the world. Linge poignantly points this out writing,

The worlds we speak function precisely by *not* being thematic, but by concretizing and disappearing into the subject matter they open up to the other person. “The more language is a living operation, the less we are aware of it. Thus it follows from the forgetfulness

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid. 294.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. 291.

<sup>50</sup> Gunter Figal, “The Doing of the Thing Itself: Gadamer’s Hermeneutic Ontology of Language,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*, ed. Robert J. Dostal, Cambridge Companions to Philosophy (Cambridge ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002). 111.

of language that its real being consists in what is said in it.<sup>51</sup>

Language mediates our experience of being in the world, it is that by which we can understand and interpret

The act of translation, of interpretation, in an effort to understand is a movement of application according to Gadamer's thinking.<sup>52</sup> Translation must be completed in contemporary and understandable terms when translating something that carries with it the meaning it had for another historical epoch or person. In this sense, application is an understanding of the meaning of something in terms of one's present horizon. Horizon is a term Gadamer uses to indicate the worldview we each possess. It is formed by the traditions, cultures, social structures, language, and experiences that make us who we are. It is a dynamic concept as we are always moving through time and opening ourselves up to new experiences.<sup>53</sup> Our encounter with the historical horizon surrounding an object of interpretation with our present horizon, and the dialogic process of interpretation that the hermeneutic circle invokes can codify or give descriptive language to an understanding, which Gadamer calls a "fusion of horizons."<sup>54</sup> In an important way application can be seen as a fusion of horizons. Both are expressions of the movement toward, and actualization of, understanding.

Finally, art is fundamental example of the hermeneutical phenomenon for Gadamer. In his essay, "The Artwork in Word and Image: "So True, so Full of Being!" Gadamer begins by reflecting upon our encounter with a work of art, namely its absoluteness.<sup>55</sup> Gadamer means that the we recognize a timelessness in the work of art. By this he means that we today can recognize a work of art as such because it still speaks to us—it addresses us. In doing so a dialogue is

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<sup>51</sup> David E. Linge, introduction to, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, xxx.

<sup>52</sup> Jean Grondin, "Gadamer's Basic Understanding of Understanding," 43.

<sup>53</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 303.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. 305.

<sup>55</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Artwork in Word and Image: "So True, So Full of Being!"



formed that results in a contemporaneity with the work of the past and our current situation.

Gadamer notes, “When one views the whole of art, it is certainly not possible to think in terms of some kind of historical “progress” toward and ultimate completion.”<sup>56</sup> Explicating further the temporal dimensions that the absoluteness of the work of art evokes, Gadamer evinces art’s ability to “attune” itself to the present time. He states, “In art and philosophy one does not have to know from what distance in the past, or from what foreignness, what one encounters comes. Each has its presence and is not gazed at as strange; rather, it draws you into its path—even if there may be much that is foreign in it to be overcome.”<sup>57</sup> Despite the passage of time we are able to identify parts of ourselves in our encounter with the work of art. Gadamer concludes this point saying, “An artwork is able to build bridges that reach beyond the enclosure and space in which it originated.”<sup>58</sup>

As a result of the contemporaneity with which the work or art speaks to us, it is able to enrich our traditions in new and dynamic ways. “Every tradition appropriates what it encounters,” Gadamer notes, “in order to move forward in the continuous process of enriching its tradition. But we should not forget that this appropriating does not mean just *knowing* but also *being*.”<sup>59</sup> Gadamer looks to Nietzsche’s analysis of the impact scientific consciousness has had on culture which, “...has led to a weakening of the general mythos in our culture, which is the only thing able to give it style and shape.”<sup>60</sup> Gadamer points to the exclusivity and social segregation of art as mere, “pleasure,” as opposed to beacons with which we orient our being in

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*The Gadamer Reader: A Bouquet of Later Writings*, ed. Richard E. Palmer (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 197.

<sup>56</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, “The Artwork in Word and Image,” 197-198.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. 197-198.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. 199.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 200.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. 199.

the world.<sup>61</sup> In order to retrieve the significance of the work of art as an active shaper of culture, Gadamer calls our attention to the experience of the work of art. In this regard, Gadamer observes that there is an, “ungraspability [that] makes an overwhelming impression on us... Works of art possess an elevated rank in being, and this is seen in the fact that in encountering a work of art we have the experience of something emerging—and this one can call truth!”<sup>62</sup> The work of art places us in a liminal state of wonder when it truly speaks to us. Gadamer cites Plato’s *Philebus* as helping to articulate this liminal space as a “coming into being... Being emerges from becoming!”<sup>63</sup> Gadamer explains, “In it [Plato’s notion of coming into being] we recognize the basic experience we have in encountering a work of art when we say: ‘That’s right! That is the way it is!’...”<sup>64</sup> Aristotle furthers Plato’s insight by taking Plato’s notion of “being as becoming” and furthering it to “the becoming of being.”<sup>65</sup> In explaining this furthering by Aristotle, Gadamer looks into the concept that Aristotle associated with “the becoming of being,” *energeia*.<sup>66</sup> Gadamer goes on to name the associating attributes of *energeia* saying, “The Aristotelian terms that inquire into the being of movement—like *dynamis*, *energeia*, and *entelecheia*—point to the side of the action in the process of being carried out and not to the *ergon*—the completed action. The process of being carried out, the execution or performance, already has its goal and the fulfilling of its being in itself (*telos echei*).” This of course is reminiscent of Gadamer’s use of the example of play. In its back and forth we are taken-up in the game. Gadamer explains this phenomenon:

An experience of art is like this: it is not a mere copy of something. Rather one is absorbed in it. It is more like a tarrying that waits and

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid. 200.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. 207.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 209.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. 210.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. 210.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 210.

preserves in such a way that the work of art is allowed to come forth than it is something that we have done...To tarry is not to lose time. Being in the mode of tarrying is like an intensive back-and-forth conversation that is not cut off but lasts until it is ended. The whole of it is a conversation in which for a time one is completely “absorbed in conversation,” and this means one “is completely there in it.”<sup>67</sup>

The work of art however is not perpetually calling to us every time we look at it. The encounter with the work of art conceals as well as reveals.<sup>68</sup> Gadamer observes, “We say “it” comes forth because something resides within the work, and in a certain sense what comes forth is of something that is hidden in the work itself and not in whatever we may say about it.”<sup>69</sup> Gadamer furthers this point citing the example of architecture that it is more than a merely utilitarian structure, but, “in the middle of its use, something wonderful shines forth, as with everything that is beautiful. This experience causes us to pause in the midst of our purposeful doing, for example in a room of a church, or in a stairwell, when suddenly we stand there and remain entranced.”<sup>70</sup> Architecture’s purposiveness and capacity to become a work of art witness to the concealment and un-concealment of experiencing the work of art. Gadamer concludes, “...we have the artistic thought possessed by the building holding back at first behind the purpose until it takes hold of the viewer’s attention in its form. Then the relation to its purpose steps into the background, so that what is distinctive in the building completely fills us. It is then like “music” that has fallen silent.” (Goethe).<sup>71</sup>

The final aspect of art as architecture is Gadamer’s association of it with the decorative. Paul Kidder’s book, *Gadamer for Architects* explains that by decorative Gadamer is not referring

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid. 211.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. 214.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 214.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 221.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. 222.

to architecture as a superficial act of making.<sup>72</sup> Kidder explains what Gadamer means by the term decorative saying, “He [Gadamer] draws here on Vitruvius’ sense of “decorum,” which refers to the fittingness of the work’s form to its meaning and function...”<sup>73</sup> The artfulness of architecture in this sense is its ability to unify form and function. In doing so Architecture draws from its past forms and creates something new and fitting for the functions that it must serve today.

Understanding Gadamer’s views on the hermeneutic valence of experiencing the work of art is crucial in understanding how landscape architecture, as a work of art, creates conditions for the possibility of calling oneself, other, and world into question. In his thinking of art the dynamics of arts disclosure to those who are encountered by it provides possibilities for landscape architecture’s forms to create conditions for a similar disclosure to emerge. This will be addressed in the following chapter.

In this section I briefly given soundings from the long tradition of hermeneutics as it applies to the thinking of Hans-Georg Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics. It is by no means an exhaustive account of the tradition as it has affected Gadamer, or in general. But it is only meant to situate the thinker within the context of the tradition as Gadamer engaged it. Important contributions from thinkers such as Jacques Derrida or Paul Ricoeur, to name only a few, have unfortunately had to be left out for the sake of focusing on Gadamer’s thinking as it applies to the question driving this thesis. Having given this background the next section will focus on architecture and landscape architecture’s appropriation of the hermeneutic tradition through the writing of Alberto Pérez-Gómez, Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyne, Paul Kidder, Ann Whiston-Spirn, and James Corner.

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<sup>72</sup> Paul Kidder, "Gadamer for Architects," (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013). <http://preproxy.galib.uga.edu/login?url=http://site.ebrary.com/lib/ugalib/docDetail.action?docID=10659503>. 29.

<sup>73</sup> Paul Kidder, "Gadamer for Architects," 29.

## Architecture and Landscape Architecture's Appropriation of Philosophical Hermeneutics

In "Hermeneutics as Discourse in Design," Alberto Pérez-Gómez begins by identifying the problem in contemporary architectural theory and building as consisting of an instrumentalization of the discipline.<sup>74</sup> Pérez-Gómez traces this phenomenon to the beginnings of the 17<sup>th</sup> century with Claude Perrault challenging the position of traditional architecture's concern for localities understandings of themselves as seen in relation to the larger cosmos. Pérez-Gómez notes that with the emergence of Cartesian physics and mathematics, "The purpose of theoretical discourse was to be as easily "applicable" as possible, a set of recipes to control and architectural practice which, in his [Perrault's] view, was always prone to error and subject to the clumsiness of craftsmanship."<sup>75</sup> This combined with a general disregard for the impact of history by the profession results, according to Pérez-Gómez, in, "...an incapacity to consider truly radical alternative modes of thinking architectural theory."<sup>76</sup> At issue for Pérez-Gómez is articulating what type of discourse can pronounce the function of design in the building of our environment.<sup>77</sup> The question is then asked by Pérez-Gómez, "...is there a way we may conceptualize what is of the essence in discourse, a mode of speech that might result in a working hierarchy of the knowledge required for the realization of design work?"<sup>78</sup>

It is through hermeneutics that Pérez-Gómez finds an adequate response to his question.

He draws from Paul Ricoeur's work *Time and Narrative*, writing:

...we recognize that the word, through its original capacity for storytelling, articulates the possibility of meaning, in that it names intentions in deference to a "space of experience," either a cosmic (traditional) or historical (modern) world, and with respect to a

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<sup>74</sup> Alberto Pérez-Gómez, "Hermeneutics as Discourse in Design," *Design Issues* 15, no. 2 (1999).

<sup>75</sup> Alberto Pérez-Gómez, "Hermeneutics as Discourse in Design," 74.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. 76.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. 71.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. 72.

“horizon of expectations.” Thus, the projections of the architect’s imagination construe a better future for the common good.<sup>79</sup>

Echoing the ontological primacy of language, Pérez-Gómez links the word to its spatial ramifications of meaning. In doing so, he invokes an architectural ethos of building toward the common good; because of architecture’s capacity to orient our collective memory towards the future, it is a fundamentally ethical project.<sup>80</sup> Hermeneutics offers architects a primary orientation in which to approach the task of transposing meaning from culture and tradition into the built environment:

The world of our experience includes the artifacts that make up our artistic tradition and, in turn, those revelatory moments we call architecture, moments of recognition in spatio-temporal forms that are completely new, yet strangely familiar when finally articulated in language. By understanding these forms of specific embodiment and articulating their lessons in view of our own tasks, we will have a greater chance to construe an appropriate architecture, an intersubjective reality that might fulfill its social and political task as an affirmation of culture.<sup>81</sup>

In this passage Pérez-Gómez poignantly affirms architecture, and as I will argue, landscape architecture’s ability to create conditions for the possibility of calling oneself, the other, and world into question. Hermeneutics can orient the creative task of design, a task that is essentially interpretive, to express a culture and tradition’s hopes and aspirations toward the common good.

Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyne draw explicitly from Gadamer’s thinking in their book *Interpretation in Architecture*, which links hermeneutics to the process of design proper to architecture.<sup>82</sup> Snodgrass and Coyne begin by showing architecture to be an essentially interpretive act of creativity. Interpretation, according to the authors, “...is to position it within a

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 72.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. 73.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. 78.

<sup>82</sup> Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyne, *Interpretation in Architecture : Design as Way of Thinking*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006).

set of relationships.”<sup>83</sup> The act of building and its resulting forms establish relationships with social, cultural, and political contexts among others.<sup>84</sup> In doing so architecture positions, or helps orient, understanding through its building being an act of interpretation.<sup>85</sup>

Drawing from the work of Donald Schön, Snodgrass and Coyne relate the process of design to the hermeneutical circle:

The designer thus begins the design task by shaping the situation in accordance with an initial appreciation. The situation then ‘talks back’ and the designer responds to the situation’s back talk by reflecting-in-action on the construction of the problem, the strategies of action, or the model of the phenomena. The process then develops in a circle—‘back and forth, back and forth.’ Each move draws out implications of earlier moves, seen as having consequences that are described and evaluated in terms drawn from one or more design domains, and having implications binding on later moves, creating new problems to be described and solved.<sup>86</sup>

Meaning is projected and then further refined based upon its inter-relationship with the rest of the parts making up the whole.<sup>87</sup> Throughout this process of exchange the past, present and future are all taken into consideration as Snodgrass and Coyne explain, “Our present understanding, thrown from our past experience, throws forward to adumbrate the artifact in its future completion. This provisional projection then throws back to refashion our present understanding, which in turn throws back to refashion our understanding of our past experience...and so the cycle continues.”<sup>88</sup> The authors note that the success of this process is

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<sup>83</sup> Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyne, *Interpretation in Architecture*, 8.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. 8.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. 22.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. 46.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. 46.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. 46.

dependent upon it being in motion, in constant interplay, that gradually builds upon itself a structure of understanding.<sup>89</sup>

Snodgrass and Coyne also apply Gadamer's primacy of the question and the dialogue it cultivates to the arena of design. The design situation itself is what questions the designer throughout the process of creation, "...who or what does the design situation question? It questions all the prejudgements, pre-understandings, values and attitudes that the designer brings to the design situation, preconceptions that are taken for granted since they are for the greater part unconscious."<sup>90</sup> The next iteration of the designer's understanding is in response to this questioning, to which the design situation responds in turn. The authors note that this takes the form of a lively conversation, so much so, that like play, the subjective self-consciousness of the designer and the design situation as object dissolve into the quest for understanding embodied in and through the design.<sup>91</sup>

Another aspect of Gadamer's thinking that Snodgrass and Coyne evoke is his appropriation of the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis*. Snodgrass and Coyne translate the term as 'ethical knowledge,' others have translated it as practical wisdom or prudence.<sup>92</sup> *Phronesis* underscores the idea that, "understanding and application of pre-given rules involves a type of knowledge that is unlike epistemic knowledge."<sup>93</sup> This makes the circumstances or context surrounding a particular situation important in the application of interpretation and understanding. Drawing from Gadamer, Snodgrass and Coyne remark, "...application does not come after understanding and interpretation. They comprise one unified process; we do not first interpret, then understand, and finally apply what we have understood. Every event of

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid. 46.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. 47.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. 47-48.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. 62.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. 62.



understanding involves interpretation, and interpretation always involves application.”<sup>94</sup> Each particular situation nuances the application of understanding; and *phronesis* is the knowledge, gained through practice, that allows for the right application of understanding to the situation based upon its specific circumstances.

This is translated in design, according to the authors, in the sense that the rules of design must be properly applied to a specific design situation. Gadamer’s use of the rules that structure a game can be seen as an example of *phronesis* correlating to the process of design. Snodgrass and Coyne explain, “It would not be possible to play a game if it had no rules; yet the rules only take actual shape when the game is played; and outside the particular specific instance of its playing neither the game nor its rules have concrete shape or existence.” This is the same in the process of design. Rules of design exist which construct a creative framework with which to engage a particular design situation. However not all of the rules of design necessarily apply to the particular situation, and the ones that do apply are nuanced in the way they are *phronetically* applied to the situation. A common example from outside of the discipline is the function of the Supreme Court. The Constitution is a set of rules that creates the framework by which the United States’ form of democracy functions. There are times when the application of these rules must be applied to a particular situation, due to its specific circumstances, which make it unique. In the application of the law to the situation, the understanding of the law is nuanced in light of the situation and serves as a precedent on how that particular law is to be interpreted in the future. Snodgrass and Coyne conclude, “...practical design rules are not objective, nor are they applicable in the same way in each design case, but are analogous to the rules which govern the

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid. 62.

conduct of societies or games, being efficacious and appropriate to the degree that they are capable of giving rise to inexhaustible possibilities of interpretation and action.”<sup>95</sup>

Another hermeneutical topic that Snodgrass and Coyne show as applying to design is “otherness”. They ask the question, “How is architecture concerned with otherness?”<sup>96</sup> In addressing this question the authors elucidate the three senses in which Gadamer speaks of the I-Thou relationship.<sup>97</sup> The I-thou relationship is the interaction that is brought about by our encounter with the unfamiliar, with the other.

The first mode of I-Thou encounter objectifies the other. The relationship is impersonal and uneventful. Snodgrass and Coyne explain, “By treating the other as an object, the interpreter prevents it from speaking for itself, so that no dialogue takes place. The conversation is one-sided... To treat the Thou as an object lacks morality because it involves the explicit or implicit domination of the other.”<sup>98</sup>

In the second form of I-Thou relationship there is acknowledgement of the personhood of the Thou, but no reciprocity or conversation is allowed.<sup>99</sup> The I claims to understand the Thou despite never having listened to the Thou. The authors give a summary of this perspective saying, “I do not accept the meaningful content of his utterance as a truth claim that impinges upon and calls into question my own concepts of what is true.”<sup>100</sup> No substantive agency is given to the Thou—the Thou poses no question.

The final sense in which the I-Thou relationship is established acknowledges the Thou truly as Thou. An equality of viewpoints is established which allows true listening to question

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid. 67.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. 147.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. 154.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. 154.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. 155.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. 155.

and response to emerge.<sup>101</sup> In this sense a genuine openness emerges by the mutual recognition of the validity each has toward reaching truth. Respect stratifies the essential vulnerability that this event of understanding possesses. Coyne and Snodgrass conclude, “The I not only questions the Thou, but is in turn open to the questions the Thou asks. This is to enter into dialogue that is capable of carrying the interlocutors along in such a way that the I and the Thou become a We.”

The appropriation of Gadamer’s thinking into the realm of design by Snodgrass and Coyne enriches our understanding as designers, particularly in understanding the hermeneutic circle, *phronesis*, and the other. The way in which landscape architects design a space structures the encounter we have with the “other.” The way in which the landscape architect applies the understanding cultivated by the hermeneutic circle into the design of the built environment has profound influence upon the type of I-Thou relationship users of that space have with one another.

Paul Kidder, in his monograph *Gadamer for Architects*, further nuances Gadamerian ideas and their application to architecture.<sup>102</sup> Kidder furthers our thinking on understanding horizon’s application to the design discipline by setting forward his idea of “design horizon.” First, Kidder identifies that due to the role of the architect, she must deal with a host of horizons assumingly ranging from client, community groups, city officials, contractors, and engineers.<sup>103</sup> The architect does that while also operating within a certain horizon. Kidder notes, “The most distinctive feature of that horizon is the decisive role that design plays in it. For an architect design is never simply a skill, or even just an art: It is an entire way of being present to the world

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid. 156.

<sup>102</sup> Paul Kidder, “Gadamer for Architects,” (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013). <http://preproxy.galib.uga.edu/login?url=http://site.ebrary.com/lib/ugalib/docDetail.action?docID=10659503>.

<sup>103</sup> Paul Kidder, “Gadamer for Architects,” 89.

and sensitized to its defining qualities.”<sup>104</sup> From within this horizon, other horizons surrounding the project come into interaction—into relationship. “In the unfolding of the process many principles come into play that one is inclined to call universal—justice, human dignity, sustainability, professional integrity, honesty—but...,” Kidder here brings in *phronetic* knowing, “...with the understanding that these can only be realized in the concrete as qualities of the relationships that the shared work of the project initiates. The universal cannot be taken for granted; it must speak again in the unique circumstances of the here and now.”<sup>105</sup> The design horizon then emerges as the relationships necessarily formed around a project and the principles and values structuring those relationships finding specific applications to the unique circumstances of the project. The design horizon is the space that plays host to all of the stakeholders surrounding the design project.

Kidder points out the distinctive role that the designer plays as a facilitator in the conversations that surround the design of a project. In working with multiple horizons Kidder also helps us to further understand Snodgrass and Coyne’s interpretation of Gadamer’s three senses of the I-Thou relationship by his understanding of Gadamer’s view of hermeneutics as a practical philosophy. The hermeneutic impact on what Kidder refers to as “practical deliberation” sheds light on facilitating a conversation that increases conditions for the possibility of understanding to occur.<sup>106</sup> He frames practical deliberation ultimately in terms of how to authentically listen to the multiple horizons the designer comes into contact with on a project.<sup>107</sup> Hermeneutics, as a practical philosophy, is not aimed at determining answers, but

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid. 89.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. 94-95.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. 85.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. 85

rather inquiring into the patterns of discourse that results in authentic collaboration and mutual understanding.<sup>108</sup> Kidder explains:

These patterns come into play whenever we say that members of a deliberating group are trying to “listen to one another” or to “understand one another’s point of view.” In such moments the purpose is not simply to state the principles or policies at stake but to try to grasp the different ways they are being interpreted by the group’s members. These interpretations bring ideas to bear, but even more so, histories: the history of their interactions with individuals and organizations that determines the levels of trust and confidence that they bring to the table, the histories of fairness or unfairness that define the members’ roles as defenders or activists, and the symbols and feelings that got with all of these histories.<sup>109</sup>

The designer’s horizon is dramatically enriched by attentively listening and seeking to understand the hermeneutic lens (“ways of interpretation”) of the various stakeholders in the project. In doing so, dialogue more substantively results with each stakeholder’s respective horizons, insofar as, through listening, the designer creates an environment of receptivity by understanding the patterns of inquiry, through dialogue, that allow the past histories of each stakeholder to speak to the issues surrounding a project. This then positions the architect and landscape architect’s horizon on the same plane as the users of a particular sites horizon. The architect does not have the answer, but instead is a facilitator of questions that are aimed at mutually determining an answer between the native genius of the users and the particular training and skill sets of the architectural disciplines.

Paul Kidder’s work helps to identify the dynamics influencing the encounter of stakeholders and designers respective horizons on a project. His interpretation of Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics as practical philosophy also enriches our understanding of Snodgrass and Coyne’s explication of the I-Thou relationship, insofar as giving insight on how to

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid. 85.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. 85.

hermeneutically listen to the situation at hand. In applying Kidder's reading of Gadamer's notions of horizon and practical philosophy a designer is given ways in which to engage the users of a design in an attempt to understand how they approach the site in question, and the elements within a site that hold, or carry the potential of holding, true meaning and value.

Ann Whiston Spirn appropriates the Gadamerian hermeneutic principle of the primacy of language in her book *The Language of Landscape*.<sup>110</sup> Spirn argues that the land we as human occupy forms a language even more primordial than that of our spoken one. Spirn notes:

Like the meanings of words, the meanings of landscape elements (water for example) are only potential until context shapes them. Rules of grammar govern and guide how landscapes are formed, some specific to places and their local dialects, others universal. Landscape is pragmatic, poetic, rhetorical, polemical. Landscape is scene of life, cultivated construction, carrier of meaning. It is language.<sup>111</sup>

If we understand landscape as comprising a language, interpreting our dialogue with it and with each other upon it is a properly hermeneutical task. Spirn clearly identifies the ontological significance of landscape as language:

Landscape is the material home, the language of landscape is a habitat of mind. Heidegger called language the house of being, but the language of landscape truly is the *house* of being; we dwell within it. To dwell—to make and care for a place—is self-expression. Heidegger traced that verb in High German and Old English; in both, the root for “to dwell” means “to build.” In German, the roots for building and dwelling and “I am” are the same. I am because I dwell; I dwell because I build. *Bauen*—building, dwelling, and being—means “to build,” “to construct,”

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<sup>110</sup> Ann Whiston Spirn, "The Language of Landscape (1998)," in *Theory in Landscape Architecture : A Reader*, ed. Simon R. Swaffield, Penn Studies in Landscape Architecture (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

<sup>111</sup> Ann Whiston Spirn, "The Language of Landscape (1998)," in *Theory in Landscape Architecture : A Reader*, 125.

but also to “cherish and protect, to preserve and care for, specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the mind.”<sup>112</sup>

In this passage language is seen in the broad sense of the term as a means with which we can articulate our experience of the world. A part of that articulation, the self-expression that Spirn speaks of, is in the building of landscapes. Spirn’s writing helps the landscape architect to be aware of the magnitude and importance of constructing the built environment to facilitate authentic dwelling and identifies the means of doing so in her notion of the language of landscape. We are all fluent in this language insofar as we shape the land as an expression of ourselves. The nearness of landscape as language to our being-in-the-world can at times dissolve its fundamental importance to us in our day-to-day use of it. Spirn is challenging designers to foreground this language in the process of design realizing the powerful way in which it in turn can shape us.

Finally, our review of designs appropriation of philosophical hermeneutics addresses landscape architect James Corner’s 1991 essay, “A Discourse on Theory II: Three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics.”<sup>113</sup> Corner begins the piece identifying the alienating effects of techno-economic hegemony upon society and the landscapes that we as a society design and construct as well as the profession of landscape architecture’s inability to offer up a theoretical counter-position embodied in and through design.<sup>114</sup>

Throughout the article Corner traces the effects of this techno-economic reductionism upon landscape architectures approach toward the design of the built environment concluding, “They are usually mathematically efficient and economically profitable, while the poetics of place

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<sup>112</sup> Anne Whiston Spirn, “The Language of Landscape,” 16. See also, Martin Heidegger, “Building Dwelling Thinking ” in *Basic Writings : From Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell(San Francisco, Calif.: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993).

<sup>113</sup> Corner, “A Discourse on Theory II: Three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics.”

<sup>114</sup> James Corner, “A Discourse on Theory II,” 115.

have been blindly erased. Built and planted over in universal fashion, the hygienic image is empty and inoffensive...Cleansed of memory and consciousness, these deserts of quantitative reasoning form a strip like cortege of anaesthetized landscapes...”<sup>115</sup> The vignette Corner depicts is found in the cookie-cutter suburban developments, the “prison-esque” utility of public housing projects with its tightly clipped shrubbery atop a bed of dyed red mulch. This is a landscape of alienation.

Corner next critiques what he calls three tyrannies of contemporary landscape architectural theory. First he begins with a critique of positivism. Positivism, as Corner defines it is, “a dogmatic, empirical approach that believes a logical synthesis will follow from a comprehensive and objective fact-structure.”<sup>116</sup> Its manifestation within the realm of landscape architecture is the belief that no interventions can take place until a complete set of all pertinent data has been collected and analyzed. Corner remarks, “The failing of extreme positivist approaches to design is that they validate their theory in the realm of the objective and effectively suppress or exclude any sort of imaginative vision or speculative free will.”<sup>117</sup> Examples of positivism infiltrating design would be the American shopping mall or “big-box” retail places that are built to maximize every inch of space in order to capture every penny of profit.<sup>118</sup> In doing so the continued memory of place imbued by culture and tradition is completely removed from the process of design.

The second tyranny Corner names as paradigms. Corner defines paradigms as, “...a lens through which a group of practitioners share a view of history and nature so as to be able to

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid. 115.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. 116.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. 117.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. 118.



proceed in a stable, coherent manner.”<sup>119</sup> Paradigms form a common vision among a group of practitioners and can be a helpful way in which ideas are tried and disseminated. Corner importantly notes however that paradigms are necessarily incomplete; it represents one way of looking at the world and its languages are coded amongst each constituent group that dialogue with other points of view is challenging at best.<sup>120</sup> Additionally, paradigms can become models and too easily used as a “one size fits all” approach to design.<sup>121</sup> Finally, paradigms can also assume a classist mentality which Corner remarks, “This accounts for part of our difficulty today, where much of practice looks primarily at the formal image of certain models without understanding, or finding relevant, the origin or tradition of their being. This consumption of signs merely perpetuates the excesses of aestheticism and historicism, exemplary models being reduced to “stencils” for easy reproduction as fashion and taste desire.”<sup>122</sup> Certain forms of urban development that rely on nostalgia or cookie-cutter suburbia can find a home in this sort of tyrannical thinking.

The third and final tyranny Corner refers to as the avant-garde. The avant-garde seeks to upset tradition and precedents. Corner notes, “Its proponents believe that their work must be constantly made afresh, and they find creative adrenaline in risk, novelty, and polemical experiment. The rejection of rules and limits is an intentional attempt to create rupture, announced in the dictum: “Make it new!””<sup>123</sup> Corner nuances his critique of the avant-garde differentiating between “an evolutionary avant-garde” and an “avant-garde of endless rupture.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid. 118.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. 119.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. 119.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. 120.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid. 121.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. 123.

Speaking of the evolutionary avant-garde, Corner remarks, “Transgression aims to construct theory from both within and outside the limits of one’s discipline. It involves a creative resetting of limits...”<sup>125</sup> On the other hand, an avant-garde of subversion is a position that makes a statement for the sake of making a statement.<sup>126</sup> Corner associates this with veins of deconstructivism noting, “The language here is vehemently resistant to completion, stability, and holism (utopia). A new syntax, based around the prefixes de-, dis-, and trans-, forms the core of the deconstructivist vocabulary.”<sup>127</sup> With no grounding vectors of development such as culture or tradition, but instead an active subversion of both, subversive avant-garde’s ethos of disorientation, Corner notes, “The French philosopher Jean Baudrillard captures the emptiness of such disorientation in the phrase, “I exist...I have no name, I have no meaning, I have nothing to say.””<sup>128</sup>

In response to these three tyrannies, Corner looks to hermeneutics to provide an alternative. Corner draws upon three major themes in Gadamer’s hermeneutics: “situational interpretation, the primacy of perception, and the “happening” of tradition...”<sup>129</sup> Situational interpretation provides the landscape architect with flexibility and nuance. This is due to the fact that, Corner drawing explicitly from Gadamer here, notes that interpretation is always an ongoing event, ever open to new pertinent information with which to develop an understanding from.<sup>130</sup> Corner next calls our attention to the primacy of experience, a fundamental issue within

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid. 123.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. 124.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. 124.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. 124. See also: Jean Baudrillard and Sylvère Lotringer, *The Ecstasy of Communication*, Foreign Agents Series (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Autonomedia, 1988). 30.

<sup>129</sup> James Corner, "A Discourse on Theory II: Three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics," 127.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid. 126.

philosophical hermeneutics. Corner shows the relationship that landscape has to this notion writing:

The medium of ideation—and subsequent embodiment—in landscape architecture is the landscape itself. This not only encompasses the physical materials and natural processes that constitute landscape, but also includes the codes and languages through which landscape is culturally understood. The landscape is therefore the *setting* of our lives, the sensual-intellectual perception of which constitutes meaning and value. By extension, things and places can be properly understood only through nearness and intimacy, through bodily participation.<sup>131</sup>

Situational interpretations of the experience(s) of the landscape give the landscape architect a window into the meanings and values that have shaped that particular place. It involves a nearness on the part of the landscape architect according to Corner, “Indeed, the quest becomes a dangerous *personal task* involving self-discovery and self-possession—a personal task because the primary sources of creativity is grounded in the tactile experience of making, of *techne-poiesis*, crucial for any significant ideation. Thus one works toward a landscape of embodied thought—a built “topos” of mind.”<sup>132</sup> Here we can see a connection to the kind of task Corner is setting forth and Gadamerian issues of horizon, prejudice, and the primacy of the question.

The third aspect of philosophical hermeneutics that Corner engages is tradition. Using Gadamer’s understanding of the term, seeing it as a dynamic process, constantly having to prove its relevance while simultaneously showing our own lives as being vital extensions of our heritage. Through serious engagement with tradition a dynamic “...relinking of modern culture to its vital heritages...” takes place.<sup>133</sup> Metaphor as a device used by design and concerned with hermeneutics contributes strongly to the appropriation of tradition. Both Corner as well as his

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid. 127.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid. 127.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. 127.

colleague Laurie Olin in his article, "Form, Meaning, and Expression in Landscape Architecture" both shows the efficacy of metaphor and tradition. Corner remarks, "The deployment of metaphor is therefore both a reconciliatory and innovative practice. In cultivating tradition from within, hermeneutics enables a *re*-cognition: a knowing things anew. Much of the difficulty in contemporary landscape architecture lies in such recoding and transformation...how can we make the ordinariness of everyday situations into something imaginative or fresh, pertinent to our time but not estranged from tradition?"<sup>134</sup> Olin echoes these remarks saying, "...where does this repertoire of forms come from? As I have remarked elsewhere in a discussion about places and memory, the only thing that we can ever know for certain about the world is that which exists now or has existed in the past. To make something new we must start with what is or has been and change it in some way to make it fresh in some way."<sup>135</sup> In these statements we are shown the power of metaphor in actively imbuing the design of landscape with tradition.

Corner concludes his article by suggesting how the discipline of landscape architecture could go about appropriating the insights of hermeneutics. He writes, "In the desire to reflect both on our modern context and on our inheritance, landscape architecture might practice a hermeneutical plotting of the landscape—a plotting that is as much political and strategic as it is relational and physical. The landscape architect as plotter is simultaneously critic, geographer, communicator, and maker, digging to uncover mute and latent possibilities in the lived landscape."<sup>136</sup>

Corner and Spirn's articles show landscape architecture's unique appropriation of hermeneutics to its practice. While Pérez-Gómez, Snodgrass and Coyne, and Kidder all spoke of

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid. 128.

<sup>135</sup> Laurie Olin, "Form, Meaning, and Expression in Landscape Architecture," *Landscape journal* 7, no. 2 (1988). 155.

<sup>136</sup> James Corner, "A Discourse on Theory II: Three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics," 129.

hermeneutics' application to architecture, no doubt their insights of architecture's appropriation of hermeneutics applies equally as well to the profession of landscape architecture. All four of these authors deal with the transposition and embodiment of meaning. In the process of shaping the land we not only enter into relationship with it, but also permeate ourselves into it. Building upon this act is fundamentally an interpretive task. In this chapter I have shown the relevance of philosophical hermeneutics to landscape architecture. In the next chapter I will further articulate hermeneutics relevance to design proper to landscape architecture by using the orientation the philosophy provides to create an integral heuristic structure that's aim is to transform the essentially dialogical process of design into one's experience of a designed place. In doing so I hope to show that the notion of dialogic space carries with it conditions for the possibility of calling oneself, the other, and world into question.

## CHAPTER 3

### DIALOGIC SPACE AND THE HERMENEUTIC PROCESS OF DESIGN

Site is a term that means more than merely indicating a plot of land in which a design is prescribed, but in addition to that, it is an epicenter of manifestation in which all of its constituent parts and their relational dynamics dwell. This chapter will concern itself with sounding the depths of what the notion of site means for the landscape architect in terms of the design process. First, the foundational cornerstones of client, user, landscape architect and “coupled-urban ecosystems,”<sup>137</sup> whose individual influence and collective confluence constitute site as such, is elucidated. Next, landscape architecture’s understanding of site is expanded by showing it to be an essentially hermeneutic phenomenon, and in doing so show the fruitfulness of bringing a hermeneutic lens to the design process proper to landscape architecture. Afterwards, the resulting interaction (confluence) that occurs by bringing each cornerstone’s influences into dialogue will be expounded. Finally, understanding the design as an embodied understanding of this dialogue and its fundamental openness to further dialogue, and capacity to evoke dialogue as a built work will be shown in the concept of dialogic space.

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<sup>137</sup> Marina Alberti, *Advances in Urban Ecology : Integrating Humans and Ecological Processes in Urban Ecosystems*, 1st pbk. ed. (New York: Springer, 2009). 71.

## Site-as-Situation

The Oxford English Dictionary defines site as, “The place or position occupied by some specified thing.”<sup>138</sup> It’s Latin root, *situs*, is shared with the English word ‘situation.’ Situation means, “The place, position, or location of a city, country, etc., in relation to its surroundings.”<sup>139</sup> The term can also mean a location in relation to other surrounding things, settlement, occupation, or, “The position in life, or in relation to others, held or occupied by a person.”<sup>140</sup> This section sets forth an understanding of site-as-situation. It argues for an expanded understanding of site as the client, user, landscape architect, and “coupled-urban ecosystems” respective horizons coming into contact with one another, creating a moment of encounter facilitated by the design.<sup>141</sup> These four constituent pillars were chosen because their fundamental relationships to one another providing the basis of the dynamics which shape the physical landscape of a particular space.

The constituent pillars of site, in terms of site design, consist of client, user, landscape architect, and “coupled-urban ecosystem,” with the exception of the last pillar, a fairly standard understanding of each is meant.<sup>142</sup> This project defines client as the entity that retains the services of the landscape architect to create a design for a particular parcel or parcels of land. The landscape architect is the professional who will create the physical design of the space through all of its phases of development: site inventory and analysis, program and concept development, design development, and construction documentation. The user is defined by

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<sup>138</sup> Oxford English Dictionary. s.v. “Site,” accessed February 22, 2014, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/180472?rskey=S1Tny4&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid>.

<sup>139</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “Situation,” accessed February 22, 2014, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/180520?redirectedFrom=Situation#eid>.

<sup>140</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, v.s. “Situation,” accessed February 22, 2014, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/180520?redirectedFrom=Situation#eid>.

<sup>141</sup> Marina Alberti, *Advances in Urban Ecology : Integrating Humans and Ecological Processes in Urban Ecosystems*, 71.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. 71.

Kevin Lynch in his classic text *Site Planning* as, “...all those who interact with the place in any way: live in it, work in it, pass through it, repair it, control it, profit from it, suffer from it, even dream about it.”<sup>143</sup> The final constituent pillar is referred to as “coupled-urban ecosystem.”<sup>144</sup> The parcel of land is of course embedded in, and surrounded by, an ecosystem. Human beings (e.g. client, user, landscape architect) are a part of that ecosystem. However, our language surrounding the uniquely profound dominance and impact that human beings have as a part of the ecosystem has largely led to a differentiation between humans and the rest of the biota, in discussing issues surrounding ecology. For example, Felix Guattari’s *Three Ecologies* identifies three ecological registers of environment, social relations, and human subjectivity.<sup>145</sup> Mohsen Mostafavi, influenced by Guattari, writes in his introduction to the *Ecological Urbanism* reader of three registers of ecological urbanism as being mental, social, and environmental.<sup>146</sup> Here the language the human (social, mental) is separated from other biota and natural systems (environmental). In an essay by Nina-Marie Lister, she distinguishes between, “the management of human-ecological interactions...” and, “...city as a hybrid cultural and natural space...”<sup>147</sup> Dramstad, Olson, and Forman write, “Natural processes as well as human activities change landscapes.”<sup>148</sup> The authors note, “...spatial process are evident in land transformation, such as

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<sup>143</sup> Kevin Lynch and Gary Hack, *Site Planning*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1984). 67.

<sup>144</sup> Marina Alberti, *Advances in Urban Ecology : Integrating Humans and Ecological Processes in Urban Ecosystems*, 71.

<sup>145</sup> Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, English ed. ed. (Athlone Press ; London ;, 2000). 28.

<sup>146</sup> Mohsen Mostafavi, "Why Ecological Urbanism? Why Now?," in *Ecological Urbanism* (Baden, Switzerland: Lars Müller Publishers, 2010). 48.

<sup>147</sup> Nina-Marie Lister, "Insurgent Ecologies: (Re)Claiming Ground in Landscape and Urbanism," in *Ecological Urbanism*, ed. Mohsen Mostafavi, Gareth Doherty, and Harvard University. Graduate School of Design. (Baden, Switzerland: Lars Müller Publishers, 2010). 538, 542.

<sup>148</sup> Wenche E. Dramstad, James D. Olson, and Richard T. T. Forman, *Landscape Ecology Principles in Landscape Architecture and Land-Use Planning* (Cambridge? Mass.



perforation, dissection, shrinkage, attrition, and coalescence, each with major *ecological and human implications.*” (emphasis added)<sup>149</sup> These three examples show that while ecosystems comprise the full spectrum of all biotic life, the differentiation between human and remaining biotic life and their respective systems is a common convention in the disciplines of landscape architecture and ecology. Therefore, it makes sense that this differentiation be represented in the constitution of site and not folded into client, user, or landscape architect. Allowing ecosystems to function as their own separate pillar constituting site gives agency to the health and carrying capacity of the site, which profoundly affects the remaining constituent pillars.

The work of Marina Alberti is used to define the ecological pillar of site. Alberti writes, “A new integrated framework is needed to explore interactions between human and ecological patterns and processes in coupled urban systems.”<sup>150</sup> Alberti’s framework of coupled human and ecological patterns, processes and function represents an interweaving of social and economic human interests with ecology. In doing so two inputs are shown to operate and constitute one system of ecology.

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Washington, DC: Harvard University Graduate School of Design; Island Press; American Society of Landscape Architects, 1996). 15.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid. 15.

<sup>150</sup> Marina Alberti, *Advances in Urban Ecology : Integrating Humans and Ecological Processes in Urban Ecosystems*, 68.

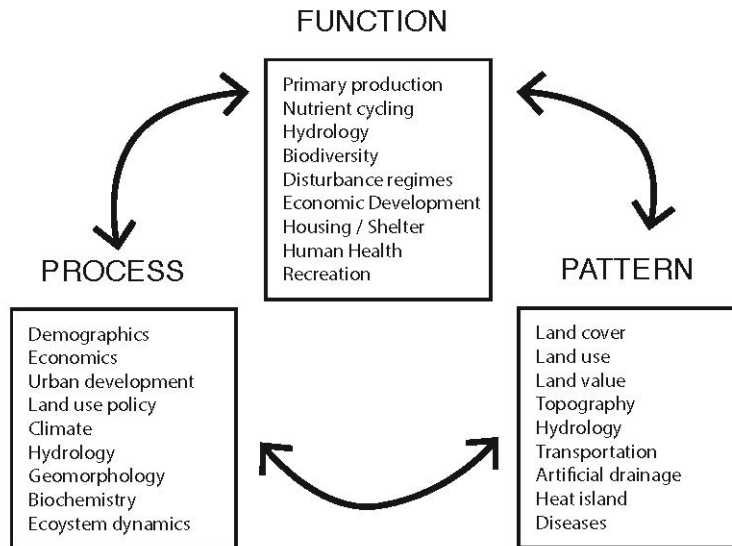


Figure 3.0. Marina Alberti's Integrated Framework of Coupled Urban Systems  
 Source: Alberti, Marina. *Advances in Urban Ecology: Integrating Humans and Ecological Processes in Urban Ecosystems*. 1<sup>st</sup> pblk. Ed. New York: Springer, 2009. Figure 3.5.

More and more government regulation surrounding ecosystem health and functioning in addition with ecological rating certifications such as LEED and the Sustainable Sites Initiative, are drawing upon the framework of Alberti and others to advocate and give agency to environmental concerns and ecological health.<sup>151</sup> It is for these reasons that our understanding of site uses Alberti's "Coupled-Urban Ecosystems" (henceforth CUE) framework of processes and function as a constituent pillar of site.<sup>152</sup> In representing CUE as a constituent pillar of site, the concerns of sustainability and resilience thinking are being placed into the very constitution of site.

<sup>151</sup> See [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org) for LEED and [www.sustainablesites.org](http://www.sustainablesites.org) for the Sustainable Sites Initiative.

<sup>152</sup> Processes and functions of Alberti's framework include: demographics, economics, urban development, land use policy, climate, hydrology, geomorphology, biochemistry, ecosystem dynamics, primary production, nutrient cycling, biodiversity, disturbance regimes, housing / shelter, human health, and recreation. See: Alberti. *Advances in Urban Ecology*. 71. Pattern is not considered a constituent pillar because it is more a result of the processes and function of coupled-urban ecosystems.

Acknowledging the distinctiveness, interaction, and agency of human and non-human environmental variables is also accomplished by adopting Alberti's framework.

Client, user, landscape architect, and CUE are then the four constituent pillars of site. The interactions between these pillars, throughout the design process, are a realization of the site itself. Having now identified the constituent pillars of site, I will now relate site to hermeneutics by showing Gadamer's hermeneutic understanding of 'situation' and how it can enrich landscape architecture's understanding of site.

Gadamer notes how hermeneutics uses the term "situation" saying, "Consciousness of being affected by history is primarily consciousness of the hermeneutical situation...essential to the concept of situation is the concept of "*horizon*." The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point...working our hermeneutical situation means acquiring the right horizon of inquiry for the questions evoked by the encounter with tradition."<sup>153</sup> The immediacy of site is analogous to the immediacy of the hermeneutic situation. The hermeneutic situation, like the site, is a moment of encounter whereby we are called into question by being confronted with a tradition or an "other" that speaks to us.<sup>154</sup> The site too is a moment of encounter with the horizons of client, user, designer, and coupled-urban ecosystem (CUE).<sup>155</sup> It is also an encounter with the tradition that has defined the character and relevance of the site and the present issues that must be addressed by it. Additionally, essential to the concept of the hermeneutic situation is its understanding of being perpetually *in via*.<sup>156</sup> Gadamer states, "*To be historically means that knowledge of oneself can never be complete.*"<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 301-302.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. 480.

<sup>155</sup> Marina Alberti, *Advances in Urban Ecology: Integrating Humans and Ecological Processes in Urban Ecosystems*, 71.

<sup>156</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 301.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. 301.

This is also true of a site. It is in fact never a static thing. The landscape is in a constant state of flux responding to seasonal, ecological, and human inputs. When a site does not continually adapt to the demands of time or its users it becomes irrelevant and lost. Dynamism is a fundamental characteristic then of site-as-situation.

In James Corner's 1991 essay, "A Discourse on Theory II: Three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics," he shows the situatedness of site. As humans whose intelligence and inter-subjectivity is embodied by cultures and carried forward through tradition, the built environment gives witness to this complex and evocative process.<sup>158</sup> Corner notes that landscape, "...is also a highly situated phenomenon in terms of space, time, and tradition and exists as both the ground and geography of our heritage and change." Here Corner alludes to the ways in which history affects articulations of space, time, and tradition literally shaping our environment through our expressions of building. Being attentive to the ways in which form is an expression of not only our belonging to a history, culture and tradition, but also our attempt to understand our place in a history, culture, and tradition is an expression of site as creating or instigating a hermeneutic situation. The intersection of heritage and change creates the dynamic tension inherent in culture and tradition. Gadamer reflects on the meaning of tradition saying,

...as finite beings, we already find ourselves within certain traditions, irrespective of whether we are aware of them or whether we deceive ourselves into believing that we can start anew. For our attitude does nothing to change the power that tradition exercises over us. But it makes a difference whether we face up to the traditions in which we live along with the possibilities they offer for the future, or whether we manage to convince ourselves that we can turn away from the future into which we are already moving

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<sup>158</sup> James Corner, "A Discourse on Theory II: Three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics," 129. On the idea of culture see also Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight; a Study of Human Understanding*, 3d ed. (New York,: Philosophical Library, 1970). 261.

and program ourselves afresh. For, of course, tradition means transmission rather than conservation. That transmission does not imply that we simply leave things unchanged and merely conserve them. It means learning how to grasp and express the past anew.<sup>159</sup>

Site is an engagement with tradition due to its capacity to draw client, user, designer, and CUE into conversation with the history of the space receiving a design.<sup>160</sup> Additionally, seeing the design as an agent of transmission--of culture, memory, heritage in ways that speak to the site-as-situation (client, user, landscape architect, and CUE's engagement with one another), facilitates the encounter indicative of the hermeneutic situation. Laurie Olin speaks of tradition and its application to landscape architecture as being an active presence constantly proving and reproving itself when he writes:

Landscape architecture evolves...as it finds new ways to perform operations upon a particular corpus of forms—re-using, re-assembling, distorting, taking apart, transforming, and carrying forward an older set of forms—often quite limited in range, but constantly making new things with new meanings. Occasionally a few new forms will be let in or discovered, but more generally new material consists of the re-presentation or recombination of material that has been forgotten or has been deemed banal or out-of-bounds for some reason.<sup>161</sup>

Olin gives us a glimpse of the exigencies of site coming into contact with tradition that creates both an interpretive and innovative encounter. In drawing from the history of past forms as a moment of orientation while simultaneously questioning their ability to speak to the contemporary issues evoked by client, user, landscape architect, and CUE is site-as-situation. Having now shown site's relatedness to situation, as being an expression of the hermeneutical

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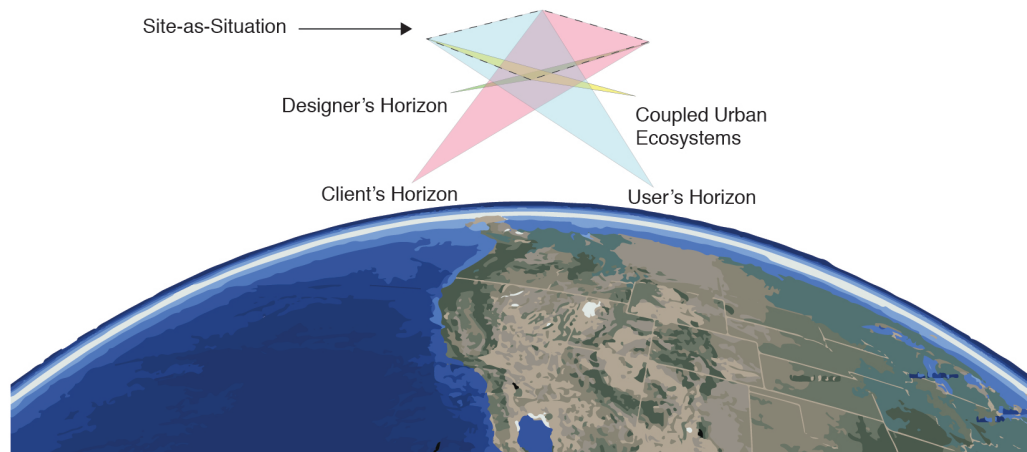
<sup>159</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer and Robert Bernasconi, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays* (Cambridge Cambridgeshire ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986). 49.

<sup>160</sup> Marina Alberti, *Advances in Urban Ecology : Integrating Humans and Ecological Processes in Urban Ecosystems*, 71.

<sup>161</sup> Laurie Olin, "Form, Meaning, and Expression in Landscape Architecture." 155.

situation, I would like to further unpack this notion by explaining the structural elements, which comprise the hermeneutic situation, and their relationship to site.

### Horizons of Site



*Figure 3.1. Horizons of Site-as-Situation*

To begin first with what Gadamer states as being, “essential to the concept of situation...the concept of horizon.”<sup>162</sup> Gadamer defined horizon above as, “...the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point.”<sup>163</sup> Client, guest, designer and CUE each possess horizons.<sup>164</sup> Their experiences, language, history, culture,

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid. 301-302.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. 301.

<sup>164</sup> Since CUE is not directly a person or people the understanding of its possession of a horizon is metaphorical. When referring to CUE as having a horizon I mean to imply all of

society, and all those things that they are both aware and unaware that have shaped their view of the world are horizons that collectively inform how client, user, and landscape architect, and CUE interpret an understanding of site. By definition it is limited in scope, however, like the hermeneutic situation it is dynamic, essentially open, influenced by time and the accrual of experiences.<sup>165</sup>

Paul Kidder applies the notion of horizon explicitly to the concerns of architecture explaining:

Architects and designers know just how deep a horizon goes in the human psyche. They see it embedded in language, but equally in gestures and bodily habits—the way people move within public spaces and congregate together, the way they orchestrate their lives amid public and private spaces. The horizon is manifest in all of the feelings and images that go along with these dimensions of experience and activity.<sup>166</sup>

An example of the power of horizon and its spatial manifestations can be seen by the radio program *This American Life*'s episode, "Rules to Live By."<sup>167</sup> Reporter Linda Lutton goes into Harper High School in Chicago's inner city to document the gang culture that affects the lives of everyone in the school and community. Lutton reports that there are several rules the students

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the contextual underpinnings concerned with Alberti's coupled-ecosystems frameworks process, pattern, and functions. See Alberti, *Advances in Urban Ecology*, 71. These underpinnings and their representation in the particular inter-related categories of function, process, and pattern constitute a definite perspective of human systems interweaving with natural systems forming Alberti's coupled-urban ecosystem.

<sup>165</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 301.

<sup>166</sup> Paul Kidder, "Gadamer for Architects," 39.

<sup>167</sup> Linda Lutton, "Rules to Live By: Episode 487: Harper Highschool, Part One 02.15.2013," *This American Life*, Part One, [www.thisamericanlife.org/radioarchives/episode/487/harper-high-school-part-one?act=1#play](http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radioarchives/episode/487/harper-high-school-part-one?act=1#play). [accessed February 24, 2014].

abide by in order to survive. One rule is to never walk alone.<sup>168</sup> If you walk in a group you won't get jumped or shot, say students.<sup>169</sup> However, this rule is complicated by the next rule, which is: "Never walk with someone else."<sup>170</sup> Lutton explains, "See, walking in a group can send its own message. If you're with a group of boys in Englewood, on your porch, walking home from school, your highlighting your affiliation [to a gang or 'clique'] which makes you more of a target."<sup>171</sup> These two rules are followed by a third: "Don't use the sidewalk."<sup>172</sup> Lutton explains that kids walk in the street because they are afraid of getting jumped if they walk on the sidewalk close to trees and bushes.<sup>173</sup> Lutton interviews a student about this:

**Alex:** We feel safer like this. For some reason, we just feel safe like that. We never like to walk past trees and stuff, there's too much stuff going on.

**Linda Lutton** (Narrating): "Too much stuff going on" is shorthand for the shootings, the fights, the craziness. It's better to walk down the middle of the street, where you can keep a broad view of things, and where you have a few more seconds to run if you need to.<sup>174</sup>

Essentially, the entire program was identifying features of horizons of the student's of Harper High School. It is the student's horizons that allow them to attempt to navigate the hostile environment of the Englewood neighborhood. These complex cultural traditions and the students' encounter with them on a daily basis construct a large part of their horizon, and facing the situation is being confronted with questions such as, "Do I walk alone or in a group?" "Do I

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<sup>168</sup> Linda Lutton, "Rule to Live By," This American Life, 16:06, [www.thisamericanlife.org/radioarchives/episode/487/harper-high-school-part-one?act=1#play](http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radioarchives/episode/487/harper-high-school-part-one?act=1#play).

<sup>169</sup> Linda Lutton, "Rule to Live By," This American Life, 16:06, [www.thisamericanlife.org/radioarchives/episode/487/harper-high-school-part-one?act=1#play](http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radioarchives/episode/487/harper-high-school-part-one?act=1#play).

<sup>170</sup> Ibid. 16:43.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. 16:43.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. 17:07.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. 17:07.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid. 17:07-18:08.



walk in the middle of the street and deal with traffic, or do I walk on the sidewalk and deal with the possibility of getting jumped?” These questions and their responses are indicative of their horizons coming into contact with the hermeneutical situation and the spatial ramifications it has.

Site is created by the horizons of client, user, landscape architect, and CUE coming into contact with one another. Rarely if ever is their only one person standing as the client, user, or landscape architect. Instead each is part of a community.<sup>175</sup> Bernard Lonergan speaks of community as, “a common field of experience, a common mode of understanding, a common measure of judgment, and a common consent. Such community is the possibility, the source, the ground of common meaning.”<sup>176</sup> Therefore horizons of the client, user, landscape architect, and CUE are representative of their respective communities. These horizons are brought into a moment of encounter that is instigated by the physical space of the site. Each horizon has a certain relation to the physical space of site and their intertwining relations and concerns draw them into conversation and thus constitute our expanded notion site.

Importantly, as the example of the students at Harper High School shows, horizons are, at an elemental level constituted by experience. Experience is an incredibly rich term for Gadamer. The sort of experience that he is referring to, in terms of constituting one’s horizon, is known in German as *erfahrung*. Experience *erfahrung* has a processional character to it. It builds upon itself by seeking constant confirmation of what was experienced.<sup>177</sup> In the translators preface to Gadamer’s *Truth and Method erfahrung* is described as, “... something you undergo, so that subjectivity is overcome and drawn into an “event” (*Geschehen*) of meaning.”<sup>178</sup> The eventfulness of experience underscores its formative nature, and as such builds upon itself to

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<sup>175</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *The Lonergan Reader*, 390.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid. 390.

<sup>177</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. 349.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid. Translators’ preface, Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshal, xiii.

form a history of experience. Gadamer notes that when we refer to someone as, “experienced” we are referring to the wealth of experiences one has accrued throughout their time as a result of being fundamentally open to experience.<sup>179</sup>

In understanding the nuance of *erfahrung*, another fundamental example used by Gadamer to describe his approach to hermeneutics, the concept of play, gives insight into the formative nature of experience. As was mentioned above, being drawn into an event of meaning through the call and response it possesses mirrors the to-and-fro movement that play possesses. When one is playing, one is pulled out of oneself by fulfilling the spirit of the game—play is serious in that sense.<sup>180</sup> It is the same with experience insofar as experience always involves another thing. I experience a work of art, and in doing so I no longer become the subject but the subject becomes the event of the work calling to me, and my response to it. We will return to Gadamer’s notion of play later, but here play helps one to understand what Gadamer is getting at when he speaks of experience *erfahrung* as something one undergoes, something that draws one into an event of meaning.

There is also a “present-ness” connoted by the term experience, especially in relationship to the term ‘situation’. By that I mean we are referring to the experience of the present, or near present moment, in some sense when we speak of our “situation.” How did we get here? Why do we find ourselves in this particular place? Where are we going? Situation organically gives rise to an exigency for orientation. In responding to this exigency we must confront, as Gadamer noted, our history and the ways in which it shapes our entire sphere of understanding.<sup>181</sup> This confrontation, which is essential to understanding our “situatedness” is referred to by Gadamer as historically effected consciousness, he writes, “This is precisely what we have to keep in mind

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid. 350.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid. 103.

<sup>181</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 290.

in analyzing historically effected consciousness: it has the structure of *experience*

(Erfahrung).”<sup>182</sup> What Gadamer means by this is that reflection upon experiences that constitute our *experience* is to realize how history has shaped our horizons.

Architect Dalibor Veseley sheds light on our understanding of site-as-situation, horizon, experience, and historically effected consciousness when he writes:

Situations are the receptacles of experience and of those events which sediment in them a meaning not just as survivals or residues, but as an invitation to a sequel, the necessity of a future. Situations endow experience with durable dimension, in relation to which a whole series of other experiences will acquire meaning...The richness of situations depend on the reverberations of meaning through the depths of their history.<sup>183</sup>

Situations, both understood and actively shaped within a horizon, constituted by our experience, give witness to our orientation to the world. Within site memory is imbued by the experiences that literally *take place* as the horizons of client, user, landscape architect, and CUE encounter one another within its borders and “sediment” *place*.<sup>184</sup> Corner remarks, “The very idea of a situation means that we do not stand outside it, but rather that we inhabit it. We “dwell” in situations.”<sup>185</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz unpacks what it means to dwell saying, “[One] dwells when [one] can orientate [oneself] within and identify [oneself] with an environment...Dwelling therefore implies something more than “shelter”. It implies that the spaces where life occurs are

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid. 341.

<sup>183</sup> Dalibor Veseley, *Architecture and Continuity : Kentish Town Projects, 1978-1981 : Diploma Unit 1*, ed. Dalibor Vesely and Mohsen Mostafavi, Themes ; (Architectural Association: London, 1982). 9.

<sup>184</sup> CUE does not have experience due to it not possessing a consciousness unto itself. However there is an analogical correlation between experience to consciousness as data is to the processes, functions, and patterns of CUE. Both experience and data are indicators of status. Both receive inputs. The data derived in terms of soil microbiology, water quality, FAR Ratio, heavy metals, etc...testifies of the “experience” or more properly said, status of the coupled-urban ecosystem framework of a particular site.

<sup>185</sup> Corner, "A Discourse on Theory II: Three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics." 124.

*places* in the true sense of the word. A place is a space which has a distinct character. Since ancient time the *genius loci* or “spirit of place,” has been recognized as the concrete reality [one] has to face and come to terms within [one’s] daily life.”<sup>186</sup> This is the designer’s telos: to facilitate authentic dwelling. Kidder further nuances our understanding of dwelling when he writes that dwelling creates an, “...opening to being and of being... While architecture has proximate origins in any number of practical needs, its ultimate origin seeks to explore it, to announce somehow the event of the opening of a world of involvements.”<sup>187</sup> Site-as-situation, as an encounter with the horizons of client, user, landscape architect, and CUE can create an event of meaning embodied in and through the design that creates conditions for the possibility of calling oneself, the other, and world into question. This moment of encounter, in being called into question, orients our dwelling in the world.

### Horizons and Lonergan’s Dialectic of Authority

Horizons coming into contact with one another create issues of power to emerge. Whose voices are heard? Who is included in the conversation and who is excluded from the conversation? How does the designer navigate opposing viewpoints within the framework that we are constructing? Lonergan gives insight into the power dynamics operating within the four constituent pillars of site coming into contact with one another in his notion of the dialectic of authority.

The four constituent pillars of site: client, users, designer, and CUE, are representative of not just one individual or, in the case of CUE, scientific data, but are instead representative of communities. As was noted by Lonergan earlier, “Community means people with a common or

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<sup>186</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci : Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980). 5.

at least complementary way of understanding people and things, with common judgments and common aims.”<sup>188</sup> Lonergan goes further in defining the power of community writing, “...it is community that hands on the discoveries and inventions of the past and, as well, operates in the present, so it is community that is the carrier of power.”<sup>189</sup>

Lonergan next goes on to identify two types of exercises of power: power exercised within a world of immediacy, and power exercised within a world mediated by meaning and motivated by values.<sup>190</sup> The world of immediacy is given directly through sense and is charged with feelings. It has correlations to the Id in psychology. Whereas the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value is first made manifest when one takes on a language. The answers given in and through language to the where, what, why and how, “...extrapolate from what is near to what is further away, from the present to one’s own and others memories of past and anticipations of the future, from what is or was actual to the possible, the probable, the ideal, the normative.”<sup>191</sup> Lonergan concludes from this that, “As exercised within the world mediated by meaning and motivated by values, power resides in the word of authority.”<sup>192</sup> The word of authority actualizes the achievements of past generations for present and future generations to build upon. It regulates and distributes the fruits of those achievements to the members that constitute the community.<sup>193</sup>

Lonergan makes a further distinction here between authorities and authority noting, “The authorities are the officials to whom certain offices have been entrusted and certain powers delegated. But authority belongs to the community that has a common field of experience,

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<sup>188</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *The Lonergan Reader*, 531.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid. 551.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid. 551.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid. 552.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid. 552.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid. 552.

common and complementary ways of understanding common judgments and common aims. It is the community that is the carrier of a common world mediated by meaning and motivated by values.”<sup>194</sup>

Lonergan then goes to further differentiate the meanings and values found within a particular community as authentic or inauthentic. Lonergan defines meanings and values in terms of being authentic, “...in the measure that they are the result of the transcendental precepts, Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible. They are inauthentic in the measure that they are the product of cumulative inattention, obtuseness, unreasonableness, irresponsibility. Authenticity makes power legitimate...Similarly, authenticity legitimates authorities, and unauthenticity (*sic*) destroys their authority and reveals them as merely powerful.”<sup>195</sup>

“Progress,” according to Lonergan, “is the fruit of authenticity.”<sup>196</sup> Lonergan asserts, “...long-sustained attentiveness notes just what is going on. Intelligence repeatedly grasps how things can be better. Reasonableness is open to change. Responsibility weighs in the balance short- and long-term advantages and disadvantages, benefits and defects. The longer these four are exercised, the more certain and the greater will be the progress made.”<sup>197</sup> Inauthenticity leads to the breakdown of community and its ability to cooperate as Lonergan explains, “Community loses its common aims and begins to operate at cross-purposes. It loses its common judgments so that different groups inhabit different worlds. Common understanding is replaced by mutual incomprehension. The common field of experience is divided into hostile territories.”<sup>198</sup>

The dynamics of power that Lonergan frames here are present within the horizons of client, users, designer, and CUE. Firstly, community can be understood as having a nested

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid. 553.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid. 553.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid. 554.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid. 554.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid. 555.

understanding. What is meant by that is that the term operates at multiple scales beginning with a small group of people, and latter carrying the possibility of including thousands or hundreds of thousands of people. The client can be comprised of many communities that together represent the community of the client. All four constituent pillars of site can, perhaps ideally, be seen as forming a collective community. Certainly larger institutions are very mindful of their role and relationships with the larger community they are a part of.

The landscape architect as facilitator of the creative framework that dialogic space hopes to create, becomes the nexus of the multivalent forces represented by the constituent pillars of site. Occupying this central position as facilitator requires a framework that fosters authenticity. Therefore, in as much as the framework fosters attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility the power of authority bestowed upon the authorities by their respective communities can create conditions for the possibility of entering into a fruitful dialogue. This of course will not always be the case. As Lonergan says himself, "...authenticity in man or woman is ever precarious: our attentiveness is ever apt to be a withdrawal from inattention; our acts of understanding a correction of our oversights; our reasonableness a victory over silliness; our responsibility a repentance for our sins."<sup>199</sup> The adoption of Gadamerian hermeneutics within the creative framework has features inherent to it that ward against inauthenticity, or at least help to identify instances of it. For example, as will be explained in greater detail later, Gadamer's notion of prejudice, and its expression in our attempt to understand, foregrounds and tests the interpreter's bias. Creating a design process where the constituent pillars of site can acknowledge entering into the dialogue of what this space should become with their preconceptions brings a level of transparency and hopefully integrity to the process as a whole. Additionally, Kidder's notion of the horizon of design being essentially open to further pertinent questions and voices

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid. 554.

that emerge in the dialogic process of design keeps both the constituent pillars and the design itself open. Finally, given that dialogic space is a creative framework that is conversational by nature, the criteria of a conversation necessitates a give and take, a mutuality amongst its interlocutors.<sup>200</sup>

### The Primacy of the Question

If site is the interaction of the horizons of client, user, landscape architect, and CUE, what does that interaction look like? Gadamer gives insight into this event by his understanding of the primacy of the question and the dialogue that it facilitates. As has already been established, site-as-situation is a moment of encounter by four constitutive horizons of the client, user, landscape architect, and CUE. In terms of the designing of site, the question emerges, “What is this space to be?” Questions are extremely powerful catalysts for design. Gadamer writes:

The essence of the question is to have sense. Now sense involves a sense of direction. Hence the sense of the question is the only direction from which the answer can be given if it is to make sense. A question places what is questioned in a particular perspective. When a question arises, it breaks open the being of the object, as it were. Hence the logos that explicates this opened-up being is an answer. Its sense lies in the sense of the question.<sup>201</sup>

Questions are agents of transformation. Gadamer notes, “It is clear that the structure of the question is implicit in all experience. We cannot have experiences without asking questions.”<sup>202</sup> Questions orient us to the situation at hand based upon our experience. They are issued from and received by a particular horizon and create conditions for the possibility of some understanding to emerge. Questions are vehicles of engagement through which all of the

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<sup>200</sup> See also chapter two’s discussion of the I-Thou relationship explicated by Snodgrass and Coyne as well as Kidder: pp. 38.

<sup>201</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 356.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid. 356.



constituent pillars of site can encounter each other. As Gadamer mentioned they, “break open the being of the object, as it were.”<sup>203</sup> In terms of site-as-situation, the question breaks open the potentiality of the space that is to receive a design intervention. As was mentioned earlier, it is an encounter with tradition. What is to be the response to the dialectical tension of heritage and change? This is the question that is addressed to the constituents of site. In this sense then, not only is it a vehicle of engagement, but also the question as such creates space for the process of design to function, for the *logos* to emerge. Gadamer refers to openness as being an essential characteristic of the question, creating a period of indeterminacy whereby its creative tension might bring forth a response.<sup>204</sup> The question of our response to the dynamics of heritage and change transmitted through the design is a heuristic device helping us to make sense of our *place* in relation to our self, the other, and world.

Critical to our understanding of site’s response to the question posed by tradition is that the creative process through which form emerges is dialogic in character. Here Gadamer’s metaphor of play helps to bring out the dialogic character of understanding. In site being called into question by the encounter with tradition, its constituents see in both the vectors of heritage and change pieces of themselves to which they respond. This call and response among client, user, landscape architect, and CUE is experience in terms of *erfahrung* and the respective horizons interpreting the experience, through dialogic exchange, are attempting to reach an understanding whereby what Gadamer calls a, “fusion of horizons” results.<sup>205</sup> Gadamer explains, “Projecting a historical horizon, then, is only one phase in the process of understanding; it does not become solidified into the self-alienation of a past consciousness, but is overtaken by our own present horizon of understanding. In the process of understanding, a real fusing of horizons

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid. 356.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid. 357.

<sup>205</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 305-306.

occurs—which means that as the historical horizon is projected, it is simultaneously superseded.”<sup>206</sup> Therefore, in the question and response that forms the dialogue, the historical horizons of client, user, landscape architect and CUE, are projected on to space that is to receive a design intervention. This projection is placed into dialogue with the issues emblematic of the present horizon. The resulting understanding from the dialogue is a fusion of horizons, resulting in the client, user, landscape architect, and CUE reaching an understanding embodied by the design

### The Hermeneutic Circle and the Process of Design

The dynamics of the dialogue are influenced by the hermeneutic circle, an ancient rule of interpretation that applied to understanding the meaning of texts in terms of the relationship formed between the whole to the part and part to the whole.<sup>207</sup> Gadamer speaks of the fore-conception that is brought to all understanding informed by one’s particular horizons, “A person who is trying to understand a text is always projecting. [One] projects a meaning for the text as a whole as soon as some initial meaning emerges in the text with particular expectations in regard to a certain meaning. Working out this fore-projection, which is constantly revised in terms of what emerges as [one] penetrates into the meaning, is understanding what is there.”<sup>208</sup> Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyne, have drawn upon the work of Donald Schön to show the hermeneutic circle in relation to the process of design.

The designer thus begins the design task by shaping the situation in accordance with an initial appreciation. The situation then, “talks back” and the designer responds to the situation’s back talk by reflecting-in-action on the construction of the problem, the strategies of action, or the model of the phenomena. The process

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid. 306.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid. 291.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid. 269.

then develops in a circle—"back and forth, back and forth." Each move draws out the implications of earlier moves, seen as having consequences that are described and evaluated in terms drawn from one or more design domains, having implications binding on later moves, creating new problems to be described and solved.<sup>209</sup>

Snodgrass and Coyne's understanding of Schön's explanation of the hermeneutic circle as it applies to design is helpful in showing the interplay of whole and parts building upon each other to create an understanding. However, as can be inferred from this passage, and the rest of the article, the designer seems to be standing outside of the "design situation" as opposed to comprising a part of it. Again, Corner notes, "The very idea of a situation means that we do not stand outside it, but rather that we inhabit it."<sup>210</sup> If the designer stands outside of the situation and dialogues with it via its, "back-talk" one could be running the risk of giving too much power of opinion to the designer. While the process is certainly open consisting of back and forth, building a basis of understanding, it lacks the nearness that site-as-situation affords the designer, client, user, and CUE.

The hermeneutic circle also offers the process of designing proper to landscape architecture insights into integrating different scales. We have been considering the scale of the design intervention in terms of site. However, site can be seen also as a part to be related to the whole of neighborhood, city, state, region, hemisphere, and onward. The hermeneutic circle aids in nuancing an articulation of how each part informs the whole and each being seen as in relationship with one another.

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<sup>209</sup> Adrian Snodgrass and Richard Coyne, "Is Designing Hermeneutical?," *Architectural theory review: journal of the Department of Architecture, the University of Sydney* 2, no. 1 (1997). 32. Quoting Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner—How Professionals Think in Action*, New York, Basic Books, 1983. 78.

<sup>210</sup> James Corner, "A Discourse on Theory II: Three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics," 126.

In being confronted with the question, “what is this space to become?” the constituent pillars each have an initial understanding of the meaning of the question, and possibly an answer as well. The art of designing then is gathering those parts into a whole through the dialogic process. For example, the client might have a shopping center that is to be built. The company building the shopping center may see the space in question as a parking lot. The user may want to make sure there is adequate handicapped parking, or spaces to safely walk from one’s car to the shopping center. CUE’s concerns may range from heat island effect, storm water runoff, and gentrification. The landscape architect views the space in question, listening to the concerns of the other three constituent pillars, and sees meaning in completely reinventing the idea of how a parking lot functions and adapts to an aging population, a warming climate, and the plight of suburban sprawl. What is key is for the designer, as the constituent pillar with the technical expertise to synthesize the dialogue into a formally articulated design, is to keep the fore-conceptions of meaning between all four constituents in play. To allow them to “play themselves out,” in the back and forth of dialogue and the iterative process of seeing each constituent members concerns in terms of the whole. In this way, the hermeneutical circle is a radical approach to participatory design drawing on the expertise of each constituent pillar of site.

In this section I have argued for an expanded notion of site to be part of the process of design proper to landscape architecture. The expansion consists of site understood in terms of client, user, landscape architect, and CUE’s respective horizons coming into contact with one another engaging in a dialogue that results in an understanding embodied by the design. The hermeneutical situation was used to enrich our understanding of the encounter instigated by site’s respective horizons being called into question by tradition. The component parts of the hermeneutic situation: horizon, experience, and historically effected consciousness were related to site. The encounter of the hermeneutic situation, seen in terms of site, was then shown to

correlate to Gadamer's primacy of the question and the dialogue of question and answer that emerges from it. Finally, the understanding that is arrived at from dialogue was further explained by Gadamer's notion of the hermeneutic circle. In showing this it is hoped that a framework for a hermeneutical approach to design proper to landscape architecture is emerging.

### Lonergan and the Patternings of Experience

Bernard Lonergan's theory of the patterning of experience is a means through which the designer can seek to understand more fully clients and users engagement with site. The previous section showed how site-as-situation was constructed at its most elemental level by experience. This next section aims to aid in spatially articulating experience *erfahrung* of the built environment by identifying the patterns that it creates.

Lonergan's notion of the patterning of experience takes place within the larger discussion of how the one relates to things they experientially encounter. He begins his discussion of the patterning of experience by pointing out that to speak of the senses is an oddly abstract thing to do because they never occur in isolation, but there is always a series of coordinated bodily movements that are involved in sense reception.<sup>211</sup> I hear something unusual and my head turns my ear toward it. I touch something bumpy and my fingers run across it. Additionally, the actual experience brought to us by the senses contains, "a factor variously named conation, interest, attention, purpose. We speak of consciousness as a stream, but the stream involves not only the temporal succession of different contents but also direction, striving, effort."<sup>212</sup> If the bumpy object that my fingers are running across start to get prickly I stop. When I see a beautiful flower,

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<sup>211</sup> Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, Doran, Robert M., 5th ed., Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 3 (Toronto: Published by University of Toronto Press for Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, 1992). 204-205.

<sup>212</sup> Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, 205.

I move closer to it and see if it has any smell. Loneragan then concludes that a pattern emerges, “As conceived, it is the formulation of an insight; but all insight arises from sensitive or imaginative presentations, and in the present case the relevant presentations are simply the various elements in the experience that is organized by the pattern.”<sup>213</sup> Loneragan defines a pattern as, “a set of intelligible relations that link together sequences of sensations, memories, images, conations, emotions, and bodily movements; and to name the pattern [biological, aesthetic, intellectual, and dramatic] is simply to affirm that the sequences converge upon the terminal activities [specific to each pattern].”<sup>214</sup> Experience is then shown to be highly situated itself. Insights build upon themselves forming a pattern of inter-related sensations.

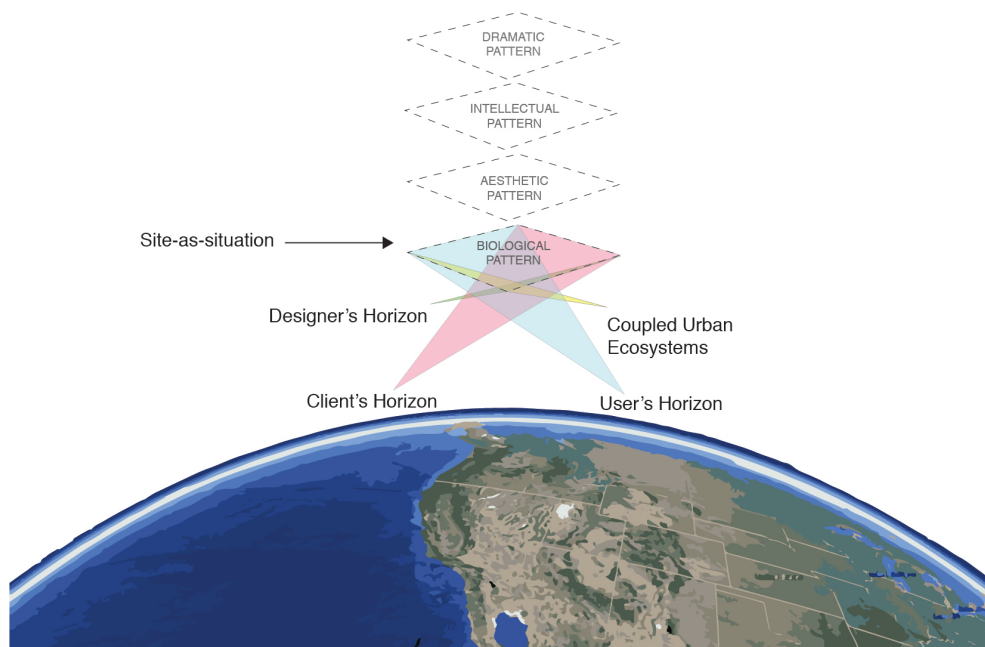


Figure 3.2. Site-as-Situation Experientially Patterned

<sup>213</sup> Ibid. 205.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid. 206.

Loneragan characterizes the biological patterning of experience by first differentiating between animals and plants and the vital needs that they have and the ways in which they go about fulfilling them are patterned in such a way so as to bring that specific need into consciousness for the purpose of having it fulfilled. An example would be hunger. When our body is hungry it calls forth a certain set of relations that indicate our need: our stomach rumbles, we get a headache, smells of food make us salivate, and all of these sensations are patterned in such a way as to indicate the need for sustenance and the efficient means to obtain it. Thus leading us to the terminal activity of gaining nourishment. Lonergan characterizes this biological patterning as extroversion:

The bodily basis of the senses in sense organ, the functional correlation of sensations with the positions and movements of the organs, the imaginative, conative, emotive consequences of sensible presentations, and the resulting local movements of the body, all indicate that elementary experience is concerned, not with the immanent aspects of living, but with its external conditions and opportunities.<sup>215</sup>

The built environment is biologically patterned in terms of survival. The environment is experientially patterned by those things, which can satisfy the subject's most elementary needs—health and safety. Looking for shelter in a downpour, finding well-lit areas at night to view your surroundings, and moving to the sunnier side of a path to keep warm, all of these objects are patterned to satisfy the conscious subjects biological needs of health and safety. From the perspective of the students of Harper High School's horizons of experience, one could identify the attractiveness of walking in the middle of the street and the broad perspective it provides as well as the aversion toward walking on the sidewalk with its concentrations of shrubs and trees which could pose a threat to their health and safety as an example of the biological patterning of experience in the built environment.

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid. 207.

The second patterning of experience is the aesthetic pattern. The aesthetic pattern deals with the sensual presentation of things that bring satisfaction and joy not to our vital needs, but to our spirit. Lonergan defines it as, "...an expression of the human subject outside the limits of adequate intellectual formulation or appraisal. It seeks to mean, to convey, to impart, something that is to be reached, not through science or philosophy, but through a participation, and in some fashion a reenactment of the artist's inspiration and intention."<sup>216</sup> The aesthetic pattern draws from how the elemental embodiment of vibrant colors, motions, textures, and sounds given in a painting, poem, dance, or landscape that speak deeply to us causing a range of emotions to emerge. But we rest in those emotions, not compelled to make sense of them or name them, but only to experience them in their fullness. Kidder speaks of Lonergan's aesthetic patterning of experience and that it can be,

the primordial experience of identity with one's world. This primitive identity is not the identity achieved in knowing, yet it anticipates that identity in affectively charged ways...It is in this ecstatic experience of identity that the thrill of aesthetic experience is to be found—the intensity, the fascination, the delight. The experience stirs the emotions with a sense of a deeper, or further, stranger mode of being. As an experience of identity, it is an intimation of truth; but as an undifferentiated experience, it is an encounter with a world of possibilities.<sup>217</sup>

The aesthetic patterning of experience addresses us. Its call is in the sensual evocativeness found within a site and our response is the internal relations that allow self-and world identification to occur.(CITE: See Bernard Lonergan's *Topics in Education*, 219.)

The third patterning of experience is the intellectual pattern. Lonergan notes, "The aesthetic liberation and the free artistic control of the flow of sensations and images, of emotions and bodily movements, not merely break the bonds of biological drive but also generate in

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<sup>216</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Insight*, 208.

<sup>217</sup> Paul Kidder, "Joseph Flanagan and the Philosophical Hermeneutic of Modern Art," *Lonergan Workshop Journal* 20, no. 1 (2011). 6.



experience a flexibility that makes it a ready tool for the spirit of inquiry.”<sup>218</sup> The intellectual patterning of experience engenders a spirit of inquiry, asking one to make sense of the painting of the artist or to name the emotion that it creates in us. In the intellectual patterning of experiences the activities terminate around understanding.<sup>219</sup> This is witnessed whenever an object in the built environment causes us to enter into inquiry. In the example of the students of Harper High School, the intellectual pattern of experience is operating when discerning, based on experiencing the site, what is the safest way to walk to and from school? And with whom?

The fourth and final patterning of experience is the dramatic pattern. Lonergan notes of this pattern, “Not only, then, is [a person] capable of aesthetic liberation and artistic creativity, but [their] first work of art is [their] own living.”<sup>220</sup> The dramatic patterning of experience deals with the relatedness of a person to the world around them. It is the integration and transformation of the previous patterns of experience and expressed in the life one leads. Lonergan remarks further:

The characters in this drama of living are molded by the drama itself. As other insights emerge and accumulate, so too do the insights that govern the imaginative projects of dramatic living. As other insights are corrected through the trial and error that give rise to further questions and yield still further complementary insights, so too does each individual discover and develop the possible roles [they] might play, and under the pressure of artistic and affective criteria, work out [their] own selection and adaptation.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Insight*, 209.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid. 210.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid. 210.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid. 211-12

The dramatic patterning of experience is an expression of praxis. Praxis is concerned with the project of human self-making taking place on both an individual and human level. When Lonergan talks about the artistry of human living he is speaking of praxis in this sense.<sup>222</sup> Important to note of all four patterns of experience is the variability of each pattern in response to the sensitive stream of consciousness. Any combination of the patternings can be called upon to respond to the sensitive stream of consciousness. In the case of the students of Harper High School, the cumulative intelligence gained from the previous patternings of experience is expressed in the unique ways in which they navigate through their life in the Englewood neighborhood. Their hopes, dreams, fears are expressed through the dramatic artistry with which they live their lives and express themselves to the community that surrounds them. The dramatic patterning then, is how one expresses their dwelling in a particular place and time.

As was noted earlier, client, user, and landscape architect possess a horizon that is constituted by experiences patterned biologically, aesthetically, intellectually, and dramatically. The experiences are emotionally and conatively charged.<sup>223</sup> Lonergan says in reference to the dramatic patterning of experience, our self-constitution of who we are, “the images are tinged with affects.”<sup>224</sup> Affects, or feelings, according to Lonergan, “...relate us, not just to a cause or an end, but to an object. Such feeling gives intentional consciousness its mass, momentum, drive, power. Without these feelings our knowing and deciding would be paper thin.”<sup>225</sup> From this Lonergan goes on to conclude, “Because of our feelings, our desires and our fears, our hope or despair, our joys and sorrows, our enthusiasm and indignation, our esteem and contempt, our

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<sup>222</sup> Patrick H. Byrne, “Lonergan’s Dramatic Patterning of Experience,” (lecture, Boston College, January 8, 2010).

<sup>223</sup> Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. 212.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid. 225.

<sup>225</sup> Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, The Seabury Library of Contemporary Theology (New York: Seabury Press, 1979). 30-31.

trust and distrust, our love and hatred, our tenderness and wrath, our admiration, veneration, reverence, our dread, horror, terror, we are oriented massively and dynamically in a world mediated by meaning.”<sup>226</sup> In attempting to understand the experiential patterning of a community we are given insight into the feelings that charge the patterning of experience.

Lonergan says of feelings that they are intentional responses to value. Lonergan identifies value as a transcendental notion, “the dynamism of conscious intentionality. They promote the subject from lower to higher levels of consciousness, from the experiential to the intellectual, from the intellectual to the rational, from the rational to the existential.”<sup>227</sup> The community holds a scale values insofar as there is a, “common field of experience, a common mode of understanding, a common measure of judgment, and a common consent.”<sup>228</sup> Lonergan refers to the vital values of health and safety, the social values of institutions cooperating together to secure particular goods for communities and individuals, cultural value as the creative and critical expressions of intelligence and inter-subjectivity, personal value as the inherent dignity and worth of the human person, and religious value as an entering into relationship with the Divine.<sup>229</sup>

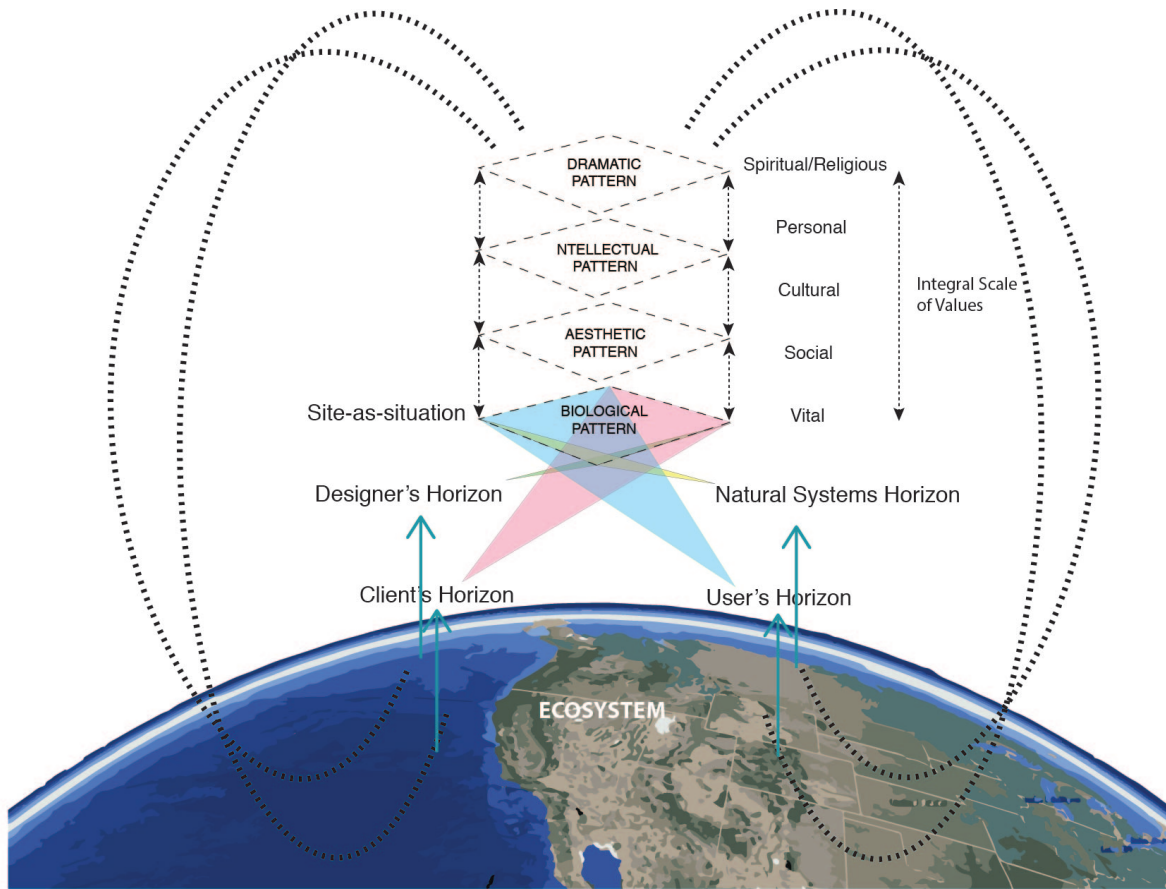
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<sup>226</sup> Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 31.

<sup>227</sup> Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 34-35.

<sup>228</sup> Lonergan, *The Lonergan Reader*, 390.

<sup>229</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 31-32.



*Figure 3.3. Site-as-Situation Experientially Patterned and Scale of Values*

Through Lonergan's patternings of experience we are given in roads into how a community experiences the built environment. For designers understanding the experiential component is essential in creating a place receptive to client and user. Experience is then taken up in understanding and judgment endowing it with meaning and value. This process is articulated and held within a community. Sensitivity to the way in which experience is patterned can then tell the designer not only how a community of users experience a particularly designed object or space, but additionally, the meanings and values that a particular object can evoke.

James Corner and Dennis Cosgrove indicate the complexity of these communally held

experiential relationships. James Corner's essay, "Eidetic Operations and New Landscapes"<sup>230</sup> gives insight into the etymological meaning of landscape. Here Corner joins with Anne Whiston Spirn who both draw from J.B. Jackson and John Stilgoe's research in uncovering the etymological underpinnings of landscape as consisting of the old German and Dutch terms for landscape: *landskip* and *landschaft*.<sup>231</sup> *Landskip*, an Old Dutch derivation of landscape, historically has referred to the landscape as scenery, whereas *landschaft* embodies the inhabitation of place and the complex interactions, which constitute it. Corner infers from the distinction that, "the meaning of *landschaft* comprises a deep and intimate mode of relationship not only among buildings and fields but also among patterns of occupation activity and space, each bound into calendric time."<sup>232</sup> Corner furthers this point quoting Dennis Cosgrove, "The visible forms [of the land] and their harmonious integration to the eye may be a constituent part of people's relationship with the surroundings of their daily lives, but such considerations are subservient to the other aspects of working life with family and community. The composition of their landscape is much more integrated and inclusive with the diurnal course of life's events—with birth, death, festival and tragedy—all the occurrences that lock together human time and place. For the insider there is no clear separation of self from scene, subject from object."<sup>233</sup> By allowing the landscape architect to look at the ways in which people relate to the surroundings of their daily life, and thematize them in biological, aesthetic, intellectual, and dramatic ways, one can more fully appropriate those patternings of experience into the design. Because this is an essentially interpretive exercise it relies upon hermeneutics to direct its approach to orient the dialogue in which the experiential patternings of experience might emerge from the site-as-

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<sup>230</sup> James Corner, "Eidetic Operations and New Landscapes."

<sup>231</sup> James Corner, "Eidetic Operations and New Landscapes," 154.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid. 154.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid. 155.

situation.

In this section I have presented Lonergan's patternings of experience and their relevance to the process of design proper to landscape architecture. I have described them as means with which the landscape architect can engage the site-as-situation in order to better design for it. In the next section I will bring together Lonergan's patternings of experience with Gadamer's notion of experience *erfahrung*. In doing so I hope to relate the two thinkers based on a complementarity they share regarding the notion of experience

### *Erfaehrung* and the Patternings of Experience

Gadamer makes a very similar point that Lonergan makes regarding senses never occurring in isolation. Gadamer echoes Lonergan writing:

Now "Aesthetic" vision is certainly characterized by not hurrying to relate what one sees to a universal, the known significance, the intended purpose, etc. But by dwelling on it as something aesthetic. But that still does not stop us from seeing relationships—e.g. recognizing that this white phenomenon with which we admire aesthetically is in fact a man. Thus our perception is never a simple reflection of what is given to the senses.<sup>234</sup>

In this example Gadamer affirms Lonergan's assertion of sense perception being received as, "a set of intelligible relations that link together sequences of sensations, memories, images, conations, emotions and bodily movements."<sup>235</sup> Additionally, Gadamer affirms the patterning of perception by using the metaphor of a motif used by an artist and saying that it has an ontological correlate in that perception carries with it a, "unity of meaning."<sup>236</sup> This coincides with

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<sup>234</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 78.

<sup>235</sup> Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Insight*, 206.

<sup>236</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 80.

Lonergan's statement that the material that emerges through sense perceptions are, inter-related to one another enabling it to be unified within a certain pattern.<sup>237</sup>

Finally, as has been noted above, *erfahrung* is processional in character. It is not merely limited to the realm of the aesthetic, but is connected with a world context that imbues it with even more richness and meaning. In this sense, *erfahrung* runs parallel to Lonergan's four patterns of experience insofar as each pattern of experience is a higher integration of the sense perceptions responded to by the pattern below it. There is more to our being than merely biological extroversion, and that is experientially integrated by the aesthetic, intellectual, and dramatic patterns. Thus it reflects a process by which we receive and engage experience, much like Gadamer's notion of *erfahrung*.

We began this chapter by developing site-as-situation as being analogous to Gadamer's hermeneutic situation. Both consist of a moment of encounter with tradition and or another person. Both consist of being called into question by this encounter. Next, the lens with which we interpret site-as-situation was shown to consist of a horizon in which we are situated. Horizon is all we know and can ask about. It is constituted by experiences informed by our historically effected consciousness. Bernard Lonergan's theory of the patternings of experience was shown to give the designer concrete inroads into experience as it manifests itself upon a site. Being cognizant of site in terms of the ways in which it emerges into users consciousness as biologically, aesthetically, intellectually, and dramatically patterned enriches the horizon of design the landscape architect works within.<sup>238</sup> Following that, Lonergan's theory of patternings of experience were placed into conversation with Gadamer's notion of experience *erfahrung* in order to show that in combining these two thinkers we are able to find new and exiting ways in

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<sup>237</sup> Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Insight*, 212.

<sup>238</sup> For more information on design as horizon see Kidder, "Gadamer for Architects". 89-92.

which to view the constitution of site.

### Dialogic Space

Dialogic space is space designed to create conditions for the possibility of calling oneself, the other, and world into question. It is a response to the question posed by Corner, “How might landscape architecture theory rebuild an existential ground, a topography of critical continuity, of memory and invention, orientation and direction?”<sup>239</sup>

In Gadamer’s essay, “The Relevance of the Beautiful,” the importance of the symbol is expressed in his telling of the history behind the *tesserae hospitales*. Gadamer writes,

What does the word “*symbol*” mean? Originally it was a technical term in Greek for a token of remembrance. The host presented his guest with the so-called *tesserae hospitales* by breaking some object in two. He kept one half for himself and gave the other half to his guest. If in thirty or fifty years time, a descendent of the guest should ever enter his house, the two pieces could be fitted together again to form a whole act of recognition...In its original and technical sense, the symbol represented something like a sort of pass used in the ancient world: something in and through which we recognize someone already known to us.<sup>240</sup>

Having shown the essentially dialogic process of design, dialogic space is a continuation of that process and asks how can the formal articulation of space call people into question, into a mode of deep and substantive remembering. In essence it is an articulation of what it means to authentically dwell.

How can the design of built urban environs become symbolically evocative of the people who dwell there? In the initial phase of site analysis and design, the landscape architect enters into the ongoing conversation with client, user, and CUE. This is site-as-situation, with each of

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<sup>239</sup> James Corner, “A Discourse on Theory II: Three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics.” 116.

<sup>240</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, “The Relevance of the Beautiful,” ed. Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 31.



its constitutive pillars horizons coming into contact with one another. Beginning with CUE, following Alberti's model, the landscape architect enters into conversation with the coupled-urban ecosystem of the site by investigating the following phenomenon: demographics, economics, urban development, land use policy, climate, hydrology, geomorphology, biochemistry, primary production, nutrient cycling, biodiversity, disturbance regimes, economic development, housing/shelter, human health, recreation, land cover, land use, land value, topography, transportation, artificial drainage, heat island, and diseases.<sup>241</sup> The data and analysis of these categories is then systematized into process, function, and pattern of the local ecosystem. Concurrently, the dialogue is initiated with client and user through a variety of means aimed at creating robust dialogue: surveys, public and private meetings, charrettes, observation, field surveys, census studies, geo design and others. As we have shown above, these strategies are helpful in designing hermeneutically insofar as they help the landscape architect in, "acquiring the right horizon of inquiry for the questions evoked by the encounter with tradition."<sup>242</sup> Kidder gives an example of this process using Samuel Mockbee's Rural Studio in Hale County Alabama.<sup>243</sup> Citing the scholarship of Beata Sirowy who explicitly draws from the thinking of Gadamer and Schön, Kidder writes,

...He [Samuel Mockbee] wanted to create homes that would not only serve basic needs but would embody the character and spirit of those who dwelt in the homes, along with the spirit of the region in which they dwelt...To achieve this goal Mockbee conceived an organic process in which getting to know the members of the community would create a conversation that would shape the design. In the play of ongoing efforts to understand one another—the clients learning to respect the dedication of the students, the

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<sup>241</sup> Marina Alberti, *Advances in Urban Ecology : Integrating Humans and Ecological Processes in Urban Ecosystems*, 71.

<sup>242</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 301.

<sup>243</sup> Kidder, "Gadamer for Architects," 92.

students learning to recognize the horizons in which the clients found meaning and purpose—the elements of design possibilities would organically emerge.<sup>244</sup>

In the example of the Rural Studio, Kidder indicates what I am referring to as site-as-situation. The intersecting points of view of the clients of Hale County with those of the architecture students is a hermeneutical encounter of two horizons with the traditions of the rural South. The dialogic process of design, following the structure of the hermeneutical circle as described by Snodgrass and Coyne above, is shown in this example through the students becoming embedded into the community and catalyzing conversation with the local residents in an effort to understand their particular horizons. Through the conversation that is, as Kidder notes, “...committed to the kind of dialogue that brings out the questions, assumptions, habits, experiences, and stories that shape individual and community horizons. But at the same time it respects the insights and techniques that theory can introduce into the conversation.”<sup>245</sup> Through this type of conversation, a fusion of horizons occurs that creates conditions for the possibility of creating forms that embody the *genius loci*. In doing so, the process of design imbues forms, which carry the tradition forward, to speak to the issues pertinent to the situation of the site.

Kidder’s use of Sirowy’s example of the Rural Studio’s engagement with the dialogical process of design shows much of the process dialogic space seeks to embody. However, there are significant differences too. Most notably the site-as-situation of rural Hale County Alabama is notably different than the site-as-situation of dense urban metropolitan areas. While there are still clients, users, landscape architects, and CUE in both places, the diversity and scale of the urban environment add an additional amount of complexity to this process.

It is for this reason that Lonergan’s notion of patternings of experience, and the

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid. 92.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid. 94.

underpinning meanings and values they signify aid the designer in understanding and help further articulate the urban site-as-situation. Because urban environments have many different communities of users there is an inherent pluralism that must be accounted for by the client, user, landscape architect, and CUE. Accounting for that pluralism is by understanding, to the extent possible, ways in which each user community biologically, aesthetically, intellectually, and dramatically patterns their encounter with the built environment. While this cannot definitively account for every single way that the communities that inhabit the site pattern experience, it does not have to be initially exhaustive. So long as a comprehensive accounting of the users has been accomplished, because of the hermeneutic circle and the horizon of design, there is a fundamental openness of other pertinent parts informing the whole as the project moves forward. Through the iterative process of dialoging with the constituent pillars of site, led by the question, “Can you see yourselves in this?” a collective understanding emerges. From these conversations, the landscape architect can formally articulate objects that both evoke the ways in which the communities pattern experience and enable the site’s tradition to speak to the issues of the hermeneutic situation.

For example, the demographic information and land use policy of a given site (elements of CUE) and its surrounding context is placed in conversation with users by way of meetings, charrettes, and site observation, facilitated by the landscape architect. In this and many other ways the constituent pillars are placing themselves into conversation with one another in the hope that an understanding embodied in the design will emerge. Through the dialogue the landscape architect is attempting to interpret the pertinent questions that are emerging and how they indicate the patterning of users experience on a biological, aesthetic, intellectual, and dramatic level. In its emergence, because its genesis is rooted in the site-as-situation, as opposed to solely the creative mind of the architect, dialogic space contains elements that are *tesserae*

*hospitals* of the dramatic artistry with which the client and users live their lives.

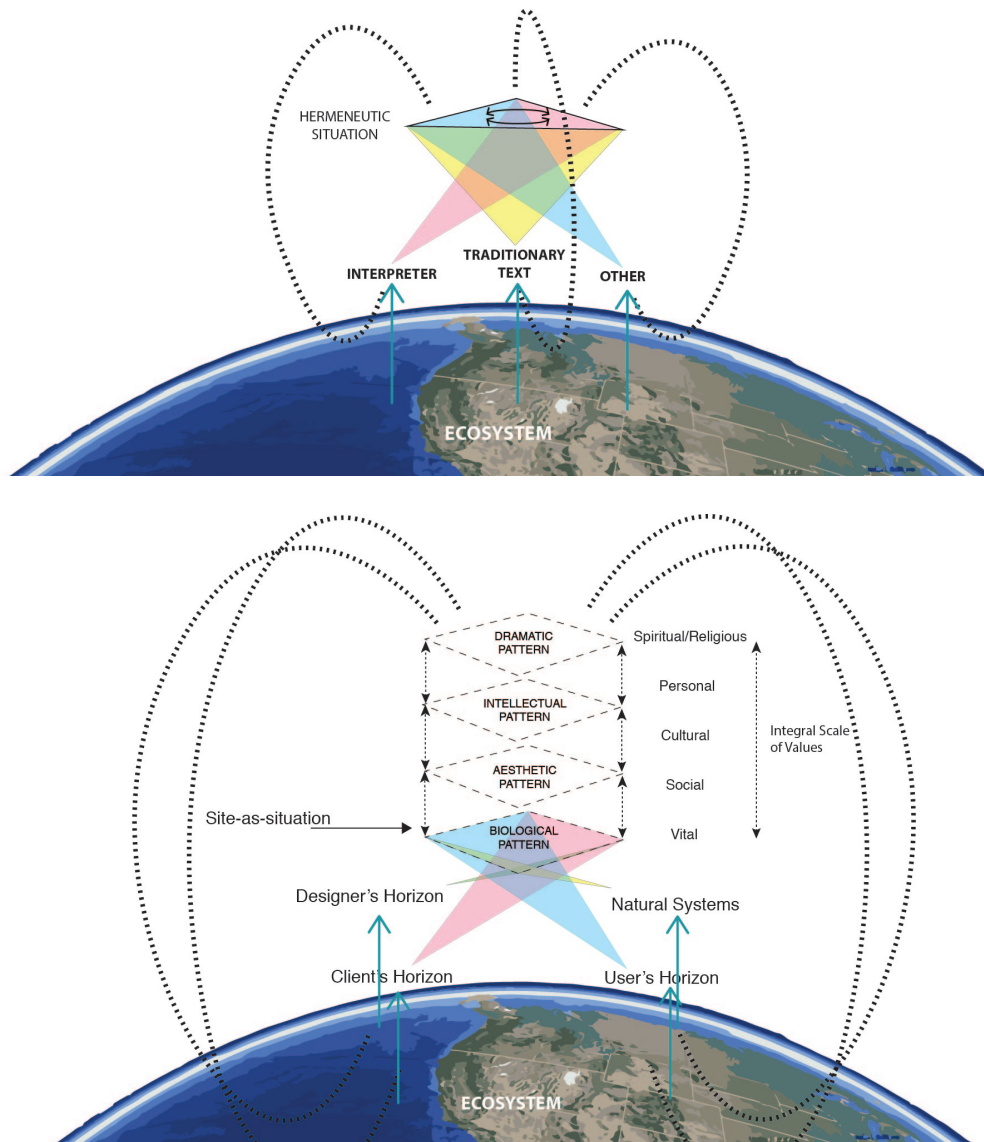


Figure 3.4. Model of Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics Compared with Model of Dialogic Space

Dialoguing on these levels with site, the landscape architect can use various representational techniques to describe the hermeneutical situation's experiential patterning as parts of the whole. The technique that will be suggested in the following chapter is collage because of its ability to simultaneously show the parts forming a whole and the whole informing the parts. Bringing the

resulting conceptual design to the client and users and testing the resulting inspiration of this process and its validity by the question, “Can you see yourself in this?” The resulting conversation will hopefully bring the design process to a further level of refinement, by that I mean more closely speak to the issues and concerns of the site-as-situation.

This approach is not meant to be a rigid scientific process, but instead a meditative one, forming an integral heuristic structure by which the landscape architect stimulates dialogue through her soundings of the site’s biological, aesthetic, intellectual, and dramatic patternings of experience. The process is therefore a means with which to help the design of a site integrate the vital, social, cultural, personal, and possibly religious values of a particular site.

## CHAPTER 4

### DIALOGIC SPACE AS APPLIED TO THE SITE OF SEATTLE UNIVERSITY'S CAMPUS PERIMETER

This chapter concerns itself with applying the creative framework, constructed in the previous chapter, to the perimeter of Seattle University. Application is a notion that hermeneutics takes very seriously. Gadamer shows the hermeneutic tradition's concern for application using the example of the sermon in Protestant ecclesiology. In the sermon the pastor encounters the scriptures and must bring to light its relevance and application to the congregation. Gadamer notes, "...understanding involves something like applying the text to be understood to the interpreter's present situation. Thus we are forced to go one step beyond romantic hermeneutics, as it were, by regarding not only understanding and interpretation, but also application as comprising one unified process."<sup>246</sup> It is this process that the present chapter is trying to begin to accomplish.

#### Joining the Conversation

In applying the creative framework of dialogic space to the project of creating a conceptual design for the perimeter of Seattle University, the perimeter itself is seen as a text. It is a text that is continually being written by client, user, landscape architect, and CUE. The site becomes a situation because a new chapter is being written and its composition is the matter at hand. This process of composition requires its authors to encounter the tradition, of which the

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<sup>246</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 307.

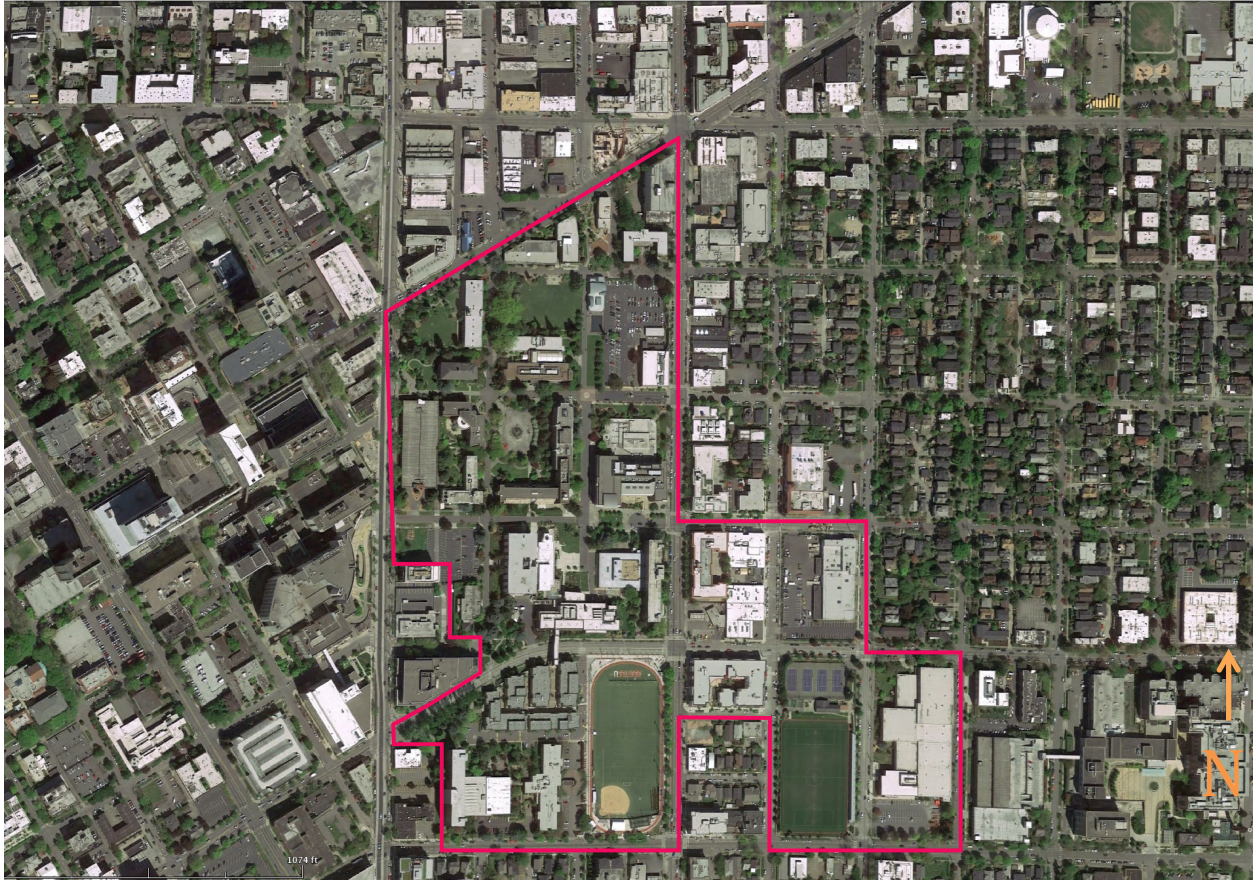
text is an embodiment, with the need for a new chapter to be written. The need arises from the traditional text having to speak anew, and prove its relevance to the ever-evolving questions the present horizon asks of it. Gadamer speaks to this issue saying, "...This indicates the task of a historical hermeneutics: to consider the tension that exists between the identity of the common object and the changing situation in which it must be understood."<sup>247</sup> How then can the perimeter of Seattle University (the "traditional text") speak to the ever open and evolving present horizon of Seattle University as an institution? Even more so, how can imbuing the meaning of who Seattle University understands itself to be, into the design of the perimeter, facilitate a dialogue with the perimeter's users?

Therefore, as the designer, I inserted myself into the ongoing conversation that was being had by Seattle University regarding the perimeter as a place that expresses the mission of the university. The means with which this first occurred was through two initial site visits. During those two times I met with faculty, staff, and students and conducted interviews that were focused on their understandings of the look, feel, and function of the perimeter of Seattle University.<sup>248</sup> These questions were aimed at gaining and understanding of the site-as-situation. I will begin first with my interpretation of the conversation surrounding Seattle University's issues pertaining to the perimeter, next move to an interpretation of the issues in dialogue from the community's perspective (users), and conclude with an interpretation of the issues pertinent to QUE.

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid. 308.

<sup>248</sup> See Appendix A for Interview Guide Questions.



*Figure 4.0* Seattle University Campus Perimeter

*Source:* Seattle University, Seattle, WA. [map]. (2014). Scale undetermined; generated by Byron B. George; using “Google Maps” [www.google.com/maps](http://www.google.com/maps). (22 March 2014).

In referencing back to the creative framework of dialogic space, in defining the client as Seattle University, I am explicitly referring to those with authority to influence decisions directly affecting the university. I understand those communities to be represented by the students, alumni, faculty, staff, and administrators of the university. In interpreting the two site visits conducted, the dialogue pertaining to the perimeter, from the clients perspective, revolved around four main themes: embodying the mission and values of the university into the physical fabric of the perimeter, the transition from a non-traditional commuter student university to a traditional four year institution, wayfinding, and neighborhood relations.



Based on guided interviews, the first question Seattle University is continually asking itself is, “How do we as an institution with a high level mission, implement that mission into the built environment we inhabit?”

### **Mission**

Seattle University is dedicated to educating the whole person, to professional formation, and to empowering leaders for a just and humane world.

### **Vision**

We will be the premier independent university of the Northwest in academic quality, Jesuit Catholic inspiration, and service to society.

### **Values**

- **Care**  
We put the good of students first.
- **Academic Excellence**  
We value excellence in learning with great teachers who are active scholars.
- **Diversity**  
We celebrate educational excellence achieved through diversity.
- **Faith**  
We treasure our Jesuit Catholic ethos and the enrichment from many faiths of our university community.
- **Justice**  
We foster a concern for justice and the competence to promote it.
- **Leadership**  
We seek to develop responsible leaders committed to the common good.

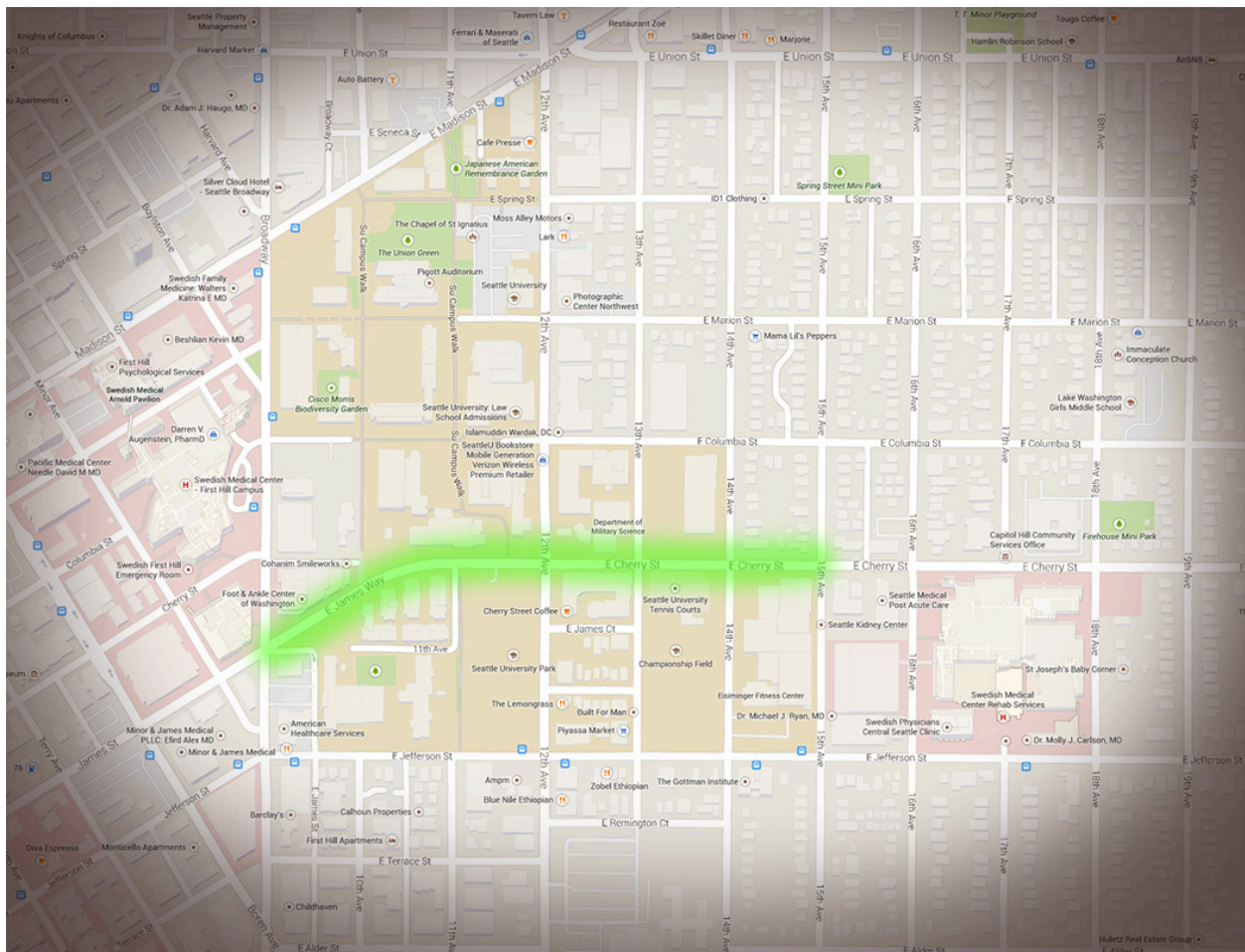
*Figure 4.1. Mission, Vision, and Values of Seattle University.*

*Source:* Seattle University, “About Seattle University: Mission, Vision, and Values,” Seattle University, <http://www.seattleu.edu/about/mission/> (accessed March 18, 2014).

How the mission, vision, and values of the university permeate all that Seattle University does is a major ongoing discussion.

Another major issue is the transition the university is gradually, and intentionally undergoing from a non-traditional commuter student based university to a traditional four-year university. This transition has led to numerous discussions within the university one of which is the role of sports. As part of the transition the university has joined the NCAA Division One

league and a real push from the university to create a large sense of school pride and comradely around the schools sports programs. There is also another contingent of the University community that is concerned over the increased importance placed upon athletics fearing that it might detract from the mission and values of the university. Spatially this emphasis is being recognized in what university administration is calling the ARC. ARC stands for Athletic Recreational Corridor. The corridor is along James Street and stretches from Broadway to 15<sup>th</sup> and Cherry.



*Figure 4.2* Seattle University Athletic and Recreational Corridor  
*Source:* Seattle University, Seattle, WA. [map]. (2014). Scale undetermined; generated by Byron B. George; using “Google Maps” [www.google.com/maps](http://www.google.com/maps). (22 March 2014).

The corridor includes the university's softball, swimming, basketball, soccer, and track facilities, the university's Athletics Department, the newly built Seattle University Park intermural field, as well as the student gym facilities.

Another major question as the university continues to expand toward the southeast is wayfinding. In conversations with students, faculty, staff, and administration, all remarked at having visitors to the university be unsure as to when they were on or off of campus. As the university continues to grow out of its central campus, how to best facilitate clear signage is a major priority. Associated with wayfinding and branding is consistency. Consistency in terms of signage style, color, and font as well as consistency in planting pallet along the perimeter has been a major discussion within the last three years. The general aesthetic is urban, with clean crisp minimalist lines in signage and fixtures, juxtaposed with naturalistic planting.



*Figure 4.3* Signage and Planting Pallet of Seattle University's Perimeter  
*Source:* Bruce Dees & Associates, "Seattle University Park," Seattle University,  
[www.bdassociates.com/project/seattle-university-park/](http://www.bdassociates.com/project/seattle-university-park/), (accessed March 22, 2014).

Another theme is how to continually foster a healthy dialogue with the larger community that surrounds Seattle University. Located in between First Hill, Capitol Hill, and the Central District, Seattle University's relationship with its neighbors has been an ongoing conversation.

The Center for Service and Community Engagement at Seattle University implements programs that foster community partnerships, academic service learning, campus collaboration, and student leadership through service.<sup>249</sup> Through the programs ran through the Center, direct relationships in line with the mission and values of the university are cultivated ranging from ecological justice, mentoring and tutoring, and homeless outreach to name only a few.

Another important question that the university asks itself is how can it turn itself out toward the community at large? The traditional campus is a six-block grid whose perimeter buildings have all been designed facing the interior of campus. In conversations this has been perceived by the surrounding neighborhood as the university turning its back to the community. Reversing this perception by placing a high priority on updating the streetscapes of the edges of campus to respond to the community has been identified as necessary changes that need to be made. Conversations surrounding this issue are very pertinent due to the new light rail expansions, which have a stop at Seattle University.

Seattle University has an open campus policy. The central campus is known for its 100% organic gardens that feature a wide assortment of edible plant material for the public to enjoy. Additionally, student p-patches are available on campus. Another public amenity offered by the university is the Union Green, which is a regular meeting spot for neighborhood dog owners to let their pets off leash. Arguably, the most notable public attraction is the world renowned Chapel of St. Ignatius designed by New York based architect Steven Holl. Another important

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<sup>249</sup> Seattle University Center for Service and Community Engagement, "About Page," Seattle University, <http://www.seattleu.edu/csce/about/>, (accessed March 12, 2014).

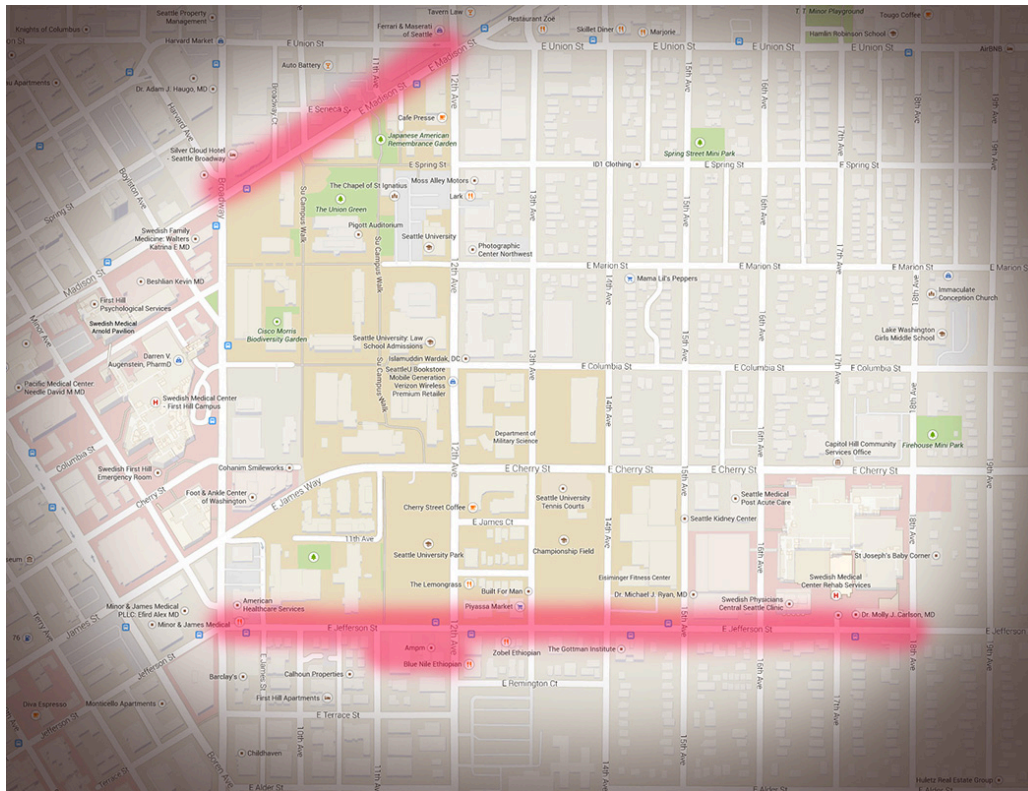


aspect of neighborhood relations is the recently constructed Seattle University Park. An intermural field located on the corner of 12<sup>th</sup> and James, Seattle University Park's facilities are open to the public and offer a walking track and playing surface for the not only students, faculty and staff, but the neighbors as well.



*Figure 4.4.* Seattle University Park

*Source:* Bruce Dees & Associates, "Seattle University Park," Seattle University, [www.bdassociates.com/project/seattle-university-park/](http://www.bdassociates.com/project/seattle-university-park/), (accessed March 22, 2014).



*Figure 4.5. High Crime Areas Bordering Seattle University Campus*

*Source:* Seattle University, Seattle, WA. [map]. (2014). Scale undetermined; generated by Byron B. George; using “Google Maps” [www.google.com/maps](http://www.google.com/maps). (22 March 2014).

The issue of how to respond to illegal activities occurring around the perimeter of campus

and surrounding neighborhood is a conversation of great concern to the university. Crime, both real and perceived, is a significant issue directly outside the campus of Seattle University, and occasionally spills inside of campus. Campus Public Safety is a non-armed service within the university working closely with Seattle’s East Precinct. The university provides regular campus patrols, video monitoring, safety escorts, and emergency response services. The areas perceived as unsafe during the conversations conducted on campus generally were along the Jefferson and Madison Street corridors. High intravenous drug use, particularly in the Capitol Hill neighborhood, is also an issue, with heroin use on the rise. A general uptick in crime has been reported. Protecting the students welfare and safety is the number one priority of the university and in addition to public safety services, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

Strategies have been robustly implemented throughout the entire university, with the perimeter being a major focus.

Users. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Lynch defines users as, "...all those who interact with the place in any way: live in it, work in it, pass through it, repair it, control it, profit from it, suffer from it, even dream about it."<sup>250</sup> It is a very broad category that in fact overlaps into the realm of the client. During the two site visits to Seattle University direct observation of user groups were conducted. In addition to the conversations that took place with students, faculty, staff, and administrators, additional conversations were conducted with a local day shelter for homeless men and women as well as the King County Needle exchange program.

Being located within in the dense urban environment of Seattle Washington, five blocks away from downtown, the user groups that engages the perimeter of the university are incredibly diverse. Additionally, Seattle University's location next to the Central District gives the university exposure to one of the most ethnically diverse neighborhood districts in Seattle. The perimeter dialogues with this diversity having Vietnamese, Haitian, and Ethiopian owned businesses located along the southeast section of campus on 12<sup>th</sup> avenue, as well as on Jefferson Street.

As reported by Seattle University's website. There are 7,422 enrolled students at Seattle University, 4,666 undergraduate students, 1,907 graduate students, and 849 law students (CITE Seattle University Website).<sup>251</sup> 95% of undergraduate students attend as full time students.<sup>252</sup> 38% of first-year students are residents of Washington State.<sup>253</sup> 33% of the student body comes

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<sup>250</sup> Kevin Lynch, *Site Planning 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*, 67.

<sup>251</sup> Seattle University, "Seattle University Facts," Seattle University, <http://www.seattleu.edu/about/facts/>, (accessed March 12, 2014).

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

from ethnically diverse backgrounds.<sup>254</sup> Finally, 9% of the student body is international students. Observation and conversations with students indicated that, with the exception of the Seattle University Park, the main places where students congregate are in the central parts of the main campus. During a conversation with a student, the interior of the main campus was described as being a bubble of calm and beauty surrounded by the frenetic pace of First and Capitol Hills. Areas along the perimeter that were identified as “sketchy,” due to shootings and violence, mainly confirm the same places identified by Seattle University: the Jefferson and Madison Street corridor and the section of 12<sup>th</sup> St. toward the South of campus.

The homeless population is another distinctive user group of the perimeter. As a gardener working on the perimeter from 2004-2008, homeless men and women were regular fixtures often times finding shelter in the bushes, stairways of parking garages, or simply strolling through campus. During the first site visit, conversations surrounding this user group took place at a homeless day center blocks away from Seattle University’s campus. Those conversations indicated that the homeless population has generally moved south of the university. When asking a former homeless person if the homeless person’s condition of being homeless gave them a different perspective of the built environment, particularly around the area of Seattle University, it was indicated that a large priority was to find places where they would not be bothered and have some semblance of privacy.

As these interpretations indicate, the users of the Seattle University’s perimeter are incredibly diverse. As a result, it is difficult to isolate different particular user groups other than the ones identified above. Observation of user behavior along the perimeter generally indicated it to be a utilitarian engagement with the landscape. Areas of congregation were few and mainly consisted of two bus stops on the north and south end of campus.

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<sup>254</sup> Ibid.



In chapter 3 Marina Alberti's model of Coupled-Urban Ecosystems formed the fourth constituent pillar of site.<sup>255</sup> While this pillar is crucial, due to the scope and time constraints of this thesis, a limited accounting of the Function, Processes, and Patterns of Alberti's Coupled-Urban Ecosystems (CUE) can be given.<sup>256</sup> The data required for some of the categories of CUE was not available or was outside of the budget of this thesis. In the case of an actual project, as opposed to this academic exercise, the services of ecologists, soil scientists, and economist would have to be consulted. In lieu of such consultation, a descriptive as opposed to explanatory account of CUE will be given relying on field observation and conversations with Grounds staff during site visits. Additionally, substantive conversation regarding conceptual design schemes can initially take place with out an exhaustive collection of CUE data and analysis as a pre-requisite.

While Alberti's framework can be addressed at any of the three categories of pattern process and function, She begins her explication of the framework with pattern. Alberti notes, "Humans are the dominant driving force in urbanizing regions, and changes in ecological conditions also control human decisions. Furthermore, these interactions are spatially determined...For example, land-use decisions are highly influenced by patterns of land use (e.g., housing densities), infrastructure (e.g., accessibility), and land cover (e.g., green areas). These local interactions affect the composition and dynamics of entire metropolitan regions."<sup>257</sup> The patterns of Alberti's coupled-urban ecosystem framework are identified as land cover, land use, land value, topography, hydrology, transportation, artificial drainage, heat island, and diseases.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> Marina Alberti, *Advances in Urban Ecology*, 71.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid. 71.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid. 71.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid. 71.

Processes functioning within the Alberti's CUE are as follows: Demographics, economics, urban development, land use policy, climate, hydrology, geomorphology, biochemistry, and ecosystem dynamics.<sup>259</sup>

CUE Function consists of primary production, nutrient cycling, hydrology, biodiversity, disturbance regimes, economic development, housing/shelter, human health and recreation.<sup>260</sup>

Based upon site observation and interviews with Seattle University Grounds Staff a few initial interpretive remarks can be made that draw upon Alberti's framework. There are clear signs of rapid economic development surrounding the perimeter of Seattle University. Apartment buildings marketing to young professionals and students are continuing to emerge surrounding the university. Business catering to the new influx of residential population makes this area upon observation, a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood of Seattle. As a result of development, vegetative land cover is scarce, and mainly in the form of street trees and parking strip planters surrounding the university. The steep topography running east to west also indicate signs of erosion from storm water runoff within the planting strips along the perimeter. Impermeable concrete and asphalt surfaces make up the majority of the perimeter, with small planting beds and parking strips interpenetrating the impermeable surfaces. In terms of nutrient cycling and biodiversity the campus follows an in-depth Integrated Pest Management program, and actively seeks to cultivate soil microbiology through scheduled treatments of compost teas. Additionally, the university is located at the end of a pollinator pathway. A pollinator pathway is a linear migratory route for insects and birds to inhabit. Properties along this pathway voluntarily cultivate habitat conducive to supporting these activities.<sup>261</sup> Habitat in the form of snags and nurse logs

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid. 71.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid. 71.

<sup>261</sup> The Pollinator Pathway, "About," The Pollinator Pathway, [www.pollinatorpathway.com/about/the-first-pathway](http://www.pollinatorpathway.com/about/the-first-pathway), (accessed March 12, 2014).

along the interior side of the perimeter are also a regular feature where appropriate along the perimeter.

In this section I have described the site-as-situation. It depicts the encounter of the horizons of client, users, landscape architect, and CUE being called into question by the perimeter of Seattle University's need to be relevant to the issues in which its present horizon faces. In order to show this I described myself entering into the conversation as a landscape architect through interviews with faculty, students, staff, and administrators as well as members of the community. In doing so I hoped to gain an understanding of the living tradition the perimeter embodies and the pertinent questions from each constituent of site that break open the issues surrounding the perimeter. It was a moment of receptivity on my part as landscape architect, but also dialogue as I became a part of the site by asking my own questions to the other constituents, testing my prejudices to see if they brought any light to bare on the situation or not.

In reflecting upon the conversations that took place during the two site visits to Seattle University, and my own encounter of spending time on the perimeter, an attempt was made to find ways in which the conversation was being experientially patterned. Particular attention was paid to the ways in which the sensations, memories, images, conations, emotions, emblematic of the users experience of not only perimeter, but also Seattle University in general. In doing so I am attempting to find insight into how the horizon of the client and perimeter's history can inform the horizon of the present in fresh new ways—a continuation of tradition. The question the landscape architect must ask in facilitating the creation of dialogic space is what are the ways in which experience has, is, and will be biologically, aesthetically, intellectually, and dramatically patterned for the constituent pillars of a site; and based upon the ongoing dialogue within the site, how might they be developed to further speak to the present situation? It is a dual movement of looking back and looking forward. Addressing the design through this approach

brings the landscape architect in touch with the ways in which objects within the built environment are experientially interpreted by the client and user; and using the present issues at hand as catalysts to find new ways in which the tradition can address the site. In this line of thinking, the perimeter of Seattle University can be seen as a traditionary text written by multiple authors. Because tradition is a dynamic transmission of history it is constantly having to prove its relevance by its ability to speak to the never before thought of issues of today. The designer in this analogy is in essence a co-author with Seattle University (client), users, and coupled-ecological systems. His authorship is based upon articulating a translation from the language the site-as-situation to the language of landscape. This translation is also a transformation. Meaning literally changes form--from being spoken to being embodied in the forms of the designed landscape. Just as in translating one language to another, artistry is involved. A literal translation often does not truly communicate the nuance and meaning that the speaker had intended. Therefore, the translator has to make that meaning manifest in his translation by finding correlates in the other language that can express the nuance intended. This is an artistic endeavor especially in the design of landscapes within the hermeneutical framework set up here. A literal translation of meaning comes across as cliché or kitsch—failing to convey the subtlety and nuance of the site-as-situation.

### Interpreting the Patternings of Experience on the Perimeter

The work of identifying potential patternings of experience is an interpretive gesture of application requiring a *phronetic* disposition to associate particular inter-related experiences had by constituents of site as being biologically, aesthetically, intellectually, and dramatically patterned. The landscape architect can fail miserably at this task. However, the brilliance of the hermeneutic circle is the back-and-forth in which the designer constantly asks the question, “Can

you see yourself in this?” This is another way in which our fore-conceptions of understanding the situation are necessarily tested by the dialogic process of design. In addition to the interviews conducted on and around campus, as well as site observation, an effort was made to expand the breadth and depth of voices heard in relation to the perimeter, so as to gain a more robust understanding of the authors patternings of experiences. To accomplish this inspiration was drawn from the contemporary notion of “crowd sourcing”. This notion is typically understood in terms of a person, or organization, pitching an innovative idea to a group of potentially interested investors, this entire interaction taking place within the platform of a website.<sup>262</sup> In this particular instance I sought to “crowd source,” examples of people’s experiences of Seattle University and the immediate surrounding neighborhoods, documented photographically, on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Flickr. This was done by using search terms “Seattle University”, “Capitol Hill Seattle,” “First Hill Seattle,” And “Central District, Seattle.”

Photography being a means with which experience is both captured and distilled, I sought to place these images into conversation with the pertinent questions emerging from the perimeter of Seattle University described above. For example, Seattle University has a Facebook page.<sup>263</sup> In viewing that page as an expression of the common field of experience within that community—photography posted was interpreted for its potential expressions of the biological, aesthetic, intellectual, and dramatic patternings of experience within that community. Interpreting the patternings of experience is meant to serve as a springboard of inspiration into how client and user experience and interact with the living traditions they dwell within. It should therefore be noted that multiple patternings of experience can be had of a particular object. A boulder, for example, bathed in sunlight could possibly be biologically patterned as a source of warmth in

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<sup>262</sup> See Kickstarter at [www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com).

<sup>263</sup> See <http://www.facebook.com/seattleu>.

response the chill one feels from being in the shade. Its roughly hewn edges catch the light and cast shadows in provocative ways, and create an almost glow like effect on the moss that grows on top of it (aesthetic). The size, shape, and fixity of the boulder may provoke thoughts of permanence and groundedness (intellectual). Finally, interpreting the boulders symbolic valence within my own life as areas of permanence, strength, and solidity could also occur (dramatic). In trying to understand a community's common field of experience as it relates to objects of the built environment, the designer can better attune herself to the goal of dialogic space—creating an environment that resonates and orients the client, users, and CUE that dwell there.

Beginning with the biological patterning of experience, which as indicated in the previous chapter, is concerned with objects in the built environment that promote health and safety. The impact of CPTED along the perimeter is one of the biggest factors effecting the biological patterning. Viewsheds between large shrubs and trees and the sidewalk are generous allowing for pedestrians to clearly see into the vegetative areas. Street lighting also provides an ample lighting scheme making it easy to see at night. Emergency call lights posted on the interior side of the perimeter portals along the main section of campus, as well as selectively along the perimeters of south and southeast sections of campus provide a lit area for responding to emergency situations. There are very few outdoor shelter structures along the perimeter of the university with only to bus stop shelters on the north and south end of campus.

The aesthetic patterning of experience concerns itself with the sensual presentation of objects. Color, texture, rhythm, and volume are all examples of the aesthetic patterning of experience. Kidder again poignantly describes it as,

...the primordial experience of identity with one's world. This primitive identity is not the identity achieved in knowing, yet it anticipates that identity in affectively charged ways...It is in this ecstatic experience of identity that the thrill of aesthetic experience is to be found—the intensity, the fascination, the delight. The

experience stirs the emotions with a sense of deeper, or further, stranger mode of being. As an experience of identity, it is an intimation of truth; but as an undifferentiated experience, it is an encounter with a world of possibilities.<sup>264</sup>

The Seattle University community has many evocative examples of this patterning of experience. Generally, the landscape aesthetic is very naturalistic, replete with regionally sensitive perennial plantings. There is a strong Japanese aesthetic of wabi-sabi found on campus in the emphasis of rockery, nurse logs, and moss depicting the passage of time and the materials ephemeral nature. The richly diffused light found inside the Chapel of St. Ignatius is a powerful example of the aesthetic patterning of experience. Part of the concept of Holl's masterpiece was the notion of the chapel being seven bottles of light. The aesthetic patterning of experience is also evident in the new branding Seattle University is implementing. Modern clean lines featuring a consistent color of bright red are prevalent throughout campus. The architectural styles are mixed throughout campus, but the majority of buildings are modern or post-modern in style with the exception of the Garrard Building, which was the original building of the college.

Moving outside of the university and into its surrounding neighborhoods, Capitol Hill, First Hill, and the Central District have a significantly gritty feel to them. The loose flowing lines of graffiti feature prominently on the sides of buildings, parking meters, and signage throughout the neighborhood. Capitol Hill, a neighborhood known for its robust music scene, music posters are plastered everywhere throughout the neighborhood.

Going even further outside of the neighborhood, being located on a major hill, Seattle University has stunning views of Mt. Rainer, the Cascade, and Olympic mountain ranges. The awesome magnitude of the mountains feature prominently on campus during clear days.

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<sup>264</sup> Paul Kidder, "Joseph Flanagan and the Philosophical Hermeneutic of Modern Art," 6.

The intellectual patterning of experience causes wonder and its activities terminate around the act of understanding. They are experiences that instigate curiosity and intrigue. They invite closer examination. The intellectual patterning of experience, building upon the experiential momentum created by the aesthetic patterning, can be found on campus in the amazing art collection the University has. Instead of placing the art in an on-campus museum, it is integrated instead throughout the campus, creating an environment conducive to reflection. Wayfinding signage on the interior side of the perimeter is also an important patterning of the intellectual experience, directing guests to their desired destinations. The Taqwsheblu Vi Hilbert Ethnobotanical Garden features a collection of native plants used by the First Peoples of the Puget Sound region. The Japanese American Remembrance Garden designed by Al Kubota, grandson of Fujitaro Kubota honors the memory of Japanese Americans within the area who were placed in internment campus during WWII. The Chardin Community Garden is a raised bed p-patch made available to students, faculty, and staff promoting urban agriculture. Finally, the El Salvador Jesuit Martyrs Memorial Garden gives witness to the martyrdom of six Jesuits and two laywomen during the 1989 civil war in En Salvador. In these examples we see the intellectual patterning of experience witnessing to the diverse traditions that intersect and form Seattle University.

As an academic institution, the most obvious example of the intellectual patterning of experience is the courses offered to students throughout the university. The Jesuits opened their first college in 1548 in Messina Italy eventually developing a detailed curriculum known as the *Ratio Studiorum*.<sup>265</sup> This course of study gave students exposure to the classics such as Cicero,

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<sup>265</sup> Ronald Modras, *Ignatian Humanism: A Dynamic Spirituality for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 2004), 79.



Horace, Virgil, and Ovid.<sup>266</sup> As Ronald Modras explains, “True to their own humanist training, the early Jesuits were critical of instruction that was purely speculative or abstract. Education, like other Jesuit ministries, was to address the whole person—character and morals, not just cognitive faculties.”<sup>267</sup> The tradition of the *Ratio Studiorum* is a living tradition that has now evolved to what is known to day as the core curriculum. Four distinct phases comprise the core curriculum at Seattle University. The first phase is “Engaging Academic Inquiry.”<sup>268</sup> Within this phase students take courses in academic writing, mathematics and quantitative reasoning, creative expression and interpretation, and inquiry seminars in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.<sup>269</sup> The second phase, “Exploring the self and others,” requires students to take course work in theology, philosophy, and ethics.<sup>270</sup> The third phase is, “Engaging the World.” Students take course work in theology, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences from a global focus and prospective. The fifth and final phase of the core curriculum is “Reflection.”<sup>271</sup> This course consists of a senior synthesis or departmental capstone project that the student completes during their final year of studies.<sup>272</sup> All students of Seattle University must take these types of courses in order to graduate.

The dramatic patterning of experience integrates the previous patternings of experience through the artistry with which one lives one’s life. It is our authoring the story of our lives and is written by the lives we choose to lead. As an institution ran under the auspices of the Society of Jesus, the Seattle University community has an incredibly nuanced understanding of the

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<sup>266</sup> Ronald Modras, *Ignatian Humanism*,” 80.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid. 80.

<sup>268</sup> Seattle University, “Core Curriculum,” Seattle University, <http://www.seattleu.edu/core/curriculum/>, (accessed March 12, 2014).

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

dramatic pattern. Thomas M. Lucas, S.J., in his book *Landmarking, City, Church & Jesuit Urban Strategy* gives insight into the Society of Jesus's views concerning this endeavor:

Ignatius' Society of Jesus cannot be understood as an abstraction. Rather, to appreciate its inspiration and to comprehend its historical novelty, it must be considered as an element in a continuum: the Church-as-Urban-Phenomenon that began with the first apostolic preaching in the ancient holy city of Jerusalem. That continuum is a complicated dialectic between flight from and embrace of the world, between love of the City of God and rootedness in the City of Man. From its beginnings, the Society of Jesus has willingly participated in the Church's ongoing dialogue with urban culture.<sup>273</sup>

The dramatic pattering of experience truly gets to the crux of the dialogue surrounding Seattle University's perimeter. The dramatic patterning grapples with the question of, "Who do we say we are?", "How do we as a community live out the mission and values of Seattle University?" "In what ways must we be...", as Pedro Arrupe, former Superior General of the Society of Jesus put it, "...women and men for others."?<sup>274</sup> As Lucas describes it, those questions are asked and answered within the context of being in dialogue with the city, with urban culture. It is for this reason that most Jesuit universities are found well within the confines of the city. Invitation toward fuller being is at the crux of the artistry with which Seattle University operates. As ran by the Society of Jesus, the love of Christ motivates and expresses this invitation, and it is importantly extended to all to be responded in their own unique way. The invitation's breadth and depth invites people with religious commitments, or none at all, to work together toward creating a world that promotes the fullness of human being. The examples of this dramatic

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<sup>273</sup> Thomas M. Lucas, *Landmarking : City, Church & Jesuit Urban Strategy* (Chicago, Ill.: Loyola Press, 1997). 3.

<sup>274</sup> Pedro Arrupe, S.J., "Men and Women for Others," address given in Valencia, Spain, 1973. [http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/Collaborative Ministry/men-for-others.html](http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/Collaborative%20Ministry/men-for-others.html), Made available through the Jesuit Secondary Education Association, Washington D.C., 1974, (accessed March, 8, 2014).

artistry are vast within Seattle University, from the vast student associations on campus, to campus recreation, working with each other, as diverse peoples to together determine the artistry of our lives is the dramatic patterning of experience for Seattle University.

The dramatic patterning of experience is also witnessed in the neighborhoods that surround Seattle University. Examples of the dramatic patterning include the vibrant gay culture on Capitol Hill. The hipster culture on First Hill and Capitol Hill is also a prevalent example. Toward the south of campus, in the Central District, many expressions of Asian cultures are present ranging from food and market places, to traditional medicines and art galleries. These are all examples of community's of people artistically expressing the living out of their lives.

Ultimately, the dramatic patterning of experience asks the question of how does one tell their story? It is a question that forms an ongoing discussion that as this chapter has shown, is conducted among the client, users, landscape architect, and CUE. How these conversations are experientially patterned provide soundings of inspiration of the common field of experience shared by the communities that form client and user. Having identified and interpreted these soundings as they apply to the perimeter of Seattle University, next an explanation as to how the hermeneutic phenomenon can bring the experiential soundings into conversation through collage as a platform for conceptual design inspiration is explained.

In this section I hope to show the relationship of collage and the hermeneutic circle as it has been discussed in previous chapters.<sup>275</sup> The pieces of the collage can be seen as anticipations

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<sup>275</sup> Gadamer's notion of the hermeneutic circle, which originates in his philosophical hermeneutics, has interesting overlap, but also important differences with the tradition of semiotics. For sources that outline the important differences see: Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Text and Interpretation," in *The Gadamer Reader: A Bouquet of Later Writings*, ed. Hans-Georg Gadamer and Richard E. Palmer (Evanston, ILL.: Northwestern University Press, 2007). See also James Risser, "The Two Faces of Socrates: Gadamer/Derrida," in *Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter*, ed. Dian P. Michelfelder & Richard E. Palmer (Albany, NY.: State University of New York Press, 1989).

of understanding and meaning of a given whole. There is a certain playfulness in the to-and-fro of bringing the parts into dialogue with one another. If the site is to be seen as a text, as I have suggested, taking pieces of the text, introducing new ones based upon traditions encounter with the present horizon, a rich dialogue ensues where unseen relationships may emerge. In Jennifer A.E. Shields recently published book, *Collage and Architecture*, she asserts the creative ambiguity in the relationship of figure and field that collage possesses, “The shifting impression of foreground, middleground, and background demonstrates the capacity for collage, as initiated by the Cubists, to reveal multiple spatial and material conditions concurrently and offers the potential to understand dynamic temporal and spatial conditions.”<sup>276</sup> In addition to understanding temporal and spatial dynamisms, collage allows for multiple viewpoints to be expressed, which allows for multiple readings, which carry with it the potential to facilitate dialogue.<sup>277</sup> Shields draws on the thinking of architect Steven Holl in showing collage’s capacity to deal with experience explicitly. She quotes a passage from Holl in *Questions of Preception*:

A city is never seen as a totality, but as an aggregate of experiences, animated by use, by overlapping perspectives, changing light, sounds, and smells. Similarly, a single work of architecture is rarely experienced in its totality (except in graphic or model form) but as a series of partial views and synthesized experiences. Questions of meaning and understanding lie between the generating ideas, forms, and the nature and quality of perception.<sup>278</sup>

In this passage Holl describes one’s imaging of a city as taking the form of the collage.

Experience patterned by use, perspective, light, sound, and smell are juxtaposed with one another

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<sup>276</sup> Jennifer A. E. Shields, *Collage and Architecture* (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2014). 23.

<sup>277</sup> Jennifer A.E. Shields, *Collage and Architecture*, 26.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid, 2. See also: Steven Holl, Juhani Pallasmaa, and Alverto Perez-Gomez. *Questions of Perception: Phenomenology of Architecture* (San Francisco: William Stout Publishers, 2006), 130.

to inform ideas, forms, and perception. In attempting to interpret soundings of the biological, aesthetic, intellectual, and dramatic patternings of experience from the ongoing conversation between client, user, landscape architect, and CUE, collage provides a platform upon which the hermeneutic circle can aid in articulating formal relationships that respond to the site-as-situation. Experience as biologically, aesthetically, intellectually, and dramatically patterned, and visually represented through photography, is brought into conversation with the questions evoked by site's encounter with tradition. These dynamics are represented in the process of collage. It is hoped that the resulting artifact may provide inspiration for a design that embodies the mutual understanding of the hermeneutic situation of site and its transmission of tradition.

#### The Hermeneutic Circle Through Collage

As was mentioned above, the photographs were sourced from three major sources: pictures taken by myself during the two site visits, Facebook, and Instagram. The intention with using Facebook and Instagram was to dialogue with the users perspective and experience of the objects encountered within Seattle University and the adjoining neighborhoods distilled in their photographs. In engaging in this exercise, the insight that the dramatic patterning of experience is the overarching patterning of which the intellectual, aesthetic, and biological are a part of, became readily apparent. Due to the extremely elemental nature of the biological patterning of experience, it was challenging to find compelling pictorial examples present along the border. These patternings can be adequately accounted for in the text. A brief description of all of the pieces that went into the constitution of the diagram and their relevance to the site-as-situation will now be offered



*Figure 4.6.* Chapel Window, Chapel of St. Ignatius, Seattle, WA.  
*Source:* Russell G. Oliver, *Chapel Window*. 2014, Seattle, WA.



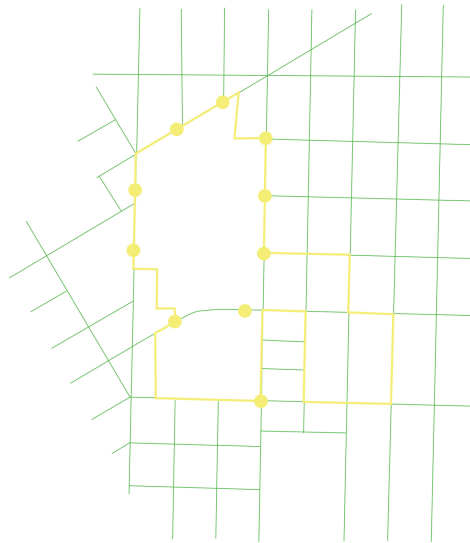
*Figure 4.7.* Seal of the Society of Jesus  
*Source:* Wikicommons Public Domain, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ihs-logo.svg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ihs-logo.svg). (accessed March 18, 2014).

The Chapel Window is inside of the Chapel of St. Ignatius on the campus of Seattle University. It is a depiction of the Seal of the Society of Jesus, of which St. Ignatius of Loyola is the religious order's founder. The cross is referencing the sacrificial love of Christ, below it are the letters IHS, which are the first three letters in Greek of the name of Jesus. Below the letters are three nails, which are representative of the three nails used to crucify Christ. The circular shape is representative of sun and the light of Christ. The circle surrounding the lettering is also a strong allusion to the consecrated host used in Holy Eucharist. The fragmented shards depicted in the window represent the brokenness present in the world and the Society's mission to bring the light of Christ to those areas. These are the dramatic and intellectual patterns of experience of these objects within the community. The aesthetic patterning is found in the richly textured and diffuse glass. Its bends and bubbles manipulate the light passing through in evocative ways. The windows biological patterning is really not prominent, aside from the fact that the window is a

conduit of light enabling one to see. This image was selected because it spoke to the Catholic Jesuit identity of Seattle University. This was a frequent topic of conversation during the interviews with client and user.



*Figure 4.8.* Mural of Madonna and Child, Mesob Ethiopian Restaurant, Seattle, WA. Photographed by Byron B. George

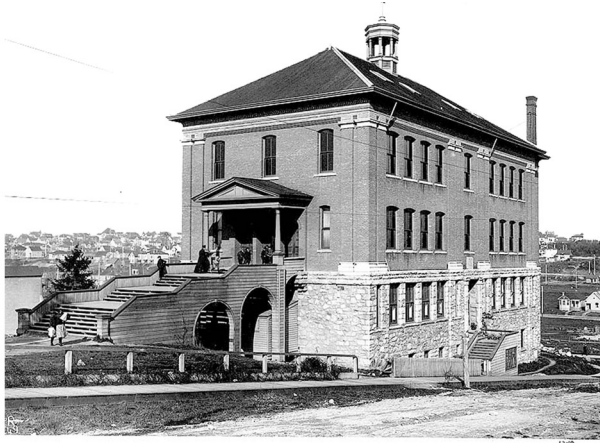


*Figure 4.9.* Street Grid and Perimeter of S.U.'s Campus, Seattle, WA.

Mesob Ethiopian Restaurant is located next to the Southeast corner of Seattle University's campus. It reflects the rich ethnic diversity of the Central district and the vibrant Ethiopian community in particular. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church is a major influence within this area, as is depicted in the mural facing campus. Here the dramatic patterning of experience is represented by the intercessory role of Mary, mother of God, and the infant Christ child. The aesthetic pattern is in the rich colors used to complete the mural. The image was selected as being representative of a major ethnic community neighboring Seattle University.

The street grid map depicts on an intellectual pattern the densification of the area, the formal borders of Seattle University's campus, and the circles represent portal and entryways

into campus. This image was selected in order to focus ones attention on the topic of the border. Having the border literally defined in the collage is an attempt to contextualize the rest of the images shown.



*Figure 4.10.* Garrand Hall, Seattle University, Seattle, WA.  
*Source:* Curtis Asahel, “The Church of the Immaculate Conception at Seattle College, corner of Broadway and Madison St., Seattle.” ca. 1906. University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.



*Figure 4.11.* Seattle University Student  
*Source:* Seattle University, “Seattle University Student,” Seattle University, [www.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/rocktheredsu), #rocktheredsu. (accessed March 18, 2014).

Garrand Hall is the oldest building on the campus of Seattle University. It was the original location of the Church of the Immaculate Conception built in 1891 by the Jesuit fathers who founded Seattle College. In 1904 the parish was moved several blocks away and it became the main building of the college. In 1994 it was renovated for the School of Nursing, and still serves in this capacity today. The building is dramatically patterned by its symbolic embodiment of the entire lifespan of Seattle University. It anchors the living tradition of the campus and testifies to the original inspiration of the college. It is intellectually patterned in its housing of the school of nursing. Aesthetically, the original stone and brick work give the building a rich tactility. It was for these reasons that the Garrand building was selected.



The image of the Seattle University student depicts him doing the redhawk” this is dramatically patterned as representing the Seattle University Redhawk, the school’s mascot. As the University continues to transition into a NCAA division I school a real effort has been placed around building school spirit and identity around the athletics programs it has. This hand sign is one of many symbols of this.



*Figure 4.12. Dick's Drive-In Restaurant*  
Photograph by Byron B. George, 2014.



*Figure 4.13. Gay Pride Flag*  
Source: Conlibe: Political Blog for TRUTH in Politics, <http://conlibe.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/rainbow-flag.jpg> (accessed March, 14, 2014).

Dick's Drive-In is an iconic fast food restaurant on Capitol Hill. It was recently made famous by the artists Macklemore and Ryan Lewis, area hip-hop artists, filming a music video for their single, "White Walls" on the roof of Dick's. The aesthetic patterning is one of a vintage retro vibe, keeping its original 1955 architecture. There is often a large contingent of homeless around this particular location. It has a well known reputation for serving quality food at low prices. The smells of cooked foods are easily emitted from the restaurant which gives Dick's a biological patterning as a place to procure sustenance as well.



*Figure 4.14. Graffiti*  
Photograph by Byron B. George 2014.



*Figure 4.15. Man Sleeping on the Street*  
Photograph by Byron B. George 2014.

Graffiti is a major presence all three of the neighborhoods surrounding Seattle University. Through site observation, major concentrations seem to be found on public utilities such as parking meters or street signs. Clearly there is a dramatic patterning of experience, however most of the meanings held in the written graffiti are exclusive to a community that I was unable to get in contact with. There is a growing movement, however whose graffiti is known as stencil art. Examples of this are also quite common in the surrounding areas of the Campus. Being more image based, the meanings reach a larger audience. The aesthetic patterning of experience features strongly in this sense, but also in the former example due to the vibrant swirling colors found throughout First and Capitol Hills.

The man sleeping on the street is a very common occurrence throughout the area surrounding Seattle University. Particularly high rates of teen homeless concentrate within the Capitol Hill Area. Alcoves of area businesses are regularly used as shelter. Seattle University engages with this community through a variety of service outreaches. Perhaps most notably was

in 2005 Seattle University hosted Tent City, a community of self-governing homeless men and women, on the university's Tennis Courts for a month. During that time students, faculty, staff, and administrators cooked meals with the Tent City community members, social events were held, and vocational training was also provided during that time. As mentioned earlier in the paper, a conversation was had with a former homeless person and it was their feeling that the homeless population has generally moved south of the immediate area surrounding the campus. The fact that the homeless persons sleep outside is a dramatically patterned experience because it is an outward expression of how one lives one's life. It is also an intellectually patterned experience because often times, those who have or have not experienced homelessness, are given pause to wonder how that might happen to a person and/or what their story is. The aesthetic pattern also features prominently due to the fact that many chronic street homeless have a particularly weary and disheveled appearance from surviving out in the street. The biological patterning of experience is also featured due to the fact that homeless have to carry their own materials for survival with them. Thus you will often find chronic homeless with shopping carts, sleeping bags, furniture blankets, and cardboard boxes to satisfy their survival needs for a life spent out on the street.



*Figure 4.16. Zambian Student at Desk*  
*Source:* Sy Bean, *Zambia Study 4*, Seattle University Facebook Page, [www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10151707524858263&set=pb.61006888262.-2207520000.1395265575.&type=3&theater](https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10151707524858263&set=pb.61006888262.-2207520000.1395265575.&type=3&theater). (accessed March 14, 2014).



*Figure 4.17. Lights of the Chapel of St. Ignatius*  
*Source:* Russell G. Oliver. *Chapel Lights*, 2014, Seattle, WA.

*Zambia Study 4* is representative of the Seattle University's values of service. Both internationally and domestically, Seattle University has been devoted toward empowering young people through education. The Seattle University Youth Initiative, launched in February 2011, is the largest community outreach initiative in the history of Seattle University.<sup>279</sup> The initiative is aimed at providing 1,000 neighborhood youth and their families providing direct engagement through service, community based research, social entrepreneurship, and advocacy.<sup>280</sup> It is an example of the intellectual experience due to the fact that the photograph gives way to wonder at ways in which Seattle University is reaching out to the world.

The hand blown lights of Seattle University's Chapel of St. Ignatius speak to the aesthetic patterning of experience. The organic shape and translucency resemble teardrops caught in midair. It also is an example of the biological patterning of experience as the light they provides makes it possible to see and avoid threats and obstacles.

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<sup>279</sup> Seattle University Youth Initiative, "Main Page," Seattle University, <http://www.seattleu.edu/suyi/>, (accessed March 8, 2014).

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.



*Figure 4.18. Rudy the Redhawk*  
*Source: Seattle University Facebook Page*  
 “Rudy the Redhawk,” [www.facebook.com/seattleu/photos\\_stream](https://www.facebook.com/seattleu/photos_stream), Seattle University, (accessed March 18, 2014).



*Figure 4.19. Seattle University Actor 1976*  
*Source: Don Wallen, Actor posing in an elaborate costume on the set of a Teatro Inigo production of “Atlante” at Seattle University, Seattle, Washington, August 10, 1976. 1976, University of Washington.*

Rudy the Redhawk, the mascot of Seattle University, is a dramatic expression of the increased importance surrounding sports programs at the university. Rudy the Redhawk is in a sense emblematic of the shift in student demographics from commuter to tradition. The intellectual patterning of experience is at play insofar as the red and black color scheme gives witness to Seattle University’s school colors.

The strange bird costume is from a 1976 production of “Atlante” as Seattle University is dramatically expressive of the tension of the encounter between the stranger and the host that occurs on the border. That tension is found in how to remain an open and hospitable campus emblematic of the mission and values of the university, and also how to not make the students, faculty, and staff unnecessarily vulnerable to the potential for violence and crime. It is also an expression of the intellectual patterning of experience as it holds symbolic meaning

as to the real or perceived sense of the other lurking on the border of Seattle University.



*Figure 4.20.* Students Walking on the Upper Mall  
*Source:* Henry Sukezo Takayoshi, *Aerial View of Many Students, Seattle University, ca. 1947-1982*, ca. 1947-1982. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division.



*Figure 4.21.* Seattle University Nursing Students  
*Source:* Patricksmarcy, *Seattle University Nursing Students 1966 Rotation at Providence Hospital, ca. 1966*. [Farm9static.flickr.com/8359/8322591531\\_96ee671ef8.jpg](https://farm9static.flickr.com/8359/8322591531_96ee671ef8.jpg).

The photograph of the students walking along the Upper Mall of the campus of Seattle University dramatically patterns the history of students attending Seattle University.

The photograph of Seattle University nursing students is a dramatic expression of the rich heritage of service and academic higher learning propagated by the university.





*Figure 4.22.* Fr. Stephen V. Sundborg, S.J. Chatting with Colleague  
*Source:* Seattle University Facebook Page, [www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10151106195363263&awr=ov,61006888262,-2207520000,1395280493.&type=3&theater](http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10151106195363263&awr=ov,61006888262,-2207520000,1395280493.&type=3&theater). Seattle University, (accessed March 18, 2014).



*Figure 4.23.* Spring Blossoms on Campus  
*Source:* Seattle University Facebook Page, [www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10152236436326355&set=a.20761665171614.171614.73050591354&type=1&theater](http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10152236436326355&set=a.20761665171614.171614.73050591354&type=1&theater), Seattle University, (accessed March 14, 2014).

The photograph of Fr. Sundborg, S.J., president of Seattle University, chatting with his colleague is an interpretation of the dramatic patterning of experience for several reasons. First the fact that Fr. Sundborg is wearing a Roman collar gives witness to the fact that Seattle University is a Catholic university ran by the Society of Jesus. Second, it symbolizes Seattle University's willingness to *be* and ongoing conversation. By that I mean the university is constantly questioning itself regarding how to best live out its mission and values in a vastly changing world.

Seattle Washington is infamous for its rainy weather; it is for this reason that spring is such a celebration. Seattle University's famous for its beautiful gardens on the interior of

campus. Tours of the grounds are a regular occurrence, especially during the spectacle of spring. For this reason, there is a aesthetic patterning of experience due to the diffuse colors of the blossoms. There is also an intellectual patterning found in the symbolism of the blooming flowers in Spring as a sign of new life.

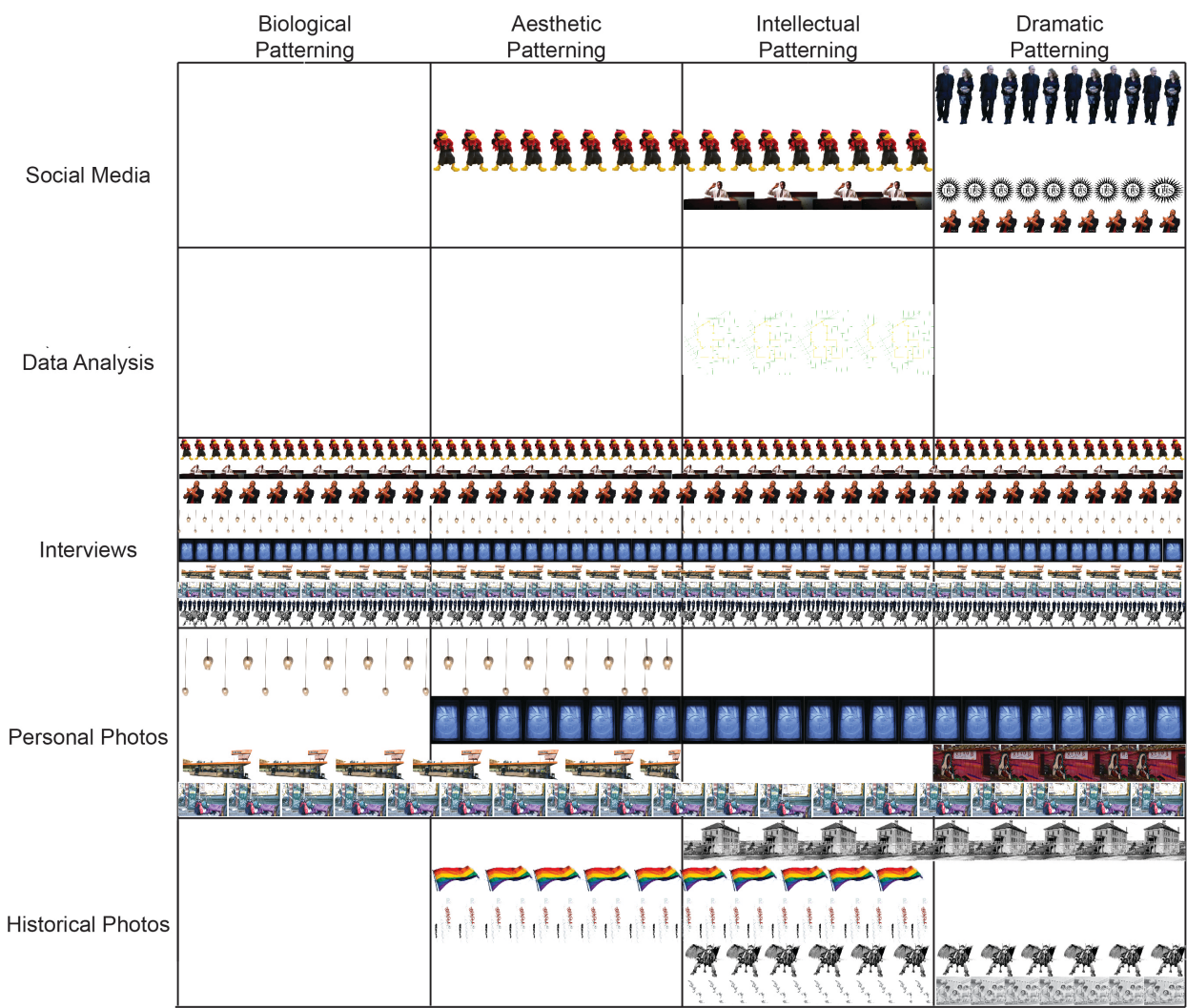


Figure 4.24. Source and Patterning of Collage Pieces



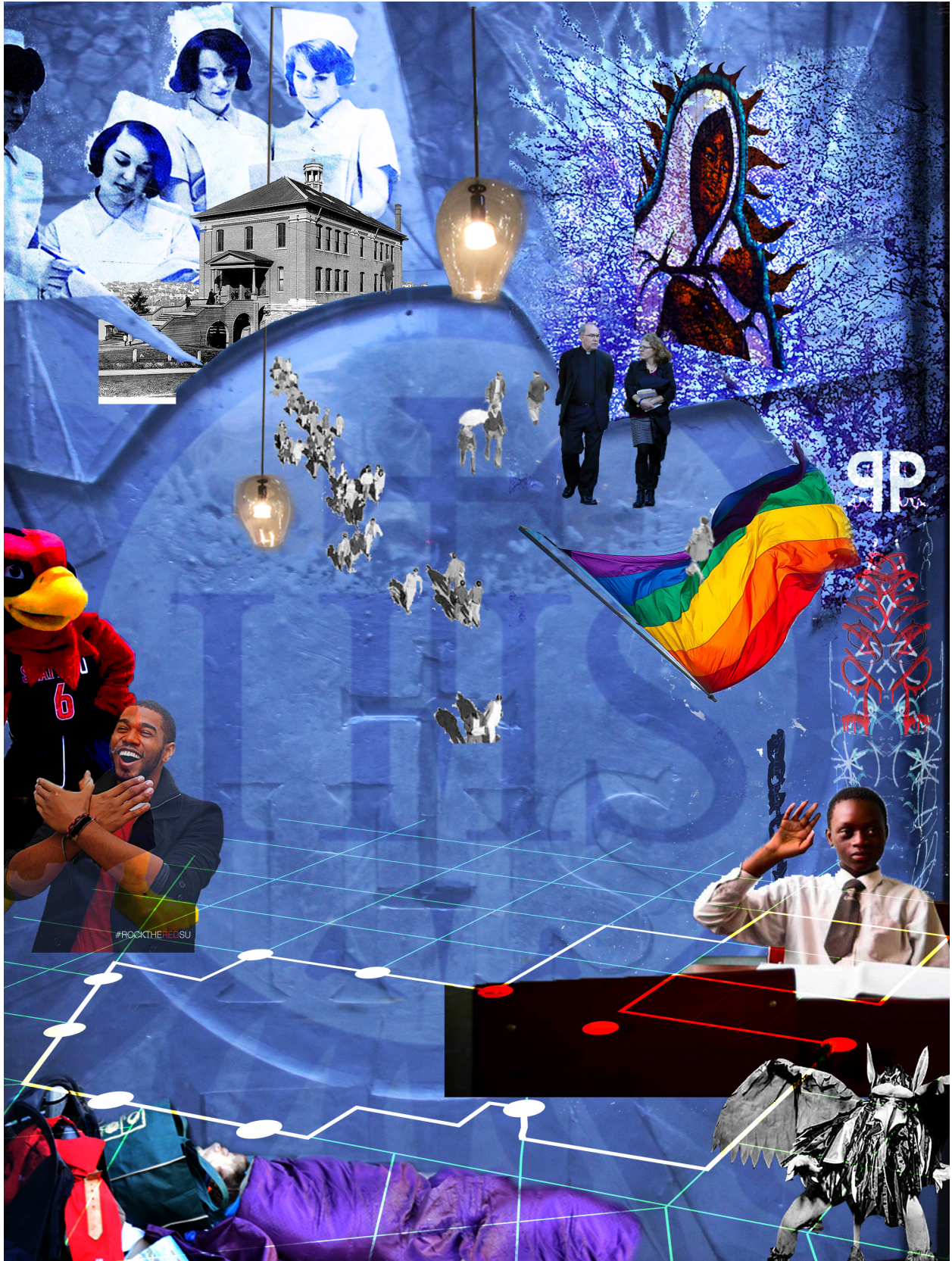


Figure 4.25. Seattle University Perimeter Collage

The resulting collage was created by interplaying the pieces, emblematic of the patternings of experience, with one another. The border and surrounding street grid was skewed and given perspective to give the piece depth while also placing parts of it in the foreground to call to mind that the perimeter is the site under consideration. The homeless person was placed below the border to both suggest the homeless' use of it as a shelter, and close relationship to the border as opposed to the interior of campus. The same rationale was used to place the strange bird costume on the opposite corner. It is representative of the real and perceived threat of danger people have of many areas surrounding the border of the university. The student raising his hand at the desk is intersected by the street grid suggesting Seattle University's commitment to reaching out in a local, regional, national, and global sense. Rudy the Redhawk and the student doing "the Redhawk" were put together to indicate the student body's new found enthusiasm for school sports—which can be interpreted as a reaction to the transition from a non-traditional student body base to a more traditional student body. The students walking were placed in the center and directed as walking toward the Garand building to indicate the history of the site itself and students continued use of it. They are shown in perspective which gives depth and another sense of temporality to the piece. The mirrored graffiti was placed along the edge to indicate the graffiti found along the edges of campus. It was mirrored to attract attention to its aesthetic value. Fr. Sundborg walking and chatting with his colleague is placed behind the lower corner of the flowering shrub to make him stand out more in the piece. The flowering shrub is juxtaposed with the mural of the Madonna and Child to indicate the multiple expressions of new life that are constantly emerging from the border. It also gives witness to the shared religious convictions of Seattle University and a segment of this neighbors. The lights are hung in order to give further depth to the piece and to draw the eye to the upper left hand corner feature Garand Hall. Garand Hall is partially cut off by the stained glass window below it to suggest its placement on the

perimeter of campus. The nurses in the upper left hand corner are made transparent and blended to indicate the heritage of service to humanity that the school cultivates. Their gaze down on several features of campus also suggests a reflective posture to the observer of the collage. The Gay Pride flag placed at an angle and having a person walking on it is not meant as a disrespect to the flag, but that the Gay community surrounding Seattle University has really been a bridge in the incorporation of GLBTQ rights in not only the Seattle area, but the entire nation. Finally, below all of the images is the stained glass window of the seal of the Society of Jesus. It's circular shape in reference to the rest of the object suggests the perimeter. It also a reference to the host used in holy Eucharist. This is juxtaposed with a more graphic image of the seal whose radiating lines represent the light of Christ reaching out into the world. The size of the piece was meant to suggest that this undergirds all of what Seattle University is trying to do a Catholic university.

These photographs represent the process of finding visual embodiments of the questions and dialogue that were surrounding the perimeter, and interpreting the conversations in terms of its experiential patterning. Here it must be stressed that this is only the interpretation of the landscape architect. Given the time constraints of this project, the pictures and collage would next be presented to client and user. The landscape architect would ask the fundamental hermeneutic questions of, "Can you see parts of yourselves in this collage? Do any elements within the collage resonate with your experience of the site? What is missing?" The designer would facilitate this conversation with client and users of the site. This step is valuable because it ensures that the collage, a further conceptual refinement of the design process, stays within and embodies the larger ongoing dialogue being had between client, users, designer, and CUE.



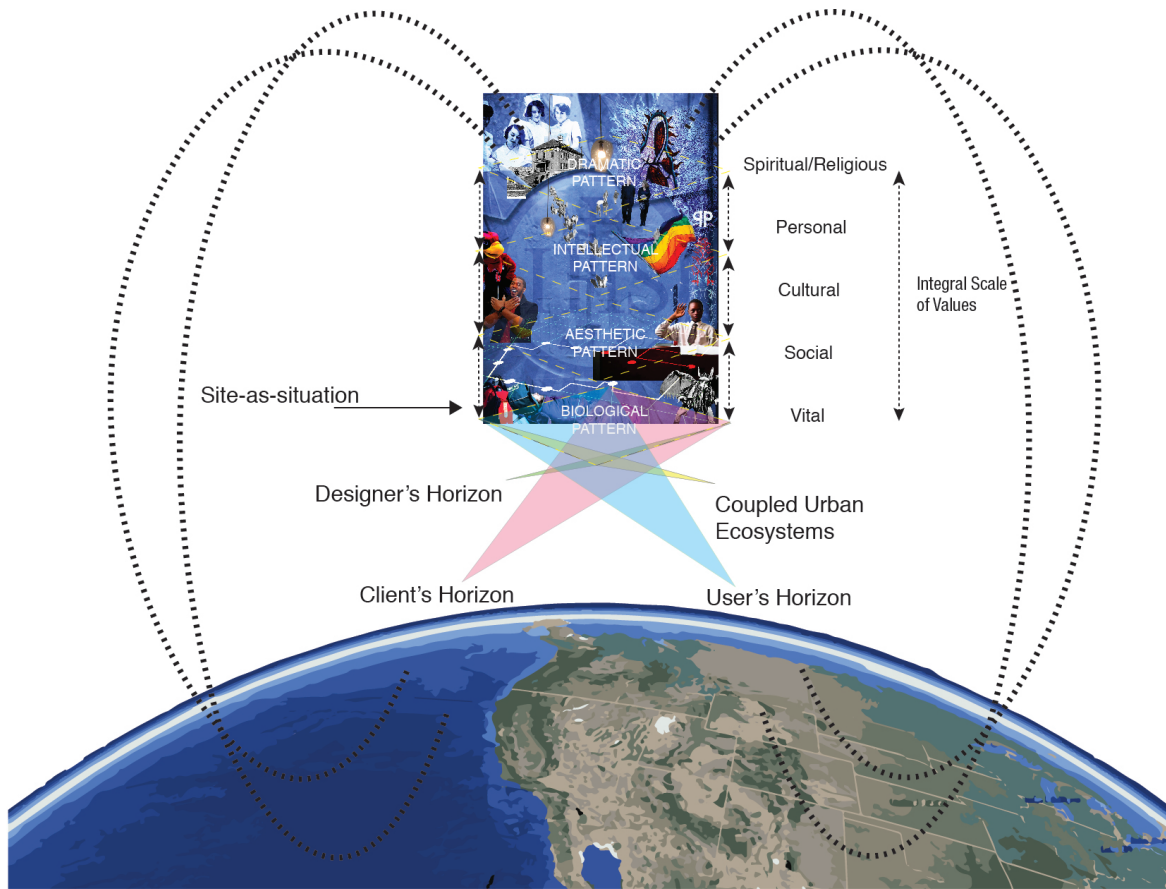


Figure 4.26. Application of Dialogic Space as a Creative Framework

Let us expound a bit further on the relevance of this question for the hermeneutical process of design. As we have stated earlier, in asking the question a fundamental space for dialogue is created. It is a carefully crafted question based upon the site-as-situation, in this sense it has sense, or direction.<sup>281</sup> Gadamer reminds us, “When a question arises, it breaks open the being of the object, as it were. Hence the logos that explicates this opened-up being is an answer. Its sense lies in the sense of the question.”<sup>282</sup> In asking the question, “Can you see yourself in this?” an effort is being made to break open the being of site-as-situation.

The dialogue that results from the question evoked from the presentation of the collage to

<sup>281</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 356.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid. 356.

the client and users, a collage of the landscape architect's interpretation of site-as-situation experientially patterned, is important in two ways. First, as was mentioned before, it creates a deepening of the dialogue that is ongoing with site-as-situation insofar as the collage gives further sense and direction toward its being formally articulated in design. Secondly, the collage gives the landscape architect an opportunity to foreground his or her own prejudices of understanding the situation, submitting them to the scrutiny of client, users, and CUE.

With the new understanding gained from the dialogue surrounding the collage of the experiential patterning of site-as-situation, the landscape architect can then further carry out the process of formally articulating these understandings in the design. The furthering comes from using the collage as an inspirational springboard into articulating the conceptual underpinnings, and associated forms, for the space in question..

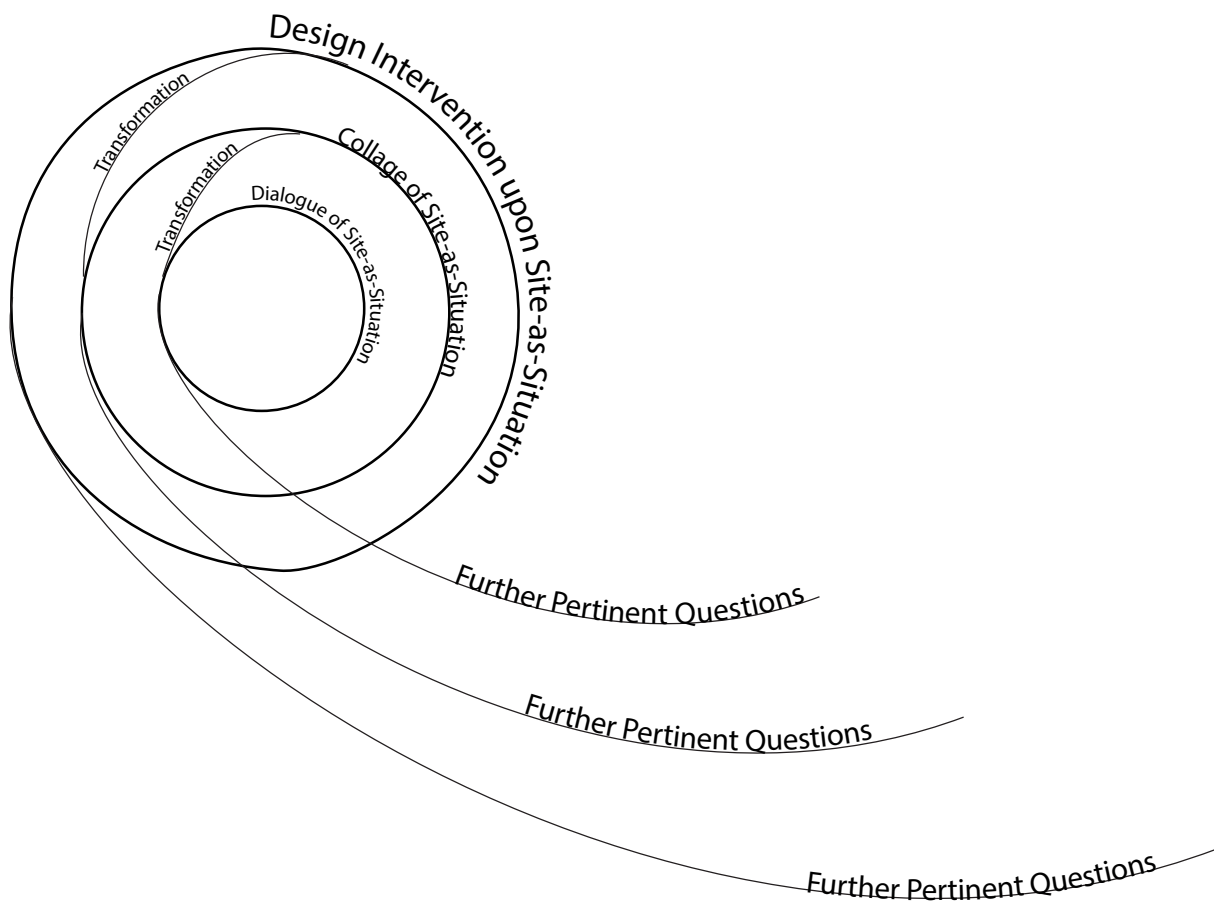


Figure 4.27. Dialogic Space's Transformation into Structure

What I call dialogic space, is what results from implementing the process described above. It is space that is intentionally designed to create conditions for the possibility of calling oneself, other, and world into question. It is to create an intervention in the built environment that is a work of art. What does this mean? As Gadamer notes, "...what we experience in a work of art and what invites our attention is how true it is—i.e., to what extent one knows and recognizes something of oneself."<sup>283</sup> Like the *tesserae hospitals*, dialogic space is a transmission of lived memory addressing users of site and calling them into question. In the play of question

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<sup>283</sup> Ibid. 113.

and answer facilitated by the questions evoked in the encounter of site, user, landscape architect, and CUE's horizons coming into contact with each other, what Gadamer calls, transformation into structure occurs.<sup>284</sup> Gadamer describes this process as:

Only now does it emerge as detached from the representing activity of the players and consist in the pure appearance (*Erscheinung*) of what they are playing. As such, the play—even the unforeseen elements of improvisation—is in principle repeatable and hence permanent. It has the character of a work, of an *ergon* and not only of *energeia*. In this sense I call it a structure (*Gebilde*).<sup>285</sup>

This transformation occurs in the process of dialogic space. In the initial dialogue of the site-as-situation transformation occurs into dialogue of collaging the experiential patterning of site as situation. The dialogue of collage as experiential patterning of the site is then transformed into the design intervention made upon site-as-situation. It is a transformation due to the fact that the meaning conveyed literally changes *form*--conversation, to collage, to conceptual design.

Driving each transformation is the momentum of the play of question and answer. In this act the coming into being (*energeia*) of an understanding of how the site is to transmit its heritage in response to the present horizon begins to literally take shape (*ergon*). The work that emerges is a work that the constituent pillars of site can see themselves in, but in a newly transformed way, a way that speaks to the exigency of the client, user, and CUE's collective horizon. Gadamer explains, "The joy of recognition is rather the joy of knowing *more* than is already familiar. In recognition what we know emerges, as if illuminated, from all the contingent and variable circumstances that condition it; it is grasped in its essence. It is known as something."<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid. 110.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid. 110.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid. 113.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The previous chapter made the claim that the site can be considered as a text. It is a traditional text insofar as it possesses a history that is successively transmitted throughout the many chapters it takes through history. The authors of this traditional text are the client, the users, and the CUE of the surrounding area. New chapters are continually written to answer the questions posed to it by the issues the present horizon contains.

In the case of Seattle University, the perimeter is the text, authored by the students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, neighbors, visitors, and guests, as well as the complex urban ecosystem that are present in the area. The present horizon has confronted this traditional text with the issues of how to incorporate its mission of, "...educating the whole person to professional formation, and to empowering leaders for a just and humane world,"<sup>287</sup> into the very fabric of their building and dwelling. The landscape as text is confronted by the changing landscape of the student body—shifting from being largely comprised of non-traditional and commuter students to a student body comprised of traditional four-year undergraduates. The perimeter of Seattle University is confronted with the shifting demographics and evolving cultural traditions of the neighborhoods that surround it which nuance the university's relationship with the larger community it comprises. Finally, as the university expands within the rich urban context that surrounds it, issues of wayfinding along the border of campus, where host first encounters the guest, becomes an open question. Wayfinding, seen within the context of the issues mentioned has both practical and existential dimensions to it.

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<sup>287</sup> Seattle University, [www.seattleu.edu/about/mision](http://www.seattleu.edu/about/mision), (accessed April 28, 2014).



As was shown in the third chapter, the foregrounding of these issues through the horizons of client, user, landscape architect, and ecosystem comprised site-as-situation. This was seen as the constituent pillars present horizons engaging one another and their respective heritages, collectively working toward transmitting an intelligibility that addresses the questions of today embodied in a design. The collective work is carried forward in the landscape architect facilitating a dialogue between the constituent pillars of site and interpreting the experiential patterning of the emergent experiential patternings on the levels of biological, aesthetic, intellectual, and dramatic. Visual representations of the patternings of experience that emerged from the dialogue were collected in photographs from various sources including the landscape architect's own site observations, but also from social media sources like Facebook and Instagram as well as digitized collections of historic photos. The photographs were further distilled into the essential aspects that represented the patternings of experience emerging from the site-as-situation. The hermeneutic circle was then employed, placing the various parts entering into dialogue with one another to see if a whole was formed. This process was technically executed through collage, which allows for a creative ambiguity between figure and field mirroring the interplay of part and whole.

It is possible that there are other techniques that could be used to represent the intermediary process that collage served in. Participatory art in the form of mural or mosaic could possibly be a fruitful endeavor. However, collage so powerfully represents the Gadamerian interpretation of the hermeneutic circle as the interplay of whole and parts comprising the site-as-situation.

In the case of Seattle University, the collage provided a powerful embodiment of the history of site. Pictures from the 1920's, 50's, and 2000's juxtaposed with one another testified to the rich legacy of the university—a legacy with powerfully informs a sense of place. Formal

precedents also emerged from the shapes of the glass window interacting with the other pieces of the collage. The open and outstretched hands of the student also provided formal inspiration to the designer.

Next, steps in furthering the design process along the perimeter of Seattle University would include presenting the collage to the client, users, and CUE. In its presentation the following questions would be asked: “Can you see yourself in this? Can you see examples of the perimeter that resonate with your experience in this? What’s missing?” There are a myriad of ways that this could be accomplished. Approaching the collage as a piece of art, it could be installed in large-scale formats within the neighborhood and along the perimeter. For example the collage could be spray-painted as a mural along a building. The three questions would be placed somewhere in the vicinity of the piece and a recording device would be used to take in peoples responses. The recording device could be a re-purposed payphone for example. When not taking responses it could be programed to ring on the hour inviting people to pick up the phone and give a response regarding the collage or the perimeter in general. The collage could be exploded in a three-dimensional fashion and have a similar response device employed. Both of these approaches draw from the creative framework’s emphasis on play as an invitation to dialogue, to be called into question.

Traditional focus groups with the constituent pillars of site would also be legitimate and useful venues to solicit feedback on the designer’s interpretation of the site-as-situation. Setting the each individual piece of the collage up as an individual piece of artwork in a gallery space and having them sequentially build upon themselves until the final collage is shown followed by the three questions would also be a way in which feedback could be gathered from the constituent pillars.

From the information gathered from these exercises the designer would next refine the

collage if the dialogue with the constituent pillars warranted it, or move forward toward developing a parti and executing schematic drawings based on the entire process. As the process continued, more traditional forms of client/user interactions soliciting feedback on the emerging design, would take place. In doing so dialogue is focused in parallel fashion to the design. In the case of Seattle University, the process began broadly, first by the designer joining the conversation occurring on the perimeter through interviews, site observation, and research. Next the process focused by the designer collecting visual pieces emblematic of the patternings of experience that emerged in the dialogue with the constituent pillars of site and placing those into dialogue through the technique of collage. The next level of distillation would occur by presenting the collage to the constituent pillars in the ways described above. The final level of schematics and construction documentation would be a further, more intimate, focus group of stakeholders.

Reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of using this approach, the creative framework of dialogic space requires an active and ongoing choice to in fact respond by entering into the dialogue, facilitated by the designer, with the history of the site's encounter with the present horizons of the client, users, designer, and CUE. On the perimeter of Seattle University, the conversational process helped to open up the creative possibilities of discussing what a response to the site-as-situation could be. Framing the problem in terms of a situation was also a helpful way to deeply engage in the nuances surrounding a design solution, insofar as it fostered a strong association with the dynamics occurring on a site with the site itself. Another strength of the framework is its ability to aid organizations in reaching out to their surrounding community. In doing so, Seattle University could use the hermeneutic framework suggested in this thesis as a platform to discuss a broader set of needs and issues with the constituent pillars of the site. The processes weaknesses would be the time and uncertainty involved in carrying out the design.

From initially entering into the conversation occurring on the site in question, to interpreting the patternings of experience via collage, to furthering the conversation by posing the collage as a question in and of itself, to moving into the more typical processes of design such as concept, schematic, and construction drawings, a great deal of time and energy is required to successfully execute the process.

### The Work of Art and the Dynamics of Dialogic Space

The goal of this approach of applying hermeneutics to the process of design proper to landscape architecture is to create a design that contains within it conditions for the possibility of calling those who engage it into question, with themselves, the other, and world. In doing so the essentially dialogic process of design and the meanings and values that emerge are transformed into the very space itself. It is a common saying in the field of landscape architecture to refer to the work that it carries out as being both an art and a science. Gadamer also notes a similar duality in architecture, but applies equally as well to landscape architecture, in its purpose of both artistic expression and utilitarian function, “Of course, designers can be significant artists, but as designers they perform a service.”<sup>288</sup> Gadamer further explicates this duality:

Rather, architecture is true to what it is designed to be in a double respect. Certainly a work of civic architecture cannot ever be a product of pure art. It serves a purpose and has a place in the midst of the activities of life. At the same time, we often call such buildings as a church, a palace, a city hall, and even occasionally a department store or a railroad station, “architectural monuments.” What does this mean? It means that there is something in the building that gives one something to think about. It is certainly not merely there to be looked at but rather also serves its purposes, and yet it is a work of art.<sup>289</sup>

This thesis has taken Gadamer’s own philosophical hermeneutics, coupled with Bernard

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<sup>288</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, “The Relevance of the Beautiful,” 20.

<sup>289</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, “The Artwork in Word and Image: ‘So True, So Full of Being!’,” 21.

Lonergan's patternings of experience, to build a creative integral heuristic structure in order to create a process for creating places that, "...gives one something to think about."<sup>290</sup> In concluding I would like to further expand upon the artistic expression inherent in landscape architecture's contribution to the built environment in an effort to further define the significance of this notion I am calling dialogic space.

In Gadamer's essay, "The Relevance of the Beautiful," he looks to play, symbol, and festival as comprising three essential elements of the work of art.<sup>291</sup> In our explication of dialogic space we too have touched on all three of these elements of a work of art. These notions also enrich our understanding of the built environment as landscape—as work of art. To begin with the notion of play highlights landscape's ability to facilitate intention. Gadamer shows how play has a disciplined direction led by the intending of the players. When one is playing ping-pong focused intention is being placed on hitting the ball into the other player's side. This back and forth movement is facilitated by the engagement of the players' intention in play. Similarly in a park, or a promenade, the elements of the landscape reach out toward the users and direct their attention toward intentionally engaging the space. Through specially crafted views, or the playful sequencing of spaces, the artistry of the landscape calls out to its users in play.

Even more importantly for Gadamer is that play, "...does not really acknowledge the distance separating the one who plays and the one who watches the play. The spectator is manifestly more than just an observer who sees what is happening in front of him, but rather one who is part of it insofar as he literally "takes part."<sup>292</sup> We see this the case in the joy we get in "people watching." This is even more the case when the landscape has been artistically designed in such a way as for us to participate in the artistry with which fellow users of a site live their

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid. 21.

<sup>291</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Relevance of the Beautiful," 20.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid. 24.

lives. We see this in the joy an elderly person has in watching children play on a playground. The looks on their faces testify to the fact that they are in fact playing too. Gadamer's ultimate point here is that play breaks down the distance separating the work of art from the observers of the work of art, which is of course a major theme in modern art.<sup>293</sup> In the case of a landscape as a work of art, observers can literally enter into the canvas. The intimacy of play that results, which brings for the unity of the work, allows for its identity to emerge. Gadamer notes of this happening, "So it is the hermeneutic identity that establishes the unity of the work. To understand something, I must be able to identify it. For there was something that I passed judgment upon and understood. I identify something as it was or as it is, and this identity alone constitutes the meaning of the work."<sup>294</sup> In the play of a users engagement with a landscape its identity is communicated and its meaning is found.

We have already spoken extensively on the importance of the symbol and have identified its presence in the experiential patternings of Seattle University's perimeter. Here I would only like to underscore, Gadamer's understanding of the symbol as vehicle of self-recognition. Gadamer explains of the role of the symbol in art, "...and for our experience of the symbolic in general, the particular represents itself as a fragment of being that promises to complete and make whole whatever corresponds to it. Or, indeed, the symbol is that other fragment that has always been sought in order to complete and make whole our own fragmentary life."<sup>295</sup> This can be seen in dialogic space's attempt to create landscapes of encounter. Where the site-as-situation can speak meaningfully to the hermeneutic situation of the user who engages it. In doing so the design of the landscape hopes to embody fragments of meaning to the users who dwell therein. In the users playful engagement with these fragments the symbolic valence draws the artistry of

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<sup>293</sup> Ibid. 24-25.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid. 25.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid. 32.

the user into a symbolic unity with the landscape. In this sense the landscape of a site as a work of art is dependent upon it being actuated as such by the artistry of the user dwelling there. For as Gadamer notes, “The symbolic does not simply point toward a meaning, but rather allows that meaning to present itself.”<sup>296</sup>

Finally, Gadamer invokes the festival as indicating something essential about the work of art. Gadamer sees within the festival a catalyst for community.<sup>297</sup> Like the festival, the work of art gathers people together to experience it. Gadamer explains,

If we ask ourselves what the real nature of this art is [the art of celebrating], then obviously we must reply that it consists in an experience of community that is difficult to define in precise terms. Furthermore, it is a community in which we are gathered together for something, although no one can say exactly for what it is that we have come together. It is no accident that this experience resembles that of art, since celebration has its own specific kinds of representation.<sup>298</sup>

There is perhaps no better example of landscape being a work of art than its ability to instigate this festal dimension. This is witnessed in public parks and college campuses when the warming rays of spring cause these places to erupt in color and life—a festival ensues. The landscape in these examples is not a passive entity, but a catalyst of festal intention. This dimension of the work of art also gives major implications to the dialogic process of design and the space that emerges from it, insofar as the site, must ask of itself, “What shall we celebrate?” What then are we choosing in this particular design to celebrate? What is to be celebrated along the perimeter of Seattle University?

Gadamer also brings to the fore the temporal dimensions of the festival in his notion of fulfilled time. “Here we recognize, “according to Gadamer, “that everyone has [their] own time,

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<sup>296</sup> Ibid. 34-35.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid. 40.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid. 40.

[their] own autonomous temporality. It is of the nature of the festival that it should proffer time, arresting it and allowing it to tarry. This is what festive celebration means. The calculating way in which we normally manage and dispose of our time is, as it were, brought to a standstill.”<sup>299</sup> This is the notion of time that dialogic space hopes to invoke. The act of being called into question by an encounter with the many fragments of meaning that are brought into a symphonic unity through the design allows us to leave, even if only momentarily, our ready made world and enter into the mediated immediacy of the landscape as work of art.<sup>300</sup>

These three notions of play, symbol, and festival combine to form our experience of the work of art. “The work of art,” for Gadamer, “transforms our fleeting experience into the stable and lasting form of an independent and internally coherent creation. It does so in such a way that we go beyond ourselves by penetrating deeper into the work. That “something can be held in our hesitant stay.”—this is what art has always been and still is today.”<sup>301</sup> We can see in this remark the complementarity with that of the *telos* of the landscape architect—to facilitate authentic dwelling. We are existentially oriented by our experience of works of art. It is an experience of self-transcendent intimacy with our being-in-the-world. The profession of the landscape architect is to create conditions for the possibility of such intimacy to occur.

This thesis has been an attempt to create an integral heuristic structure, a creative framework, whereby the essentially dialogic process of design proper to landscape architecture is seen as an interpretive event. In doing so the dialogic process of design is transformed into dialogic space that possesses conditions for the possibility of calling oneself, the other, and world

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<sup>299</sup> Ibid. 42.

<sup>300</sup> For a discussion of meaning as immediate and mediated see Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 29.

<sup>301</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, “The Relevance of the Beautiful,” 53.



into question. Gadamer speaks of our engagement of that which emerges from the work of art in terms of a harvest:

This harvest is the fullness of sense that is built up in to a structure of meaning and similarity with a structure of sound. There are likewise the building blocks of meaning: motives, images, and sounds. But these elements are not letters, words, sentences, periods, or chapters. No, these belong to the mere skeleton of writtenness and not to its design [*formgestalt*]. It is the design that comes forth thanks to the means possessed by the language of art in poetry, sculpture, and picture, which in the flow of its play builds up the *gestalt*... In general, however, the design of the art image or of the text takes shape without any critical distance from the event. The event of emerging as experienced by the viewer, hearer, or reader, that is, the performance as experienced—the *vollzug*—is the interpretation.<sup>302</sup>

So we return to our example of the authors of site: client, user, designer and ecosystem. The landscape architect is to translate, synthesize, and transform the words of the authors into the language of landscape. This is a transformation of the meaning and values of the authors into the built environment, responding to the pertinent issues of the present horizon that need to be addressed. This is a response to the question posed by James Corner, “How might landscape architectural theory rebuild an existential ground, a topography of critical continuity, of memory and invention, orientation and direction?”<sup>303</sup> Hermeneutics as applied in the creative framework of dialogic space empowers the landscape of the built environment to touch in profound and compellingly new ways the landscapes of our lives.

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<sup>302</sup> Gadamer, "The Artwork in Word and Image: 'So True, So Full of Being!'" 218.

<sup>303</sup> James Corner, "A Discourse on Theory II: Three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics," 116.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

What are some of the most significant events that have taken place on the perimeter of Seattle University's campus and where were they located?

What made those events significant for you?

Where is your favorite place on campus and why?

Where is your least favorite place on campus and why?

What feelings does Seattle University's campus give you when you enter it?

What are the elements that contribute toward that particular feeling?

Why do they make you feel that way?

How would you describe the neighborhood that Seattle University is located in?

What do you like best about the neighborhood?

What are examples of what you like best about the neighborhood when you are on or around campus?

What do you like least about the neighborhood?

What are examples of what you like least about the neighborhood when you are on or around campus?

How would you describe the University's relationship to the neighborhood and visa versa?

What are the factors you think most influence this relationship?

What are the ways in which you see the community using the campus?

Where are the busiest parts of campus located?

Are there parts of campus where you feel particularly safe and comfortable?

What is it about those places that make you feel safe and comfortable?

Are there parts of campus where you feel particularly unsafe and uncomfortable? What is it about those places that make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable?

When you think of the people who comprise the area that Seattle University is located in, who come to mind?

When X people in the community use the campus where do they normally go and what do they do?

Do you see people adapting areas of campus to a particular use? For example, someone taking a chair from inside and placing it outside in a particular spot to relax etc.?

Visual Thinking Strategies Questions to be asked while interview is being conducted during campus walk.

What do you see here?

What do you see that makes you say that?

What else can we find