Looking at a Photograph –
André Kertész's 1928 Meudon
Interpreting Aesthetic Experience Phenomenologically

David Seamon

is Professor of Environment-Behavior and Place Studies in the Department of Architecture at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas, USA. His books include A Geography of the Lifeworld; Dwelling, Place and Environment: Toward a Phenomenology of Person and World; Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing: Toward a Phenomenological Ecology; *and* Goethe's Way of Science: A Phenomenology of Nature. *He is editor of* Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology.

Abstract
Focusing on André Kertész's 1928 photograph of the Paris suburb, Meudon, I consider a phenomenological means for exploring aesthetic encounter with a photograph. Drawing on my own interpretive work with this image as well as student responses, I delineate a continuum of encounter ranging from partial seeing to deeper aesthetic insight. Making use of the hermeneutic designations suggested by philosopher Henri Bortoft (2012), I identify a lived continuum of aesthetic experience that extends from limited assimilation through a more involved appropriation to an engaged participatory understanding.

Keywords aesthetics, aesthetic experience, André Kertész, Henri Bortoft, hermeneutics, hermeneutics of aesthetics, Meudon, phenomenology, phenomenology of aesthetics, visual studies

Introduction
In this article, I draw on a photograph by the eminent Hungarian-American photographer André Kertész (1894–1985) to point toward a phenomenology of aesthetic encounter. Shown in figure 1, this

Figure 1. André Kertész, Meudon, 1928.

photograph is Kertész's frequently published 1928 image of *Meudon*, a Paris suburb[1]. Drawing on my own interpretive experience of the photograph as well as student responses, I delineate a continuum of lived encounter that ranges from partial seeing to deeper aesthetic insight. Making use of the progressively-intensive designations of philosopher Henri Bortoft (2012), I highlight a spectrum of aesthetic experience that extends from limited *assimilation* to a more comprehensive and engaged *participatory understanding*.

The key question I address here relates to the range of aesthetic experience that Kertész's photograph evokes. What modes of encounter and understanding does *Meudon* afford, and do those modes point to any broader phenomenological themes or patterns? This question points toward a hermeneutic phenomenology of the aesthetic encounter, and the complex matter of how and in what lived ways this photograph (and other art works) are experienced and understood (Davey 1999). From the very first moment I saw *Meudon* almost thirty years ago, I was struck by how Kertész was able to portray visually a gathering of individual lifeworlds coalescing in the single lifeworld of this one stretch of nondescript street in a Parisian suburb. Shortly, I return to a lifeworld interpretation of the photograph but, first, I examine student responses to *Meudon*. What do others "see" the first time they encounter the *Meudon* photograph?

Student Responses to *Meudon*

Devising means to get at individuals' aesthetic and emotional reactions to an artwork is a difficult undertaking (Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, 1990; Elkins, 2001). One simple device is a seeing exercise I use to introduce students to phenomenological looking and describing. I provide a series of distinguished photographers' images for which I ask the students to look at and generate (as quickly and as viscerally as possible) a list of single words and short phrases that describe their experience of looking at and seeing. I provide the students only about thirty seconds per image so that they will more likely record immediate "sightings" of what they see. My instructions run as follows: "*Don't think about the photograph* – just jot

one descriptor (4)
1. street
2. industrial
3. forlorn
4. train

two descriptors (8)
5. dirty, old
6. tense, dramatic
7. industrial, poor
8. train, old town
9. shadowy, industrial
10. rundown, industry
11. factories, industrialization
12. clustered, broken

three descriptors (10)
13. wet, road, train
14. busy, old, dirty
15. urban, rundown, industrial
16. industrial, busy, depression
17. arcade, aqueduct, dissolution
18. activity, people, old
19. misplaced, destruction, dismal
20. wreckage, construction, industrial
21. terrible, hope, pit, despair
22. industrialism, modernism, industry

four descriptors (20)
23. train, people, destroyed, dirty
24. messy, empty, tall, old
25. busy, town, historic, gray
26. active, growing, lively, dirty
27. hardship, work, industrial, dirty
28. loud, dirty, hectic, unsafe
29. hat, chimney, bridge, store
30. arches, village, people, train
31. chaos, arch, contrast, war zone
32. dump, depressed, motion, grey
33. train, bridge, industrial, poverty
34. train, town, construction, journey
35. old, congested, dirty, unproportional
36. damaged, smoke, ruins, displacement
37. houses, construction, alleyways, bridge
38. sprawl, chaotic, downtown, urbanization
39. arch, left building, train, man with package
40. ghetto, slums, war zone, pollution, depression
41. industrial, bricks, train, progress
42. bridge, train, man, newspaper

five descriptors (15)
43. ruins, hat, train, people, building
44. chaos, madness, confused, hurt, anger
45. overseas, old, building, bearing, people
46. busy, fast, work, winter, neighbors
47. broken, narrow, tall, weight, scale
48. ruins, dead, disintegrating, chaos, dirty
49. train, arch, building, construction, hat
50. grungy, smoke, invention, progress, hope
51. train, industry, depleted, dirty, factory
52. arch, train, people, men, chimney
53. dismal, train, dirty, movement, humanity
54. busy, rundown, hazy, hustle, bustle,
55. train, smoke, man and package, olden, shabby
56. city, busy, train, dirty, mismatched
57. cityscape, train, buildings, man, package, friends walking

six descriptors (8)
58. bridge, arch, street, bustle, train, top hat
59. industrial, dirty, smoke, package, city, railway
60. train, dirty, man in hat, old, bridge, windows
61. urban, steam, industrial, man-made, hard, rough
62. destruction, pieces, tall, narrow, weight, heavy
63. train, smoke, buildings, people, bridge, destruction
64. industry, dirt, old, workforce, construct, development
65. rundown, industrial, dirty, old, historic, working class

seven descriptors (6)
66. train, danger, chaos, building, dirty, dark, smoke
67. train, bridge, smoke, city, buildings, people, construction
68. arch, people, window, brick, train, smoke, bundle
69. harsh, imposing, towering, enclosing, dirty, dark, deprived
70. urban, ruin, wrong, train, pollution, project, discrepancies
71. old, train, city, raised path, aqueduct, train, package

eight descriptors (1)
72. bridge, construction, train, business, alley, top hats, steam, brick buildings

nine descriptors (1)
73. industry, bridge, urban, confused, short, small, waste, gray, dirty

ten descriptors (1)
74. old, smoke, road, men, buildings, windows, train, arch, brick, dirt

Table 1. Descriptors of *Meudon* provided by 74 Kansas State University Architecture students, January 2013; arranged by number of words and phrases provided in students' descriptions.
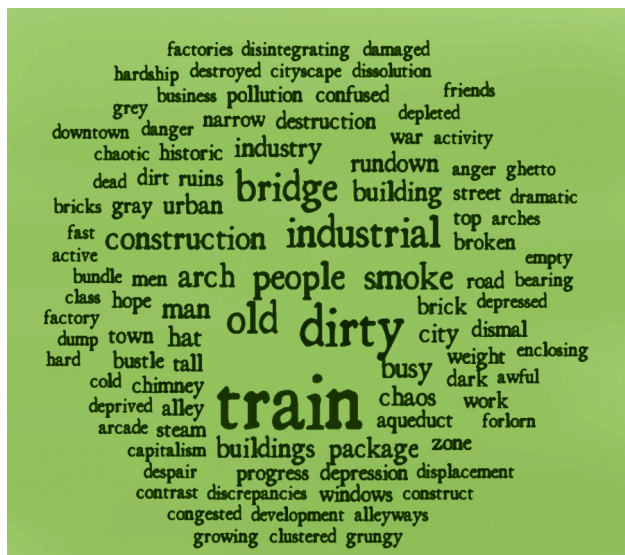
Figure 2. Word cloud of students' single-word descriptors of Kertész's Meudon.

down what comes. And don't worry about whether what you're seeing or saying is 'right' or 'wrong'. There are no correct or incorrect sightings – what you see is as correct as what anyone else sees." From a phenomenological perspective, the aim of the exercise is to facilitate what phenomenologist Herbert Spiegelberg (1982, p. 680) described as "the pristine innocence of first seeing."

Table 1 presents 74 student responses to the *Meudon* photograph. These descriptions were provided in January, 2013, by second-year Kansas State University Architecture students taking my required lecture course, "The Designed Environment and Society." Most of these students were nineteen or twenty years old and about half male and half female. In considering aggregate counts of the photographic descriptions, one notes that the 74 students provided a total of 322 words or short phrases to describe the photograph for an average of 4.35 descriptors and a median of 4 descriptors per student. Four students provided only one descriptor, and seventeen students provided six or more. Of the 322 descriptors, there were 135 unique words and phrases, a count indicating that many students drew on the same descriptors. As indicated by the word cloud of figure 2, the most frequent descriptor was "train" (used 29 times), followed by "industry" or "industrial" (19 times) "dirty" (18 times), "old" (14 times), "bridge" (11 times), and "people," "smoke," and "building" or "buildings" (10 times each).

In consolidating the descriptions indicated by the 74 student responses, I identified three major categories:

• Descriptors relating to material and environmental qualities (e.g., "brick," "train," "bridge," "street," "industrial");
• Descriptors relating to human and place activity (e.g., "people," "activity," "busy," "hustle and bustle," "friends walking in distance");

- Descriptors relating to an evaluation of the scene and situation (e.g., "dirty," "old," "dramatic," "forlorn,", "rundown," "messy," "war zone," "depressed," "hope among pit of despair," "chaotic," "hurt," "falling apart").

These three descriptive categories are revealing in two ways. First, one is struck by the many evaluative descriptors that picture the Meudon scene in a negative light. "Dirty" and "old" are most often used (18 and 14 times, respectively), but there are many other depictions ranging from environmental unpleasantness, on one hand ("forlorn," "terrible," "unsafe," "depressed," "war zone"); to environmental disorder, on the other hand ("chaotic," "broken," "falling apart," "dead," "depleted," "rundown"). Second, and perhaps more striking, is the finding that few of the descriptions relate to the experience of the photograph itself. Some of the responses are probably evoked by the aesthetic power of the image ("dramatic," "contrast, "cityscape," "hope," "humanity" "front and back mismatched," "imposing," "discrepencies"). Most entries, however, immediately move to the place scene itself and delineate either physical and environmental features of Meudon, or reactive descriptors, mostly negative or entrophic.

   In shifting attention from single descriptors to each student's descriptive cluster, one notes a related pattern. Some of the descriptive chains focus entirely on material and environmental qualities – e.g., "train, arch, building, construction, hat" (no. 49) or "old, smoke, road, men, buildings, windows, train, arch, brick, dirt" (no. 74). Other descriptors incorporate only evaluative qualities – e.g., "dirty, old" (no. 5) or "misplaced, destruction, dismal" (no. 19). A third group of descriptors incorporate both material and evaluative qualities – e.g., "train, people, destroyed, dirty" (no. 23): or "dismal, train, dirty, movement, humanity" (no. 53). In terms of evocative imagery, five of the most expressive descriptions include:

- no. 21 – "terrible, hope, pit, despair";
- no. 35 – "old, congested, dirty, unproportional" [sic];
- no. 44 – "chaos, madness, confused, hurt, anger";
- no. 48 – "ruins, dead, disintegrating, chaos, dirty";
- no. 69 – "harsh, imposing, towering, enclosing, dirty, dark, deprived."

Most strikingly, of the 74 responses, there is only one that seems fully relatable to the aesthetic aspect of the photograph itself rather than to the physical or expressive qualities of *Meudon*. This description is no. 6, in which the student succinctly describes the photograph as "tense, dramatic," a depiction intimating the mysterious ordinariness of the *Meudon* scene. Other than this one response, however, the student descriptions give much more attention to Meudon as a place rather than to the aesthetic experience of *Meudon* as an artistic photograph. Does this emphasis on situational context rather than on aesthetic experience indicate that these students are insensitive or uneducated aesthetically? That the photograph itself is to blame and without aesthetic power or presence? That delineating in words the non-verbal quality of aesthetic encounter is inappropriate to art works? I think there is another way to understand the findings here but, before I bring that understanding forward, I highlight my responses to the *Meudon* photograph.

Meudon and Lifeworld

Table 2 presents my two encounters with *Meudon.* I first discovered this photograph in 1986 when I began studying Kertész's *oeuvre* (Seamon, 1990). As a way to familiarize myself with his photographs, I set myself to write visceral reactions to pictures from throughout his professional career. Coincidentally, one of the photographs I wrote about was *Meudon*. As preparation for writing this article, I produced the second description in table 2, though I had forgotten I had written the earlier account and only ran across it accidentally when I decided to review my old files relating to Kertész.

In contrast to the student descriptions of the photograph, what strikes me about my two accounts is that they mostly ignore the specific physical and evaluative aspects of Meudon as a place and instead emphasize the photograph's power in portraying lifeworlds visually. Immediately, *Meudon* reminded me of Alfred Schutz's description of lifeworld: "that province of reality which the wide-awake and normal adult simply takes for granted in the attitude of common sense" (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973, p. 3).To me, *Meudon* is a visual introduction to phenomenology in that one not only encounters a world's lived moment but also senses the habitual unfolding of this world in moments before and after. One recognizes

Table 2. Author's two descriptions of *Meudon*

1. Written summer, 1986

The critics give this photograph much attention, though it might at first glance be considered ordinary – even uninteresting and pedestrian. The key to the photograph's power for me is *many worlds*. Kertész manages to show in one time and place how so many worlds can be going on: the world of the train passing over the trestle; the world of the man in the foreground, carrying some sort of painting or parcel; he seems the most alone of the people in the photograph. There are other worlds: Three men walking at the far end of the street; a woman and girl on the left sidewalk; three women walking behind the man. I wish I could capture the sense of world here. It has to do with time passing: something like that T. S. Elliot poem about people just doing their daily routines as the world suddenly comes to an end. It is that: multiple worlds in time, daily passing – a series of events and lives and people-in-place – their lives unfolding but not necessarily related or connected. Just present in time and place in a unique moment that Kertész literally "captures."

2. Written summer, 2013

If I am asked to generate a list of words and phrases for *Meudon*, I write "life, people, train, trestle, coming, going, together, a moment of life, a moment in time, a lifeworld of place and lifeworlds of people."

Why does this photo remain so alluring to me? I think because it draws one into this world and these worlds. We have one world but multiple worlds: (1) man with package; (2) three men walking at far end of street; (3) woman and girl on sidewalk, left; (4) three women behind man with package; (5) train headed elsewhere.

Perhaps the photo says that we are all apart and a part of? There is a wholeness to the scene in spite of the separated people and lifeworlds. In spite of the physical apartness among all these people, there seems to be a spatial collapse in that the train seems as much a part of this place as the people actually there. There is the sense that the lived quality of all these different worlds coalesces into a moment that captures the unfolding of each personal life and the history of Meudon as a place. There is also the quality of lived space whereby the materially separable parts of the place all cohere and are whole existentially. The lifeworld as time/place taken-for-grantedness is portrayed photographically. *We see "lifeworld."*

Table 2. Author's two descriptions (1986 and 2013) of André Kertész's 1928 photograph *Meudon*.

the lifeworld of this stretch of street and the lifeworlds of the several people carrying out typical lives (or atypical lives—we can't know just from this one image).

Though he knew nothing directly about phenomenology or the notion of lifeworld, Kertész offers in *Meudon* a photographic rendition of what phenomenologist Edward Casey (2009, p. 327) referred to when he wrote that "lived bodies belong to places and help to constitute them" just as, simultaneously, "places belong to lived bodies and depend on them." Through picturing an instant in the mundane history of a place, Kertész illustrates the phenomenological principle whereby individual bodily actions and encounters contribute to the particular constitution of a place as, at the same time, those actions and encounters contribute to the person or group's sense of lived involvement and identification with that place. As Casey (ibid.) explained, lived bodies and places "interanimate each other." This *interanimation* is significant because it suggests that habitual, unself-conscious corporeal familiarity is one way by which individuals and groups actualize a taken-for-granted involvement with place (Seamon, 2013b, 2014).

Reconciling Encounters?

At least for me, much of the artistic power of *Meudon* is its photographic and visual portrayal of Casey's interanimation of lived bodies and lived places. Clearly, there are other ways to express the aesthetic force of the photograph but, however one provides an explication, one can agree with critics who recognize *Meudon* as one of the great images in 20th-century photography (e.g., Greenough, Gurbo, and Kennel, 2005, pp. 75–76; Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 1994, pp. 174–75). The question I end with is how my interpretation of the photograph can be so different from my students'. Is there some way to place this difference phenomenologically so that both modes of "seeing and describing" can be placed experientially and hermeneutically?

There are a number of phenomenological pathways for interpreting these contrasting accounts (e.g., Berleant, 1971; Cloonan, 1979; Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, 1990; Davey, 1999; Dufrenne, 1953/1973; Elkins, 2001; van Manen, 2014). One possibility is phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty's differentiating between two contrasting modes of perception and awareness of the world:

On one hand, what he called "habitual perception"—i.e., taken-for-granted everyday looking and seeing grounded in corporeal inertia and the lifeworld's taken-for-grantedness; and, on the other hand, "aesthetic perception"—i.e., a mode of seeing related to an artistic attitude and incorporating a degree of attentiveness and selectiveness (Cloonan, 1979, pp. 250–54). Here, I draw on another phenomenological pathway for interpreting the contrasting accounts: philosopher Henri Bortoft's continuum of seeing and understanding marked out progressively by *assimilation, appropriation,* and *participatory understanding* (Bortoft, 2012, pp. 106–07). Each of these modes of seeing and interpreting generates and responds to contrasting modes of understanding. I argue here that the student descriptions of *Meudon* relate more to Bortoft's mode of assimilation, whereas my descriptions relate more to participatory understanding.

How does Bortoft describe these modes? In an *assimilation* mode, one encounters an unfamiliar text (like the *Meudon* photograph) and interprets it in terms familiar *to the interpreter*. In other words, the interpreter understands the text via things and thematics that he or she already knows. This mode of seeing is present in the majority of the student descriptions of *Meudon*: The students see an old, decrepit streetscape having little to do with today's world. Words like "industry," "smoke," "forlorn" and so forth suggest that the students relate the image to a past historical time that has few significant connections with their own present-day lives or experiences. For most of the students, the photograph appears to work more as a historical vignette than as an independent artwork with aesthetic and artistic force.

In contrast, Bortoft speaks of *participatory understanding*, whereby we accept that we may not know what the text is about, but we make an effort to be open and allow its potential meanings to work on us. We seek to be receptive to unsuspected sightings and understandings – Spiegelberg's "pristine innocence of first seeing." As Bortoft (2012, p. 106) explains,

> We find ourselves being addressed by the text and experience a reversal in the direction of meaning over which we have no control. This is no longer a subject-centred experience, but one in which the subject is transformed by the

encounter with meaning instead of using it for her own purposes. This usually begins with a failure to understand. We are "pulled up short by the text," as [hermeneutic philosopher Hans-Georg] Gadamer [1989, p. 168] puts it, when we feel that we cannot understand it, or that it seems to be saying something unexpected….

For me, working with Kertész's photographs has involved a deepening recognition of their visual and aesthetic insights. In this sense, I have worked to hold contact with Bortoft's participatory understanding. When I first discovered Kertész's work in the early 1980s, I felt there was something profoundly significant in the way his photographs somehow spoke phenomenologically. At first, I could not see what this significance was, but I worked, mostly through carefully looking at and writing about specific images, to encounter their presence. Over time, I concluded that Kertész can be labeled a "photographer of the lifeword" because so many of his images powerfully present unique moments whereby ordinary (and occasionally extra-ordinary) worlds come forth (Seamon, 1990).

I realize this is only my interpretation, and I hope it has been guided by a progressively strengthening participatory understanding of which Bortoft speaks. In this regard, he quotes hermeneuticist Richard Palmer's definition of phenomenology, which emphasizes a way of looking whereby the phenomenologist is gently engaged by the phenomenon, the reality of which can gradually come to reveal itself:

> [Phenomenology entails] letting things become manifest as what they are, without forcing our own categories on them… [T]he very essence of true understanding is that of being led by the power of the thing to manifest itself… Phenomenology is a means of being led by the phenomenon through a way of access genuinely belonging to it… Such a method… is not grounded in human consciousness and human categories but in the manifestness of the thing encountered, the reality that comes to meet us (quoted in Bortoft, 2012, p. 105; originally in Palmer, 1969, p. 128)

Widening and Deepening Interpretation

In the interpretation of *Meudon* offered here, I have not discussed Bortoft's third mode of encountering the text, which he labels as *appropriation* and defines as a way of interpreting whereby the interpreter recognizes the freshness or unusualness of the text but converts that uniqueness into an understanding that only arises from and serves his or her own personal concerns. These concerns may or may not appropriately relate to the author's original aims or to the potential meanings of the text. As Bortoft (2012, p. 106) explains:

> We make [the text] our own, so that it is no longer just something left over from the past which is to be reconstructed in the present, but which is used by being accommodated to the present in order to enlarge our understanding of our own interests…. In appropriation, the subject makes the meaning her own, without reducing it to what she already understands (which would be assimilation), but she does so only in a way that expands rather than transforms her understanding. In other words, in appropriation, the self-centred subject controls use to which the meaning is put, and hence understanding is under the control of the subject.

In relation to the interpretation of *Meudon* I have proposed here, one might argue that my understanding involves appropriation rather than participatory understanding, since I've described the photograph largely in the phenomenological terms of lifeworld. In responding to this concern, I would first make the point that Bortoft's modes of textual encounter involve a lived continuum – that none of the three are "pure" but, experientially, overlap and shift as the interpreter practices and matures in his or her interpretive sensibility. In addition, different interpreters will discover different meanings that are "the work's own possibilities of being that emerge as the work explicates itself, as it were, in the variety of its aspects" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 118; quoted in Bortoft, 2012, p. 109). In this sense, there is not one legitimate interpretation but many. Over time, the same interpreter may interpret the same text in much different ways. Over time, the same text may be interpreted by different interpreters in much different, even contradictory, ways.

In this article, I have contrasted my interpretation of Kertesz's *Meudon* with those of my students because this contrast offers a real-world context in which to illustrate Bortoft's assimilation, appropriation, and participatory understanding. His identification of these three modes is useful because it helps one to understand how seeing and interpretation can vary so much from interpreter to interpreter, and why some interpretations seem more attuned to the text than others. A major aim in my teaching is to introduce new ways of looking and seeing and to provoke students to realize that one's intensity of seeing, interpreting, and understanding can always be widened and deepened. I introduce students to looking and seeing via the "short-descriptor" exercise used for *Meudon* because it provides a helpful start for students' becoming more engaged with what they see and understand. Aesthetic experience is difficult to describe directly, and this exercise offers one simple, accessible means to begin to articulate what one encounters[2].

This looking-and-seeing exercise is one of several that I introduce in my courses. Once students gain facility with describing photographs via words and phrases, I then introduce a second exercise in which students look at other photographs with the aim of describing what they see and experience, first, in full sentences; and, later, in full paragraphs. Once they have practice with this more comprehensive explication, I then have them explore specific phenomena and texts – for example, the appearance of colors as seen through a prism (Bortoft, 1996; Goethe, 1970; Seamon and Zajonc, 1998); or the way that a building evokes particular expressions of motion, weight, and substance via its floors, walls, and roofs (Thiis-Evensen, 1989). My broadest aim is to introduce phenomenological and hermeneutical understanding via experiential exercises that evoke looking, seeing, and understanding in ways whereby there is a progressive movement from Bortoft's assimilation, through appropriation, toward a more deeply engaged participatory understanding.

By contrasting my understanding of Kertesz's *Meudon* with my students', I have sought to indicate the lived nature of these three modes of encounter as Bortoft presents them. The interpretations offered here involve only one text and, therefore, my claims regarding these modes of encounter are limited and open to additional interpretive evidence. In spite of these limitations, I hope my discussion here offers some insight into why looking, seeing, and un-

derstanding can involve such a wide range of interpretive possibilities. Ultimately, the aim of phenomenological and hermeneutic study is to find ways whereby the phenomenon or text can be given space to be as fully present as possible. Bortoft perspicaciously describes this potential clarity and depth of encounter with the text as an interpretive reversal in which, rather than our participating in and appropriating the text's meaning, that meaning participates in and appropriates us. He calls this experience an "event of understanding," which both sustains and is sustained by a "hermeneutic reversal." He writes:

> Understanding which participates in meaning clearly goes beyond both assimilation and appropriation…. We do not understand in a vacuum. We always already understand, and it is this already-understanding that is "pulled up short" by the text and found to be inadequate. The text calls our already-understanding into question, with the effect that, when the meaning of the work participates us [sic], our understanding is transformed – not consolidated or expanded – so that we understand differently…. In the event of understanding… it is not so much we who appropriate the meaning, but we ourselves who are appropriated by the meaning of the work. So we are participated by the meaning that we participate in – this is the hermeneutic reversal (Bortoft, 2012, pp. 106–07).

References

Berleant, A., 1971. *The Aesthetic Field.* Springfield, Illinois: C. C. Thomas.

Borhan, P., ed., 1994. *André Kertész: His Life and Work.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Bortoft, H., 1996. *The Wholeness of Nature.* Edinburgh: Floris Books.

Bortoft, H., 2012. *Taking Appearance Seriously.* Edinburgh: Floris Books.

Casey, E., 2009. *Getting Back into Place,* 2nd edition. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Cloonan, T. F., 1979. Phenomenological Psychological Reflections on the Mission of Art. In A. Giorgi, R. Knowles, and D. L. Smith,

eds., *Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology,* vol. 3 (pp. 245–77). Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press.

Csikszentmihalyi, M., and Robinson, R. E., 1990. *The Art of Seeing.* Malibu, California: J. Paul Getty Museum Press.

Davey, N., 1999. The Hermeneutics of Seeing. In Ian Heywood and Barry Sandywell, eds., *Interpreting Visual Culture* (pp. 3–29). London: Routledge.

Dufrenne, M., 1973. *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience.* Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press [originally 1953].

Elkins, J., 2001. *Pictures and Tears.* New York: Routledge.

Frizot, M. and Wanaverbecq, A.-L., 2010. *André Kertész.* New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

Gadamer, H., 1989. *Truth and Method.* London: Sheed and Ward.

Goethe, W. von, 1970. *Theory of Colours.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press [originally 1810].

Greenough, S., Gurbo, R., and Kennel, S., 2005. *André Kertész.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press / National Gallery of Art.

Palmer, R., 1969. *Hermeneutics.* Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

Phillips, S. S., Travis, D., and Naef, W. J., 1985. *André Kertész of Paris and New York.* New York: Thames and Hudson.

Schutz, A. and Luckmann, T., 1973. *The Structures of the Life-World.* Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

Scott, C., 2007. *Street Photography.* New York: I. B. Tauris.

Seamon, D., 1990. Awareness and Reunion: A Phenomenology of the Person-Environment Relationship as Portrayed in the New York Photographs of André Kertész. In L. Zonn, ed., *Place Images in the Media* (pp. 87–107). Totowa, New Jersey: Roman and Littlefield.

Seamon, D., 2013a. Encountering the Whole: Remembering Henri Bortoft (1938–2012), *Phenomenology & Practice, 7,* 2, pp.100–07.

Seamon, D., 2013b. Lived Bodies, Place, and Phenomenology: Implications for Human Rights and Environmental Justice, *Journal of Human Rights and the Environment,* 4, 2, pp. 143–66.

Seamon, D., 2014. Place Attachment and Phenomenology: The Synergistic Dynamism of Place. In L. Manzo & P. Devine-Wright, eds., *Place Attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods and Research* (pp. 11–22), New York: Routledge / Francis & Taylor.

Seamon, D. & A. Zajonc, eds., *Goethe's Way of Science: A Phenomenology of Nature.* Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

Spiegelberg, H., 1982. *The Phenomenological Movement.* The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Thiis-Evensen, T., 1989. *Archetypes in Architecture.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

van Manen, M., 2014. *The Phenomenology of Practice.* Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press.

Westerbeck, C. and Meyerowitz, J., 1994. *Bystander: A History of Street Photography.* New York: Little, Brown and Company.

Endnotes

1. Scholarly discussions and interpretations of Kertész's work include: Borhan, 1994; Frizot and Wanaverbecq, 2010; Greenough, Gurbo, and Kennel, 2005; Phillips, Travis, and Naef, 1985; Scott, 2007; Seamon, 1990; Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 1994.

2. I was introduced to this "short-descriptor" exercise in a seminar taught by Henri Bortoft, who explored a wide range of practical means for intensifying the encounter with phenomena, including the remarkable phenomenological methods of Goethean science (Bortoft, 1996; Seamon, 2013a; Seamon and Zajonc, 1998). The aim of the short-descriptor exercise is to lay out the terrain of the phenomenon as it is as a whole. The assumption is that single words and short phrases provide an interpretive means for "sighting" and understanding the particular phenomenon – in the present case, Kertész's *Meudon.* One useful variation on this exercise is to envision the phenomenon or text (e.g., *Meudon*) as a spiral on which one places – closer to and farther away from the spiral's center – each word and phrase. This spiral exercise is useful in that it provides an interpretive means to "sight" the more and less central aspects of the phenomenon's constitution or the text's meanings.