

***Advances in Environment, Behaviour, and Design (Volume 1)***. Edited by Ervin H. Zube and Gary T. Moore. New York, Plenum, 1987. ISBN 0-306-42509-2.

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This is the initial volume in a series devoted to 'theoretical, substantive, methodological, and applied advances' in the field. Each chapter's goal is to bring readers up to date on a topic, in the manner of the *Annual Reviews*. This is a welcome series, and yet another sign of the growing maturity of the field. It is meant to complement Plenum's other series, *Human Behavior and the Environment*, edited by Irwin Altman and others. The Altman series concentrates on one theme per volume (its ninth appeared in 1987) while this one will treat a variety of subareas in each volume.

The first volume's twelve chapters are grouped into six parts: theory, place research, user group research, sociobehavioural research, methods, and professional applications. As will become evident, in reviewing each chapter I took the four key words in the volume's title seriously. Most of the authors did, too.

The editors begin part one with a provocative grouping of minority viewpoints on theory: David Seamon presents his latest view of phenomenology in relation to the field and Richard Winett offers his perspective on operant and ecological approaches. Seamon's chapter emphasizes post-1982 investigations, but also provides useful background on the movement's seminal thinkers. Phenomenology is basically a descriptive pursuit, one that aims at improved understanding through 'concern, openness, and clear seeing'. What it sees in this field, and what Seamon is concerned that other approaches fail to see, is the holistic nature of places.

Seamon has no kind words for those (such as David Canter) who Seamon believes 'dissect' places into components, or those (such as Harold Proshansky) who he says 'pretend' with their 'partial understanding' of phenomenological work to advance knowledge but, caught up in a 'conventional transactional theory', reduce place identity to a subset of self identity. (Never, when dining with this phenomenologist, ask who will do the carving!) Seamon informs us that the truth, instead, is that place incorporates self. Two sentences later, however, we are told that *any* talk of a person-world division is an illusion and a mistake.

In another part of the chapter, Christopher Alexander's work is approvingly described as 'an implicit phenomenology'. After 'careful looking at real-world places throughout the world' Alexander and his colleagues came up with 253 patterns; the resulting pattern language is said by Seamon to have 'great promise'. Maybe if Canter had dissected place into 250 more pieces, his work would be as valuable as that of Alexander.

At one point Seamon describes phenomenology as a science; later he says it requires 'intuitive' seeing. Elsewhere, he connects it with religion and 'the situation where

something sacred *shows itself* to us' (my italics). Seamon says that in 'conventional positivist research', behaviour and action become objects so that the real thing is overlooked. 'In contrast, phenomenology attempts to describe the world as it shows itself *before* scientific scrutiny.' Would that include phenomenological scrutiny, given that phenomenology is described by Seamon as a science?

The numerous inconsistent and mean-spirited comments in this chapter mar the presentation of an attractive approach to environmental psychology. We could all learn from trying to experience places carefully, with concern, freshly. No doubt some researchers in the 'conventional positivist' camp confuse reality and the variables they study. (I imagine there are also a few arrogant phenomenologists somewhere whose careful and concerned seeing sometimes drifts into sloppy subjectivism.) However, we must not damn methods because some practitioners misuse them. Obviously, both phenomenological and more conventional approaches to research have value when they are properly followed.

In Winett's chapter, the operant and ecological positions are described and compared. Winett says they are both instances of extreme and mechanistic environmental determinism. Winett describes an alternative, which he calls the 'multilevel environment-behaviour systems perspective'. Apart from pointing out that different levels of analysis (e.g., the personal, the cultural) are important for different research questions, this perspective offers little that is not part of the many eclectic theoretical approaches. Winett modestly describes its shortcomings, to which might be added the observation that a large distance seems to separate the tenets of the theory from its putative research applications (compared, for example, to the operant and ecological approaches).

Winett assumes that 'broadly integrative models will revitalize the field of environment and behaviour'. I think he means they will do this by leading us to consider new topics (e.g., public health); this seems reasonable. But I must say that 'broadly integrative theories' do more to put me to sleep than to revitalize me. They remind me of the old attempts in psychology to explain behaviour by constructing exhaustive lists of instincts; the inclusiveness of the endeavor guarantees a superficial kind of truth, but does little to stimulate research, discussion, or knowledge about *how* behaviour works. What will wake up the field and lead to advances are sharp, challenging, original theories, not attempts to include every known influence in one large framework.

In a short third chapter in part one, Karen Franck tries to deal with the obvious gap between Seamon and Winett. She correctly points out that the two research strategies have different purposes and that neither should claim to be the best in any universal sense. She charitably claims that Seamon engaged only in 'reflective dialogue' rather than an 'oppositional' approach to discussing the issues. She notes that adherents of minority positions often must be more committed to their stances because they are frequently challenged; probably everyone who knows a strong behaviourist has observed this phenomenon.

Part two—place research—contains chapters by Mark Francis on urban open spaces, by Federick Buttel, Steve Murdock, Larry Leistritz and Rita Hamm on rural environments, and by Robert Riley on vernacular landscapes. Francis' review is very much in the intended spirit of the book: one gets an exciting sense of discovering what is new in research on the urban outdoors. This reader certainly learned much about the interesting, proximate work being done in cities, and found that the illustrations added

to the liveliness of the chapter. Francis' field seems to have found that happy mixture of positivist and phenomenological (or nearly so) research that Franck suggests is possible.

The Buttell *et al.* chapter takes a more traditional ('positivist') approach. Rurality is defined; rural-urban differences in attitudes are described; studies of behaviour related to soil erosion and conservation are reviewed; the social impact assessment of energy development in the Western U.S. is described. These topics are competently covered, but one is struck by the lack of material from anywhere except the U.S. and by the lack of any form or even cousin of phenomenology: no case studies, no personal observations of what it is like to live in a rural area, not even a picture. The authors say that their research area has been characterized by significant theoretical and empirical controversy which has stimulated innovative research, scrutiny and debate. This chapter does a better job of providing a useful catalog of studies in some of the area's topics than it does in conveying this vitality.

The Riley chapter on vernacular landscapes is sprightly, glib, and informative. A rigid definition of vernacular landscapes is impossible but, broadly speaking, they are landscapes that are neither wild nor professionally designed. One thinks first of streetscapes such as the Las Vegas strip as studied by Venturi, but Riley's eclectic survey includes studies of abattoirs and speed traps, flags and brothels, theme parks and truck stops.

Riley seems to be drawn to exotica, and his tone suggests a fondness for his unruly, often overlooked subject. He yearns for more rigour ('but not rigor mortis') in his free-wheeling field. I like his example of the latter: academic publishing patterns that end up being 'A's rebuttal of B's criticism of C's gloss on D's analysis of E's book'. As a psychologist, however, I was struck by the lack of human behaviour in the chapter; the landscapes themselves are the stars. Perhaps the studies reviewed have much more to say about how denizens and visitors interact with their vernacular landscapes than the chapter reviewing them does.

Another area that might have received more attention (remember the four key words) is design. For example: When is vernacular design 'good' and 'bad'? *Should* professional designers be involved or would that somehow ruin the quaint authenticity of the vernacular landscape? Should a broader spectrum of residents be involved in designing vernacular settings? Nevertheless, I found this chapter educational and entertaining: an excellent portrayal of a sprawling literature.

Part three is devoted of advances in user group research and contains chapters by William Michelson on groups, aggregates, and the environment and by Rebecca Bauer Peterson on gender issues in the home and urban environment. Michelson's chapter offers, especially in contrast to Riley's, an academic, didactic slant. We are educated in some detail on basic sociological concepts such as role, aggregate, status, and lifestyle. Also in contrast to Riley, the emphasis is back on people, albeit as members of groups. Michelson applies the sociological concepts to design considerations in some thoughtful if somewhat abstract ways (I doubt that designers reading the chapter will leap from the page to the drawing board).

Peterson's chapter concentrates on women. It is, initially, a saddening, familiar list of ways that women have been overlooked and mildly but persistently mistreated. Women still seem to do the dirty work, despite the vast movement to improve matters (e.g., a 1980 study found that women still did 92% of the laundry and 88% of meal preparation). Yet these issues are under-researched, perhaps because (until very recently) men have been out of the house doing research and administering E&B

organizations. Fortunately, Peterson is able to report on a few hopeful examples of communities planned with women's needs in mind and to offer some fairly concrete design policies that sympathetic designers should attempt to incorporate in their plans.

Part four is concerned with advances in sociobehavioural research. It contains a single chapter, on physiological aspects of environment-behaviour relations by Linda Weiss and Andrew Baum. I looked forward to this chapter because I would like to see more researchers grapple with the sometimes difficult physiological level of analysis and because I hoped to learn more myself. Weiss and Baum describe some basic physiological measures and parts (EEG, CNS, GSR, ARAS, EMG, EOP, etc.) and the two major concepts in the area (arousal and stress). I did learn from this part of the chapter, although much of the arousal and stress material seems very familiar by now.

In the current research section, however, things go awry: I couldn't find much. Classics should be mentioned in a review, but more than a full page (counting the illustration) is spent on Calhoun's rats. To test whether my impression that older material dominated the chapter was correct, I counted the number of post-1983 references in the chapter and found 10 (out of 122). Intrigued, I proceeded to do similar counts on other chapters and found 46 post-1983 references in Peterson, 54 in Seamon, 38 in Francis, 36 in Riley. I concede that such a crude index of currency has some defects, but it also has merits. When the 'currency ratio' between chapters hits 4 or 5 to 1, something significant is happening. Is nothing much new in the area of physiology and design research, or are we just not being told about it?

Part five, on methods, contains chapters by Robert Marans and Sherry Ahrentzen on quantitative methods and by Setha Low on qualitative methods. The first of these is an informative, straightforward survey covering research design, data collection, and data analysis. Most major methods are illustrated with a recent study from the E&B literature. Appropriately, Marans and Ahrentzen say less about the usual methods of data analysis and more about three less familiar but deserving methods: multi-dimensional scaling, time-series analysis, and causal modeling. I found this to be an excellent brief survey and will be recommending it to graduate students and to colleagues looking for quantitative techniques appropriate to the new look in environmental research.

Low's chapter on qualitative methods represents a form of educational tourism for a reader trained in standard psychological methods. The usual mix of travel feelings were experienced, too: delight, interest, fear of the unknown. For Low, qualitative (as opposed to quantitative) methods are those in which (a) the researcher is the major instrument of data collection (rather than an instrument wielded *by* the researcher), (b) data collection encompasses both researcher and subject (instead of the subject only), (c) there is a stronger preference for natural settings, and (d) there is more emphasis on interpretation in the data analysis process. Most often, the goal is to understand a setting from the inhabitants' point of view. Cognitive (meaning), observational, phenomenological, comparative historical, ethnographic, and discourse analysis methods are described. Low points out that while such approaches have an image problem—that they have no great usefulness—they have sometimes changed the world (e.g., Whyte's plaza studies influenced New York City zoning).

Part six, on practice, consists of one chapter by Lynda Schneekloth. She discusses three forms of practice: information transfer (the movement of design knowledge and understanding to those who can use it), education (training the next generation), and 'action research-reflective practice' (collaboration, participatory design, and reflective

practice). The latter term, which may be unfamiliar to some, refers to practice that is explicitly guided by a theoretical paradigm during the design intervention.

Schneekloth then describes five case histories that primarily illustrate the action research-reflective practice mode. These are unfortunately short, presumably due to space limitations, but they suggest the rich variety of contemporary practice.

The chapter closes with comments on the application of context, critical theory, and the tasks of a practitioner. I did not see the value of the first topic; I think it is another reminder that the field is very complex and that we must consider the context of our interventions. The critical theory comments have a more important message: that both we and our clients operate under sets of myths that are often not recognized or, even if recognized, are not often challenged. These myths nevertheless shape every phase of the intervention.

Some major tasks of the practitioner, according to Schneekloth, are 'framing the action' (setting the boundaries of the project), determining ownership of the processes and the products of the intervention and, as implied by critical theory, clarifying values that are related to the project. Given the very difficult task of describing 'advances' in an area of the field that is not well documented, Schneekloth provides a very useful starting place for those who will take the time to consider the nature of environment and behaviour practice.

The uniform typography and design of an edited book encourage the perception that its chapters are similar in style and quality, if not in content. Such a perception would be incorrect in this instance. The goal of a regular series that updates readers in the manner of the Annual Reviews is admirable and is achieved by many of the chapters in this volume. Given the extreme youth of this enterprise and the tiny number of potential authors from which the editors may choose (compared, for example, to the wide choice presumably enjoyed by the editors of the Annual Review of Psychology), this volume is, for the most part, excellent.

***Eliminating Racism: Profiles in Controversy.*** Edited by Phyllis A. Katz and Dalmas A. Taylor. New York: Plenum Press, 380 pp., 1988. £26.00. ISBN 0-306-42631-5.

*This book is published under the auspices of The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, an organisation committed to applying social science to social problems and issues. The editors and authors include some of the most distinguished names in the study of racism and prejudice.*

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Myrdal in 1944 discussed the paradox that despite a commitment to liberty, democracy and equality, American society was disfigured by a deep seated racism. Progress towards equal treatment has been painfully slow, but two events in 1954 aided the process. One was the publication of Allport's classic study *The Nature of Prejudice* and the other the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, heard by the Supreme Court which ruled that 'separate but equal' educational provision for black and white children was unconstitutional. The woman who as a small child in Topeka, Kansas was at the centre of the controversy contributes a foreword to this volume.

The book does not really deal with aspects of racism central to the concerns of environmental psychology but nonetheless must be of interest to anyone concerned with the education of ethnic minority children or with residential segregation. It also