of shared experience and emotion. Now, though, we return elemental erosion back into the earth. Let it be clear that we have been discussing an incredibly complex phenomenon taken from its own context. I have set erosion apart from all other geologic/ecological processes. I have unearthed it only so we can feel the tracks of our own process, in the hope of scouting out the beginnings of ecological sustainability. Erosion has no end, no goal: water evaporates, transpires, sublimates, and forms back into airborne thunderstorms to fall as raindrops sinking back into the land. It is a circle as soul is. Archetypal geology is incredibly interweaved, braided, and entwined, Medusa currents of snake-inlaid hair, tresses of interlocking relations. A stratigraphy of emotions. Nor have I discussed the myriad and plentiful languages that are *particular* and *specific* erosive locales (thousands of rivers, each with their own style of erosive consciousness). I have only generalized from a pandemonium of natural entities and merged them into one being that we can perceive more easily.

To reach into an archetype of geology is like trying to understand something without words; it moves us first, affects our bodies deeply, blinks so slowly our lifetime might miss the expression. It is only a small part of ecology. However, we might start in our own location by studying the behavior of where we are, watching how natural forces speak through us, and how we consciously or unconsciously enact the regional landscape. Erosive love is enduring love, endearing in its strange, unbearable beauty. The earth upon which we live and have somehow decided we can live without, is holding us (for the moment), breathing against our feet.

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Chapter 15
The Invisibility of Nature: Garbage, Play Forts, and the Deterritorialization of Urban Nature Spaces

Eva-Maria Simms

"Nature loves to hide." This famous fragment by Heraclitus has been the foundation for thinking about nature in Western philosophy, as Hadot (2006) in his essay on the history of the idea of nature has shown. The "hiding" or "secret" of nature is expressed in Western intellectual history through the key metaphor of the veil, which covers the true being of nature. Nature's true being is invisible. According to Hadot, the veil of nature is defined differently in different historical periods, which also leads to different strategies for unveiling. There are two fundamental attitudes towards nature and the process of unveiling: On the one hand, nature surrounds us as the material world with its powerful events and mysterious laws, which invite the inquisitive mind to engage in the process of science; on the other hand, nature is the ground of human perception itself, a metaphysical fact that confounds the human mind because our own being is not transparent to ourselves, which leaves a gap at the heart of perception and thinking itself and invites us to engage in philosophical inquiry. Hadot ends his history of philosophy with Merleau-Ponty and Wittgenstein as two hopeful examples of a "specific tendency" in twentieth-century thinking "which consists in renouncing abstract explanations of the world's existence, to open the possibility of an experience of the mystery of existence in the world, and of a lived contact with the inexplicable surging forth of reality, or *phusis* in the original meaning of the word" (Hadot 2006, p. 314).

However, in the *twenty-first* century, the lived contact with the mystery of nature, which Hadot was hoping for, has become more difficult than ever. More and more virtual technologies insert themselves between the engaged, perceiving body and the reality of the natural world. The unveiling of nature, *phusis*, is no longer a matter of *personal* philosophical reflection or scientific investigation or even religious conversion. It is not even a matter of epistemology anymore. The veiling of nature has become an ontological problem: Isis has veiled herself so well that humans fail to see her at all and treat her and her degradation as unreal. Her *invisibility* (in Hadot's sense) has become invisible itself, and, to paraphrase Heidegger (1971) in

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his discussion of things, nature has become so invisible that we do not even know what kinds of questions to ask her. Isis is now doubly veiled.

If Hadot had continued his history of the idea of nature into the twenty-first century, he would perhaps have had to look at political power structures and their discursive practices (Foucault 1978) which culturally veil and unveil specific aspects of nature, or at the processes of territorialization and deterritorialization (Deleuze and Guattari 1996) which make nature thinkable through concepts and manipulable by economic and political forces. This chapter will develop some ideas about the invisibility of nature in the twenty-first century by examining urban nature spaces through the twin phenomena of garbage and children's play forts/secret places in the woods. In the midst of contemporary urban life, nature is veiled and invisible at the ends of our streets, at the banks of our rivers, and at the edges of our parking lots.

Garbage

Since 2005, my students and I have been involved in community research and activism to support the reclamation of industrially degraded nature spaces in the inner city of Pittsburgh and helped with the creation of Emerald View Park, which was conceived and instituted by a neighborhood initiative. A local community development organization (CDC) stewards the development and care of the 275 acres of forested hillsides in Mt. Washington, a neighborhood adjacent to downtown Pittsburgh. Much of our research consisted in facilitating conversation and awareness of the park through focus groups, surveys, oral history interviews, and through developing models for dealing with the park's homeless population and the community's fear of "nefarious activities in the woods," as a community member put it. Over the past 6 years, more than 1,000 volunteers have removed more than 80 tons of garbage from the 275 acres of urban forest. I have seen rusted cars, refrigerators, and bedsprings. The landscape is littered with rubber tires, plastic toys, plastic bags, glass bottles, ceramic tiles, vinyl or aluminum siding, roofing shingles, lead pipes, and various other forms of contractor debris. Eighty tons of garbage is 173,369.81 pounds.

Garbage is a *phenomenon* in the sense that its physical appearance indicates a surplus of other, invisible events and meanings that are connected with it. There is more than meets the eye, and it is a "referential system" (Husserl 2001, p. 41) which points to a wider web of significations into which the simple appearance of trash in nature is woven. Once we begin to think about garbage as a referential system, it poses psychological, social, and aesthetic questions.

On the ground, in the woods, most garbage is immediately identifiable: It consists of stuff which is human made, does not decay in the cycle of a few years, poses potential dangers to wildlife, and is plain ugly. Nature usually deals with it over many decades by rusting it out or covering it over with leaf mold and dirt until it sinks into the ground. Most of us who love to walk in the woods are offended

when a ruined refrigerator with the doors hanging open interrupts the harmony of a natural landscape. What is so disturbing about garbage? Why does it offend our aesthetic sensibility so that more than 1,000 volunteers have felt the desire to come into the woods and haul the stuff up to the neighborhood parking lots, where it is collected by the city's garbage trucks? And more importantly: *what is the perception of nature by city dwellers so that natural spaces can be trashed*?

I remember my own first encounter with massive garbage in the woods a few years ago. On a crisp and colorful fall day, we were riding our horses through the Pennsylvania Game Lands in Indiana County. My senses were attuned and sharpened through the close contact with my horse. As we rounded a bend in the road, he shied violently, almost unseating me. Littered across the road were white bags full of garbage. His reaction was immediate: The white, smelly bags interrupted the landscape pattern and put his senses on high alert; his muscles prepared for flight. Only much calming language, calming body contact, and coaxing encouragement could lead him dancing in a wide arc around the garbage bags and not take the bit and run.

Garbage is fundamentally disturbing. The white bags full of trash did not come from here, did not belong here, and did not fit themselves seamlessly into the landscape. A newly fallen tree trunk is also a disturbance to the creatures who habitually use a landscape, but it soon begins to decay and merge into the greenery and the ground. *It returns from where it came.* The same is true for animal carcasses in the woods: They initially upset my horse, but after a few weeks they were absorbed by the surroundings and we passed them without notice. Not so with the garbage bags. For years they fluttered and rustled their white plastic flaps. They did not decay and return to where they came from. They stayed around as a constant reminder that people can and do interrupt the natural landscape and litter it with things that are human made.

From a systems/Gestalt perspective, garbage is an element that cannot be absorbed by the whole form. It does not fade (or fade only very slowly) into the background and it interrupts the balance of the whole. A more extreme, but very illustrative example is the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, which by some estimates covers an area in the Pacific Ocean that is "twice the size of the continental USA" (Marks and Howden 2008) and consists of a floating gyre of mostly plastics from the world's rivers and beaches. These plastics break down into smaller particles and enter the food chain. One third of the Laysan albatross chicks of the Midway Atoll between Japan and Hawaii die because their parents feed them plastic which floats over from the Pacific trash vortex. Albatrosses and turtles have no perceptual category for distinguishing plastic debris from other food sources—with devastating consequences for their species.

The lesson about garbage from my horse and from the albatross chicks is that industrial garbage derails the perceptual and digestive body field of living beings because it cannot be integrated into the life and decay cycle of the natural world. It either just hangs around for a long time as a perceptual sore in the landscape (like the rusty refrigerator) or decays in covert ways that poison the food chain (like the coolants that leach from the rusty refrigerator into the ground water).

Deterritorialization

Garbage in the woods is a symptom of deterritorialization. Urban landscapes have political and economic use functions and are "territorialized", i.e., they form a nexus of psychosocial attitudes, practices, and conceptual realities which make them "real" to a community (Deleuze and Guattari 1996): roads for traffic and transport, neighborhoods for living, business districts for business, entertainment districts for entertainment, etc. In the nineteenth century, the wooded slopes of what is now Emerald View Park were used and territorialized for coal mining and logging; in the early twentieth century, they became reterritorialized as sites for hunting, foraging, and family coal gathering (as community elders told me) and they were crisscrossed by paths carved out by the workers who walked down to the steel mills and foundries in the valleys. Today, old brownfields and other abandoned industrial sites have lost their function as sites of economic and cultural activity, and have reverted to a semi-wild natural landscape. They have become "deterritorialized" (p. 67): Not only are they no longer used as neighborhood resources or thoroughfares, but also *fall out of the awareness of a local community*. The paths through the woods and the places within them are forgotten and are slowly taken over by vegetation. The forest at the end of the street has become psychologically invisible. The landscape has become *feral*.

In the consciousness of the community, these abandoned landscapes become strange and alien places. As they are no longer used and known, neighbors look at them with fear and suspicion. In interviews with neighbors, we found that there are all kinds of rumors about "nefarious activities" and fictional reterritorializations that are happening there. Urban legends have arisen about drug dealers crossing the trails on all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), murderers lurking in the dark, homeless people forming large encampments, and prostitutes luring customers into the bushes. The projection of these "nefarious psychosocial types" (to adapt a term from Deleuze and Guattari) and the ceding of the territory to them have social and economic consequences. Real estate prices and the quality of the housing stock next to the feral woods are among the lowest in my neighborhood. No one willingly wants to live there. The neighbors do not go into the woods and they warn their children away. In the minds of the people, the feral natural places at the ends of their streets have become one-dimensional and undifferentiated "green stuff" that is potentially dangerous and better ignored.

Deterritorialized, feral nature spaces become invisible to the community around them. Invisibility has psychological consequences: If a community fears its green spaces, then the "green stuff" at the edges of the built environment becomes *undifferentiated*. Nature in these locations is no longer a varied fabric of geographies and habitats for many species of flora and fauna, but an empty canvas of green waste upon which the fears of the community are projected. Children who are not allowed to venture into these green spaces because their parents are too afraid to let them out of the house develop a fear of nature (Louv 2008; Sobel 1996). They cannot hear the invitation of the forest to climb the trees, follow the butterfly, watch the ant colony, dam the rivulet, collect acorns, and build a play fort… Their "nature deficit

disorder," as Louv calls it, consists in intellectual disinterest and emotional distance from nature. Nature is alien to them, and its mystery is so occluded that it does not evoke a sense of wonder and investigation. A generation of children who grow up without play in fields, woods, and streams does not understand how one's body and one's senses fit into a natural environment and how the ecological web of places, plants, and animals fits together and changes with the seasons. They have no attachment to natural places and feel no immediate responsibility for the well-being of other species because nature is what is on the nature channel or in the life-sciences textbook and does not really have anything to do with their lives. Nature, for them, exists as a virtual, global, and intellectual presence, and not as an embodied, engaged, and local encounter.

In the course of my work in helping to reterritorialize the local green spaces by establishing Emerald View Park, every single Pittsburgher I talked to has been surprised that we have more than 275 acres of woods in the middle of Pittsburgh, and I have often heard neighbors say: "Oh, you mean the junky wooded slopes at the end of my street?" However, as soon as the feral woods are "reterritorialized" as a "park," real estate prices go up for houses next to the parkland and developers buy up the dilapidated houses, knock them down, and build shiny big buildings with access to "nature trails" as a selling point.

Nature spaces in the city, unless they have been territorialized as "park," are in general invisible, i.e., they are not used, cared for, and the names of places or paths are forgotten in time because they fall out of community discourse. The invisibility and deterritorialization of nature in the cityscape creates a no man's land, which is abandoned by the commons. Symptoms of this abandonment can be seen clearly at the borders between the built and feral landscape: streets gradually peter out into the woods, houses built too far into the urban forest remain as ruins along abandoned paper streets, people are uncertain if they are "allowed" to take their dog for a walk in the woods because there is no signage and no custom which gives them the certainty that an overgrown path will lead somewhere. There are no fellow walkers who provide "eyes on the trail"—to appropriate a phrase from Jane Jacobs (1993)—which provide a sense of safety and the surety that there is a way back into civilization and home.

The other symptom visible at the edges of deterritorialized nature is garbage. Garbage is the unwanted surplus of human industry, the waste that has no place in the cultivated territory. To get waste into the woods there must be access, but the way in must be hidden and secretive. For dumping to be "illegal," the dumper has to appropriate a location that is not territorialized as a legal, agreed upon dumpsite. Illegal dumping is a shady, frowned upon activity because it defiles spaces that belong to the commons, even though the commons has forgotten about them. The contractor dumping a truckload of asbestos roof shingles in the woods, or the strewer of the garbage bags in the game lands, or even the neighbor who pushed the old fridge down the slope behind his house—they all refused to take responsibility for the surplus of their lives and selfishly disposed of it in the invisible common spaces because it provided an economic advantage. The perceptual shock of finding a pile of garbage in the woods comes with the sudden remembrance that there

is a commons *that is ours*, that we are a part of it, and that the selfish defilement of the natural place is an assault on us all. The thousand plus volunteers who have hauled garbage out of Emerald View Park give their time and effort to help heal and reclaim the natural commons for humans, and the animals and plants that live here.

Hardin, in *The Tragedy of the Commons* (1968), has argued that free, common spaces will inevitably be ruined by the selfish greed of the members of the commons. "Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons" (p. 1244). Garbage is a step towards the ruin of our common spaces and a marker of the ethical failure of community members to pay their fair share and take only what the communal spaces can bear. It is a direct sign of the "tragedy of the commons" (Hardin 1968). However, Hardin's argument about the inevitable destruction of commonly held places—like state parks and shared grazing land—through capitalist greed already assumes that the traditional social commons, which regulates the use of shared spaces on the local level, has been destroyed. I agree with Cox (1985) that the ruin of common spaces lies in the *bioethical failure* of communities to understand and manage the commons. I would go even further and say that the tragedy of the commons lies in the inability of many communities to understand that they *have* a commons they are responsible for. As long as our urban nature spaces remain deterritorialized, they also remain invisible to the adjacent communities and are not appreciated as *part of the neighborhood commons*. No matter how many laws and ordinances regulate the use of urban forests, they will be ruined unless the local community reterritorializes them, makes them newly visible, and includes them within the imagined boundary of their neighborhood landscape.

The deterritorialization and the following invisibility of natural spaces invite their ruin. The challenge is to reterritorialize the local nature commons in an ethical way and to reimagine it as other than a place for economic exploitation. The protection of natural places in cities is a matter of a necessary *metanoia*, a breakdown of old practices and conceptualizations of nature and the arrival of new ways of knowing, thinking, and using nature and place. The change that is needed in order to protect urban green spaces is a *psychological* change which happens in the hearts and minds of the local people: They discover their attachment and care for their natural place, they protect and preserve its ecological variety, they use it as part of their daily lives, and they watch over it as part of their neighborhood commons. The neighborhood then does not end at the edges of the built environment, but extends down the wooded slopes or into local bayous and canyons.

Attachment and commitment to a particular place is not a failure of identification, as Beyer (see Chap. 8 in this volume) seems to imply via Fox's (1990) classification of personal, ontological, and cosmic experience of commonality with nature. I am convinced that through *attachment* to nature as a particular place *and* through conversations and actions within the local commons the kind of identification with nature is possible that can lead to the political changes which protect and conserve natural habitats and diversity one neighborhood at the time. It is not a detached, cosmic vision that will protect the planet, but a passionate commitment to nature in one place and the willingness to act on behalf of it and of all the other places on the planet connected with it.

Reterritorialization

Secret Nature Places

Litter is not the only human alteration that we find in abandoned urban green spaces. There are also play forts tucked in between the trees and rope swings hanging from the branches. A number of writers in the other chapters in this volume have recalled and discussed places that were important to them as children. I have interviewed elders who grew up with and in the green spaces of Emerald View Park (decades before it was a "park"), and many of them considered the woods their playground. If garbage points to the ruin of our deterritorialized common green spaces, play forts and other secret nature spaces claimed by children show the possibility of reterritorializing the natural landscape adjacent to the built environment in creative and deeply satisfying ways. Thinking about children's secret nature places helps us grasp some primary, voluntary, and intense human relationship with nature. It also points the way towards an ethical reterritorialization and a reclaiming of the nature commons.

Beginning with my students' involvement in Emerald View Park I have collected more than a hundred descriptions of children's secret places, i.e., places to which children withdraw from the adult world in order to be by themselves (Langeveld 1983a, b; Van Manen and Levering 1996). Some children take up indoor places and spend much time in hidden closets, unused attics or cellars, behind furniture, or under their beds. However, about half of my students were children who claimed a place in nature as their own. Many secret places are at the edges of their backyards: between the garage and the back fence, tucked away under bushes; a frequent favorite is a tall tree that is climbable and from where the child looks out over the landscape or rests in the branches to daydream. I have read descriptions of trees that were emotional refuges, where children from troubled families would go to cry or to get away from it all. A number of children roam farther afield: they claim a clearing in the woods, the edge of a brook that they clean, an abandoned open field, a place under a bridge. The following two descriptions are fairly typical, and I quote them to give a flavor of the complexity of children's relationships with "their" places:

> **Matt:** As a child, I had a huge woods to play in and my brother and I would play in it all the time together. We made forts, built dams in our creek, and just had as much fun as 2 kids could on about 10 acres of land. We had a special place where we always would go to build our forts which was a tree in the middle of a small clearing. Here we would do battle with imaginary enemies, wrestle with each other and bring our friends and/or cousins into our magical world when they came over to play. It was a good distance from our actual house so we always had our ears open for the dinner bell.

> **Kristin:** With an older brother constantly in my room and in my personal space, I had to rely on the outdoors for my secret place. Behind my house was a field that the owner would let overgrow in order to make bales of hay at the end of summer. Although the field wasn't huge, it had this quality that it looked as if it stretched out forever, and I felt as though no one could ever find me within this field because it seemed to stretch so far. When I was having a bad day or just felt that I needed some time to myself, I would run to the middle

> of the field, sit down, and just let my imagination run wild. To me, it didn't matter whether I was pretending to be someone else at that moment or just sitting there listening to the environment around me, all that mattered was it was my own space that no one would ever find. My secret place was a place that no one could ever fill with their stuff and I knew that in this space no one could interrupt my thoughts and there was definitely no brother to tell me that imagining I was a princess being rescued was dumb.

The Dutch phenomenologist Martinus Langeveld described the importance of children's secret places as places of refuge where children in middle childhood could "come to themselves" (Langeveld 1983b, p. 14) and creatively encounter a world that is open and free from the demands of the adult world. In the formation of the child's identity, the secret place is experienced as an intimate, personal place where "one finds oneself in the unexpected presence of one's own self without having tried to make oneself a project of study. Here, one has every opportunity by doing or dreaming to realize, to make real a world of one's own" (Langeveld 1983a, pp. 183–184). It would go beyond the confines of this chapter to analyze these secret nature places in depth, but in the following I want to point out some key structural elements, which can help us understand the psychological conditions for reterritorializing places that have become invisible to adults.

Determined and Undetermined Places

Langeveld offers us an interesting existential, psychosocial concept that is very useful for understanding the more personal, psychological dimension of territorialization. He speaks of the undetermined ("*das Unbestimmte*") in general, and the undetermined place ("*die unbestimmte Stelle*") in particular (Langeveld 1960, p. 73) and contrasts them with determined events, places, and things. For Langeveld, the complex horizontality of the world calls us to give meaning to places and events, i.e., to make sense of them and determine what they are so we can interact and deal with them. Meaning can range from predetermined, fixed, cultural meanings to the more open structures of meaning making that we find in play and art. Langeveld also points out that places and things around us can become meaningless "as soon as our sense-making productivity stops" (Langeveld 1968, p. 156, my translation) and that they can even become somewhat insane ("*irr-sinnig*"), i.e., that they confuse and confound the human mind. The invisibility of deterritorialized nature places that we discussed earlier is an example of a place that has been withdrawn from cultural meaning making and left fallow. The "*Irr-Sinn*," the confusion of perception, the craziness shows itself in the mythologizing and fear of the neighbors and in their inability to see the complexity and variety of living structures in these nature places which have become mere "green stuff." Garbage, as we saw earlier, is also a symptom of the craziness that can come with deterritorialization.

Deterritorialized spaces have become undetermined, "*unbestimmt*" in Langeveld's sense. The German word *unbestimmt* means literally that something is no longer given a voice, that it is no longer told what to be, and/or that it has fallen out of human discourse. Undetermined nature places fade back into the totality of

the horizon and lose the differentiation of the "determined" figure that stands out before a ground. They are no longer spoken about, their names are forgotten, and their diverse biotopes become invisible.

Most of contemporary children's time is spent in places and activities that have been determined by adults. Determined activities, such as schooling or organized sports, prescribe and order children's bodies, their relationships with each other, the tasks to be accomplished, and how they spend their time. Langeveld, the pedagogue, points out that not everything can be taught in schools and adult-structured environments (Langeveld 1960). Children need the free time to find and claim undetermined places that are untouched by adult territorialization and their expectations for who the child ought to be. Children need free, undetermined places where they can make their own meaning and exercise their agency.

Ownership and Attachment

In my research and my conversations with contemporary students, the difference between children who had an "indoor" and an "outdoor" childhood is striking. The more parents are afraid of their neighborhoods and the woods, the closer they keep children to the home, which is made easy nowadays by digital entertainment, which simulates a wide and adventurous world. However, there are still many children who do find a place in nature, and who recolonize the abandoned, deterritorialized green spaces that have lost meaning and function for the adult community. It does not take much hidden nature to invite a child to lift the veil and stake a claim.

The aforementioned two examples of secret places give a fairly typical picture of undetermined, adult-deterritorialized natural places that are reterritorialized by children. The woods had become useless to the adults and the field was left to itself for most of the year, which created the perfect opportunity for children to stake their claim. One key structure of children's secret places is that they find refuge in the *leftover places* inside and outside their homes. Adults find the space behind the sofa or under the piano useless and leave it to the child. Adults have outgrown the crawlspace under the bush or they have not yet developed the stand of trees at the edge of the housing development: The children move in. In *all* descriptions of their childhood secret places, my students expressed a fierce sense of *ownership* and *attachment* to attics and closets, trees and bushes, culverts, brooks, fields, and clearings. Matt and Kristin loved "their" piece of nature, and it served as a refuge for child-centered play and as a sanctuary from the stresses of their social lives. They were free to engage with the place and fit their bodies into the structures of nature that were already there. They learned to know the landscape and its natural inhabitants and became creatures of the forest and the field themselves. The natural places allowed them egress and gave them a sense of freedom and peace while the determined structures of their busy lives as students and family members withdrew into the background.

Reterritorializations by children happen through a number of practices:

1. Children play with places in nature. They hear the invitation of natural things in a *pathic* way (Langeveld 1984), i.e., not primarily as an intellectual project, but as an intuitive invitation to interact and play. True play, as we find it in Matt and his brother's boisterous use of trees and creeks but also in the quiet description of Kristin's secret field, follows the invitation that is issued by places and things. The nature of play, as Buytendijk (1933) has shown, lies in the player's free response to the call that comes from the play object: Play is only interesting if the ball plays with the player. Kristin, though merely sitting in her field, plays with the infinite horizon of her open place: She finds its center and lets herself be absorbed by its silence. Play with and in nature implies that the child exposes her or himself to a dimension of life that is not tamed, not cultivated, and not known. The infinite horizon of Kristin's field can flip, and from a sense of freedom and possibility it can turn into an endless, indifferent cosmos within which the child is unmoored and lost. Matt's forest can flip from a kind playground to a menacing place of dark shadows and wild creatures which inspire panic and flight. The "unperson" as Langeveld (1983a) puts it, is part of the uncanniness of the secret place and looks out at the child. Isis lifts her veil, and what we see there can be terrifying. Toadvine's discussion of the elemental imagination and the apocalyptic sense of nature experience (Chap. 13 in this volume) resonate with these children's experience of nature play: There is an immemorial, "awe-ful" dimension to nature "that haunts every present while itself remaining beyond presentation" (Toadvine, Chap. 13 in this volume, p. 220). The uncanniness of nature is an indicator that we are only partly at home within it, that we are fragile, and that it transcends our temporary existence.
2. The exposure to the elemental, apocalyptic imagination becomes especially visible in some of the more extreme forms of children's nature play. The woods, more than any other place, invite a form of deep play (Ackerman 2000), which skirts the line of physical harm and destruction, and sometimes crosses it. The openness of the undetermined place implies that there are no cultural rules and no policing of human activity. A decade ago, I interviewed adults about their childhood play places in an inner city neighborhood (Simms 2008b) and one of my participants told me how he and his friends used to play in the woods at the edges of the Hill District. One summer, while the Olympic games were on television (TV), they held their own Olympic torch relay—and they burned down half the steep hillside. Another research participant in a different study reported an even more extreme form of deep play in the woods: Together with his friend he would bend a tree sapling, climb onto its tip, and let himself be hurled through the air as far as possible. He commented that the childhood experience of playing in the woods allowed him to survive as a soldier in the jungles of Vietnam. These forms of deep play were very significant in their lives: they allowed them to test the limits of their own bodies and get in touch with the ecstatic dimension of the synergy between the human body and nature—and experiment with the greatest fact of nature, death.
3. Many children reterritorialize their secret nature places by giving them new names, which allows for a differentiated conversation about these places in the imaginary play of a solitary child or by groups of children (see definition of "*bestimmen*," sense making mentioned earlier).
4. Children rearrange places in nature. Nature play and the claiming of secret places is a *de-schooled* form of "legwork" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), where children expose themselves to the influence of the location, commit their bodies to it, work on it, and learn in an unstructured, self/situation directed way, as Mitchell discusses in Chap. 7 of this volume. Matt and his brother built play forts. Many children clean streams or build dams. Others intensify the height of a climbing tree by adding footholds or deepen the sense of seclusion and interiority by hollowing and cleaning a space under a rounded bush or under overhanging tree branches. In these playful responses and intensifications of the natural landscape, we find the elemental imagination at work (see Mickey, Chap. 10 in this volume). At the same time, it is an appropriation of deterritorialized space for the child's own creative activity and exertion of the human will and as such a quintessentially human phenomenon. According to Langeveld, these activities are an exercise of the child's freedom from nature and a step into human culture-making activity:

> For whoever has come to understand how to put just three stones together in a swirling stream so that they stay together has changed the world. How mistaken is the adult, who, from the height of his maturity, smilingly belittles the sandcastle, the snowman, or the bridge as a triviality. These are actual and essential achievements of the human being because human beings have made form and meaning out of formlessness and meaninglessness. These achievements signify a step into the realm of the particulars of the reality of objects. They signify a renunciation of the more primitive freedom to leave things as they are—as when one leaves one's hand in the water in order to let the sand wash through the fingers. It signifies, in other words, growth: growth of the mind (Langeveld 1984, p. 223).

   Langeveld's insight is profound and problematic. What are we to do with this fundamental human desire and ability to exert the will upon the natural landscape: to stack the rocks and change the stream, to build trails, to create parks and nature preserves, to territorialize the earth? To deny this impulse and pretend it does not exist and preach a passive insertion of the human into biological ecosystems is dangerous and illusory. The challenge is to connect the will to the heart and temper the effects of our form-making activity with affection and attachment.
5. Children develop spatial habits: they find specific ways into their secret place. Certain places are "inhabited" while others are avoided. Paths are carved out of the landscape. The secret place, on a primal level, becomes a familiar "here" from which the strange "there" of the world further out is distinguished. The ownership that children feel for their secret place comes from the same impulse that Eliade (1959) described as the human desire to found a place as the home location around which the rest of the world is organized. On the cultural level, the *umbilicus mundi*, as he calls this central place, is highly emotionally charged for people and often the location of their myths of origin. With their secret nature places, children, on some level, repeat the fundamentally human act of founding and cultivating home places, ordering the cosmos, and building a particular

world. Langeveld named it the "renunciation of the more primitive freedom to leave things as they are" (as mentioned earlier).

6. The secret nature places are visited again and again. They become temporal habits. Places, unlike people, have a greater stability: Trees and fields and rocks and streams do not move away. They stay put. A child can expect them to be there. This experience provides the background for the child's sense that their secret place is a refuge. In a primal sense, this place becomes a *holding environment* (Winnicott 1971) which provides safety and comfort and a foundation from which the child can reenter the adult determined world with more equanimity and ease (for a more depthful discussion of holding environments and attachment to nature, see Puhakka's essay in Chap. 2 of this volume).
7. Children form a great sense of attachment to their secret nature places. They are fiercely protective of the integrity of their place and are very upset if other children or adults interfere with it.

In my work with college students, I have learned that the remembrance and description of their own childhood secret places reawakens the attachment to place in general, and is the first step in making them care about places in the communities we work with. It is as if their attachment to the place becomes speakable and conceivable for the first time. Remembering one's secret childhood place brings with it a new sense of excitement and wonder about the natural and the built world, and liberates in many young adults a great willingness to work in local communities for the transformation and ethical reterritorialization of urban nature spaces.

Educators have also noticed that traditional environmental education does not work well. Sobel (1996) has argued that the kind of "save the whale" global, unconnected nature education leads not to interest in the wider natural world, but to disconnectedness, fear, and "ecophobia." In recent years, the word "environmental education" has been replaced by the term "place-based education," which acknowledges that children learn about nature best through local, hands-on activities and direct experience with the flora and fauna in their neighborhoods. Tucker's chapter (6) in this book beautifully describes the topo- and biophilia that arises for the adult naturalist who intensely studies a particular, place-based ecosystem.

Easy affection for natural places, active care, a bodily knowledge how to interact with natural formations, and a sense that nature is an inviting, mysterious, and differentiated presence which commands respect are the legacy of children's secret nature places. The traces of play forts in the woods should give us hope that there is another generation of human beings who will respond to the gift that urban nature spaces give.

Conclusion

Garbage and play forts are two ways of claiming urban nature spaces after they have become invisible to their communities. Garbage exploits and ruins the ecosystem; play forts fit themselves into the natural environment in playful and creative ways. While garbage is a symptom of the craziness and ruin of deterritorialized, invisible urban nature, play forts and other secret places can be a model for small reterritorializations and bioethical affirmations in deterritorialized landscapes. They show how a lasting *attachment* to natural habitats is formed and the kind of *care* human beings are able to give to places. In return, natural places can give solace and comfort and issue an open invitation to play, to contemplate, and to let go of the determined, prescribed demands of everyday life.

Personally, I have the sense that children's secret places in the woods are the canary in the coal mine: when the play forts decay, when the hollows under bushes fill with leaves only, when no new places in the woods are claimed and loved by children, we have lost the future generation that will care enough to work for the preservation of the diversity of our natural world. As a piece of political action to counteract this loss on the local level, I help to initiate and create conversational spaces where my students and my neighbors can recover the memories of their special places in nature and rediscover the *topophilia* that will allow us to truly see our woods again and allow them to be a cared for element of our urban commons.

Hadot's concluding words from *The Veil of Isis* ask us, in the wake of 2,000 years of philosophy, to think nature as art and art as nature, and to experience ourselves as one with nature. The rope swings in the woods and the climbing trees at the edges of our urban lots are markers of the playful, imaginary, deep engagement with natural places humans are capable of cultivating.

The quote from the poet Hölderlin, with which Hadot closes The Veil of Isis (2006, p. 319), seems very appropriate in this place as well: "To be but one with all living things, to return by a radiant self-forgetfulness, to the All of Nature."

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Chapter 16
Lorecasting the Weather: Unhumanizing Phenomenology for Decoding the Language of Earth

Craig Chalquist

This beautiful place defaced with a crop of suburban houses—
How beautiful when we first beheld it…
As for us:
We must uncenter our minds from ourselves;
We must unhumanize our views a little, and become confident
As the rock and ocean that we were made from.
—Robinson Jeffers (1965, p. 102)

Natural objects should be sought and investigated as they are and not to suit observers, but respectfully as if they were divine beings.
—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (Matthaei 1971, p. 57)

Phenomenology and Eradigm Shift

Although every period in human history is an arena for colliding paradigms, the past several decades have opened up the vision of still larger collisions to every eye in range of a television, radio, or computer. What collides needs a larger word than "paradigm," and so eradigms refer to collective and often competing worldviews that overshadow entire eras. As a result of this turbulence, we can watch a film like *Religulous* and witness the eradigm of Modernity, or the Big Machine, waging supercilious war against the eradigm of monotheistic religion: the otherworldly, hierarchical Heavenly City worldview perched between the organic Mother Nature worldview that reaches back into prehistory, and the Big Machine that rumbled to a start with the scientific and industrial revolutions. Such collisions exhibit intolerance and aggression exactly to the degree the combatants identify with their own eradigms, reifying and idolizing them instead of using them critically as culturally ground lenses peering out at a complex world. The lens that sticks to the eye can blind it.

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