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MAPPING ATMOSPHERE

Rehearsals on rural mediterranean landscapes

Cover page:
A cartographical interpretation of atmosphere(s)
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A cartographical interpretation of atmosphere(s)

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[90] Our insight to the meaning of illusion is guided by Ernst Gombrich, Langer's contemporary art philosopher, and his book Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation, published initially in 1960:
According Gombrich (2000), the term representation is what best clarifies the definition of image-drawing, painting and sculpture: representation is a reality that, for certain reasons and for the one who perceives it or uses it, replaces, serves, or takes the place of another reality. The representation can also be used with the sense of evocation: evocation through a substitute that takes the place of a reality, because of its resemblance, figurative similarity, functionality, magical, religious, or ritual factors, or simply because of a cultural tacit and conventional agreement. Certain correlations might be drawn between Goodman's concept of exemplification and Gombrich's evocation. As Goodman (1976) proposes, what is important in representation (in art) is not so much the figurative resemblance as that the image fulfills its function serving as a substitute for the reality it evokes.

According Gombrich, the artist doesn't seek to achieve a facsimile of reality-something impossible to achieve with his limited means, but to make a substitution, causing an illusion of reality. But in order to perceive this illusion of reality, a constructive contribution is always needed by the observer's mind to give significance to what he observes. Gombrich has insisted on it, referring to the part of the observer, to the mental equipment, to the plasticity of the mind and to the effort applied in the search of significance in the data perceived. The search of significance is not an option. According Gombrich, perhaps even influenced by an ecological approach to visual perception, man is biologically prepared to perceive meanings rather than forms: We don't grasp configurations to which we add meanings a posteriori, but we automatically ¨scan¨ the reality presented to us before our eyes for meaning.

Gombrich refers to the ability of our mind to enter into harmony with the author of a picture, imaginatively reconstructing what he would mean through the painting, with the expression of the magic brush: The painter performs the miracle of evoking the real world with his brush, and the observer completes its task, giving a consistent meaning to the color pigments through that other brush that would be our mind. Man's ability to adapt his mental equipment to a given context, and thus extract a meaning of the image, is unlimited and, according to Gombrich, characteristic of the plasticity of the mind to classify and distinguish heterogeneous realities.

With all these expressions and examples Gombrich wants to stress that it is equally important the information conveyed by representation as the process of our mind to give it a coherent meaning. Although Gombrich didn't make any special reference to architecture, we might assume that one possible interpretation of Langer definition of illusion could be actually based in the fact that atmosphere would be the extract of this specific phenomenon, quite parallel as the magic brush exemplification offered by Gombrich. Architecture then becomes an illusion where the beholder(viewer) fills in the blanks, based on his own expectations and ¨mental equipment¨. The product of this process would then be the atmosphere of a place that belongs neither to the object, space, nor to the experiential mode of the perceiver…

2. TOWARDS A WORKING DEFINITION FOR ATMOSPHERE

My argument initially draws from the complex definition of atmosphere, proposed by Susanne Langer (1977):

A culture is made up, factually, of the activities of human being; it is a system of interlocking and intersecting actions, a continuous functional pattern. As such it is of course intangible and invisible. It has physical ingredients-artifacts, also physical symptoms. But all such items are fragments that "mean" the total ***pattern*** *of life only to those who are acquainted with it may be reminded of it. They are ingredients in a culture, not its image. The architect creates its image: a physical present human environment that expresses the characteristic rhythmic functional patterns which constitute a culture.* ***The place created by architecture is an illusion, begotten by the visible expression of a feeling, sometimes called atmosphere****.* (Langer 1977: 96).

Amongst all the bibliographic references to atmosphere consulted, Langer's definition seems to me as one of the denser ones. In just one phrase integrates all the key concepts to atmosphere: creation, illusion[90], visible, expression and of course feeling…But definitely, atmosphere is an expression of a feeling.

Through the theoretical questions that emerge from these concepts, we trace a possible manner of approaching the phenomenon of atmosphere from within a more structured order.

At this stage the significance of feelings in the definition of atmosphere proposed by Langer stays open, in order to focus first to the proposal that atmosphere expresses feeling. What does expression actually refers to? Drawing from Nelson Goodman,who represents a fundamental turning point in the analytic approach to artistic issues in Anglo-American philosophy, to express means to metaphorically exemplify.

Fig. 56:
Bruce Nauman, *Square Depression*, Münster, Germany, 2007
Available at http://www.landezine.com/index.php/2009/07/square-depression/

In 1977, Klaus Bußmann from the LWL-Landesmuseum had the idea for a sculpture exhibition; Kasper König invited nine artists to realize projects outdoors, thus taking art out of the museum and installing it in urban space. Bruce Nauman planned an outdoor sculpture for the campus of the university's department of natural sciences: a walk-in object made of white concrete, its edges extending downwards and crossing at the lowest point in the center, from where an observer could only just glance over the sides. Finally realized for skulptur projekte münster 07, Nauman's sculpture is the inverted pyramid. Square Depression is literally a square let into the ground, but – then as now – Bruce Nauman's title for the work is a play on the word "depression". Depressive, helpless, to be at someone's mercy is how the spectators may feel when they stand at the center of this sculpture. It is about the formal qualities of space and the vanishing point; at the same time Square Depression represents the spatial construction of a psychological state below the level of the vanishing point. As a sculpture, Nauman's work shows us just how much perspective can be regarded as constraint – and to what extent it can actually inflict violence. Square Depression is a staged threat, which now – upon its completion in the year 2007, thirty years after it was originally planned – is as haunting and topical as ever.
(http://www.skulptur-projekte.de/kuenstler/nauman/?lang=en)

[91] The term exemplification has raised a lot of controversy in the field of aesthetics. Claims against the lack of concreteness, the indeterminacy and the relativity of the term but also proposals for its ¨reconstruction¨ in order to face the aforementioned ¨weaknesses¨ haven't stopped appearing since the publication of ¨ Languages of Art¨ (See Elgin, 2011:91).

2.1. Metaphorical exemplification of a feeling

Nelson Goodman, American philosopher, whose theory on expression has been and continues being a constant reference in the field of the philosophy of symbolic forms, in his book Languages of art (1976), proposes a structural revision of the common assumption that something must resemble another thing in order to represent it. According to this basic thesis, a more liberate meaning of expressing emerges, as for Goodman, ***to express*** means ***to metaphorically exemplify***.

Exemplification is easier to approach through its comparison with denotation: Exemplification and denotation are the two basic symbol systems through which Goodman interprets works of art. According Goodman, all artworks could be conceptualized as symbol systems, that is, consisting of a symbol scheme correlated with a field of reference. While denotation is categorized in description and representation, exemplification is clasified in literal exemplification and metaphorical exemplification.

While denotation is the "core of representation and is independent of resemblance", "exemplification is possession plus reference¨[91]. Nonetheless, what is of importance for us is Goodman's proposal for the definition of metaphorical exemplification and its distinction from literal exemplification.

The term metaphorical exemplification is easiest to explain through an example: when we talk of a ¨sad picture¨, the picture "*metaphorically exemplifies sadness if some label coextensive with 'sad' is referred to by and metaphorically denotes the picture*" (Goodman 1976: 85). For instance, **when a painting is claimed to express sadness that doesn't mean that the painting is literally sad**. Sadness in this case is metaphorically exemplified, or expressed. In brief, a work of art expresses something when it metaphorically exemplifies it.

…what is expressed is possessed, and what a face or a picture expresses need not (but may) be emotions or ideas the actor or artist has […] or thoughts or feelings of the viewer or of a person depicted, or properties of anything else related in some other way to the symbol. And continues: *The properties a symbol expresses are its own property.* (Goodman 1976: 85).

Fig. 57:
Bruce Nauman, *Square Depression*, Münster, Germany, 2007
Available at http://www.landezine.com/index.php/2009/07/square-depression/

Expression is not limited to feelings and emotions but comprises any feature that can be metaphorically attributed to an artwork: in architecture, for instance, a building may express movement, dynamism, or being "jazzy" although, literally, it can't have any of those properties (Goodman, Elgin 1988:40).

To expression and exemplification, too, the general rule for which the relationship between a symbol and what it symbolizes is never "absolute, universal, or immutable" (Goodman 1976:50), applies. Hence, like representation, exemplification and expression are relative; *in particular they are relative to established use* (Goodman 1976:48).

Goodman points out that aesthetic experiences arousing emotion are very different from 'real life' experience. This leads him to claim that "*in aesthetic experience emotions function cognitively*" (Goodman 1976:48); we should place these aesthetic emotions in new relations and make judgments about them "*in order to gauge and grasp the [artwork] and integrate it with the rest of our experience and the world*." (Goodman 1976:248)

All symbolism "***is to be judged fundamentally by how well it serves the cognitive purpose: by the delicacy of its discriminations and the aptness of its allusions; […] by how it participates in the making, manipulation, retention, and transformation of knowledge***" (Goodman 1976:258, bold mine).

According to Goodman, most works of music, dance, and architecture, as well as abstract paintings, are dense systems of representation; they do not represent anything at all. Yet they are able of exemplifying without literally possessing certain qualities or feelings.

Catherine Z. Elgin (2011) summarizes the basic characteristics of exemplification:

Exemplification requires instantiation. But instantiation, even obvious instantiation is not enough; for exemplification is a referential relation. ***An exemplar refers to certain of its properties; it exhibits them, highlights them, shows them forth, makes them manifest.*** *Exemplification requires both reference to and instantiation of the properties exemplified. Because an exemplar is itself an instance of the property it refers to, it affords epistemic access to that property….****In highlighting some properties, an exemplar overshadows, marginalizes, or downplays others. Exemplification is selective. Exemplified properties need not have verbal labels. Nor need the labels, verbal or non-verbal, be literal. Just as a metaphorical label can genuinely denote an object, an object can genuinely exemplify a metaphorical property.*** (Elgin 2011:3, bold mine)

If we were to adopt and adapt Goodman's definition of expression to Langer's definition of atmosphere, then **atmosphere could be defined as the metaphorical exemplification of a feeling**. What is more, through the explanation of Elgin, metaphorical exemplification gains some more concrete dimensions. Among the most decisive ones is first the fact that exemplification is selective, highlighting or downplaying certain properties in relation to others and second that exemplified properties need not have verbal nor literal labels. It is about showing how and not describing what. These conclusions suggest some interesting conclusions on atmosphere:

Fig. 58, 59:
Peter Eisenman, *Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe*, Berlin, Germany, 2004
Available athttp://www.landezine.com/index.php/2010/03/memorial-to-the-murdered-jews-of-europe/holocaust-mahnmal-06/

Fig. 58

Fig. 59

It is a cold, hard, deaf, heavy, extremely un-natural environment, contrasted with the Tiergarten park across the street. Though the memorial is a very confusing concrete landscape, and you can easily lose orientation (especially, when you are deep inside, where slabs reach a height of nearly 5 meters) you can't hide. At every moment you can be seen from a great distance, since the paths are straight.
http://www.landezine.com/index.php/2010/03/memorial-to-the-murdered-jews-of-europe/

The metaphorical exemplification of a feeling doesnt' refer to the expression of a concrete feeling, is not intending an overall presentation of it or aiming at providing a thorough answer to the question: what feeling. On the contrary, atmosphere would refer to the precise manner that a feeling is felt, would show how to experiment the feeling in a very concrete way defined through the configuration of space.

On the other hand, Goodman's proposal that what is expressed is possessed (Goodman 1976) highlights another interesting point. Transferring this to my argument, then the specific properties of a feeling exemplified through atmosphere are properties of the proper environment. This last suggestion opens some new perspectives as far as one of the main claims against atmosphere is concerned. Atmosphere conceived in this manner is not longer belonging only to the subjective perception of the observer: it is a property of the environment, and helps conceptualize atmosphere as a spatially situated form.

Atmosphere thus, in this thesis, refers to the objective properties of the environment that metaphorically exemplify structures of feelings and as it will be subsequently argued is can be further defined through the structural patterns that configure perception and more globally, cognition.

WORKING DEFINITION

1955 1960 1965 1970 1975 1980 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2012 2015

1968 1973 1974 1977 1993 1998 2003 2004 2006 2007 2008 2009 2011 2013

NELSON GOODMAN

Expression: ***To express means to metaphorically exemplify.***

ERNST GOMBRICH

Illusion: *It is equally important the information conveyed by representation as the process of our mind to give it a coherent meaning in relation to the objects that are represented...*

SUSANNE LANGER

The place created by architecture is an illusion, begotten by the visible expression of a feeling, sometimes called atmosphere.

Atmosphere: the objective properties of the environment that metaphorically exemplify structures of feelings. through the configuration of the embodied experience

2.2. The objective subjectivity

If we were to accept that atmosphere, refers to an instinctive, immediate effect of space to our emotional sensibility, then a systematic approach to perception is needed in order to reveal which, if any, are the objective properties of this interaction capable of constructing a more solid ground for the concept of atmosphere.

The intuitions on atmosphere, as reflected by the phenomenological approach, basically through the works of Hermann Schmitz (2011), and of course that of Mikel Dufrenne[92] (1973) both point towards a *body-subject pre-reflective corporeal awareness expressed through action and typically in sync with and enmeshed in the physical world in which the action unfolds* (Seamon 2010:1.) Although both claim a phenomenological reconsideration of perception that overcomes the schism between mind and body, body and environment, perception and action and reclaim the recovery of feelings and emotions as a structural factor of perception and consequently cognition, the truth is that phenomenology as integral part of the 20th century continental philosophy has been restrained from the necessary "scientific" input coming from the field of cognitive science that would correlate and qualify its proposals.

Findings in the field of embodied cognition offer solid responses that help overcome the typical misconceptions that seem to obstruct us from the legitimization of the concept of atmosphere as Böhme proposes, but also enlighten en several ways the structural hues that underlie the phenomenon of atmosphere.

My interest is focused on three precise theories, through which not only the immediateness of the phenomenon of atmosphere is confirmed, but also its objective specificities, potentially geo-localized, are revealed, that could eventually orient its cartographic interpretation.

[92] *I am not in space and time, nor do I conceive space and time; I belong to them, my body combines with them and includes them*. (Merleau Ponty 1962 quoted in Seamon 2010:1)

[93] Granting the threads of the argument to Dewey (1896), William J. Clancey (Clansey 2008), one of the major figures in the area of so-called "Situated Cognition", explains that the key principles of situated cognition, that shook the foundations of Artificial Intelligence studies at the 90's, are to be found in an interactive relationship between person and environment in terms of a dynamic mutual modification:
In summary, situated can be understood as emphasizing the contextual, dynamic, systemic, non localized aspects of the mind, mental operations, identity, organizational behavior, and so on. Across the sciences of psychology, anthropology, sociology, ethology, biology, and neurology, and their specialized investigations of knowledge, language, and learning, the systemic, holistic view strives to explain behavior within a developmental and evolutionary framework. Specifically, situated cognition views human knowledge not as final objective facts but as (1) arising conceptually (e.g., dynamically constructed, remembered, reinterpreted) and articulated within a social context (i.e., acontext conceived with respect to social roles and norms); (2) varying within a population in specialized niches (areas of expertise); (3) socially reproduced (e.g., learning in communities of practice; Lave & Wenger, 1991); and (4) transformed by individuals and groups in processes of assimilation that are inevitably adapted and interpreted from unique perspectives (improvised in action, not simply transferred and applied). (Clansey 2008:19)
…..Can we summarize the meaning of situated cognition itself, as seen through all the scientific disciplines over the past century? As stated, an all-encompassing generalization is the perspective of complex systems. From an investigative standpoint, the one essential theoretical move is contextualization (perhaps stated as "antilocalization," in terms of what must be rooted out): we cannot locate meaning in the text, life in the cell, the person in the body, knowledge in the brain, a memory in a neuron. Rather, these are all active, dynamic processes, existing only in interactive behaviors of cultural, social, biological, and physical environment systems. Meaning, life, people, knowledge, and so on, are not arbitrary, wholly subjective, culturally relative, or totally improvised. Rather, behaviors, conceptions, and emotional experiences are constrained by historically developed structural relations among parts and subprocesses in different kinds of memories –neural, artifactual, representational, and organizational –and are dynamically constrained in action across system levels. (Clansey 2008:33)

The situated perspective

The situated perspective emphasizes that intelligent behavior derives from the environment and the agent's interactions with it. The nature of these interactions is defined by an agent's embodiment.

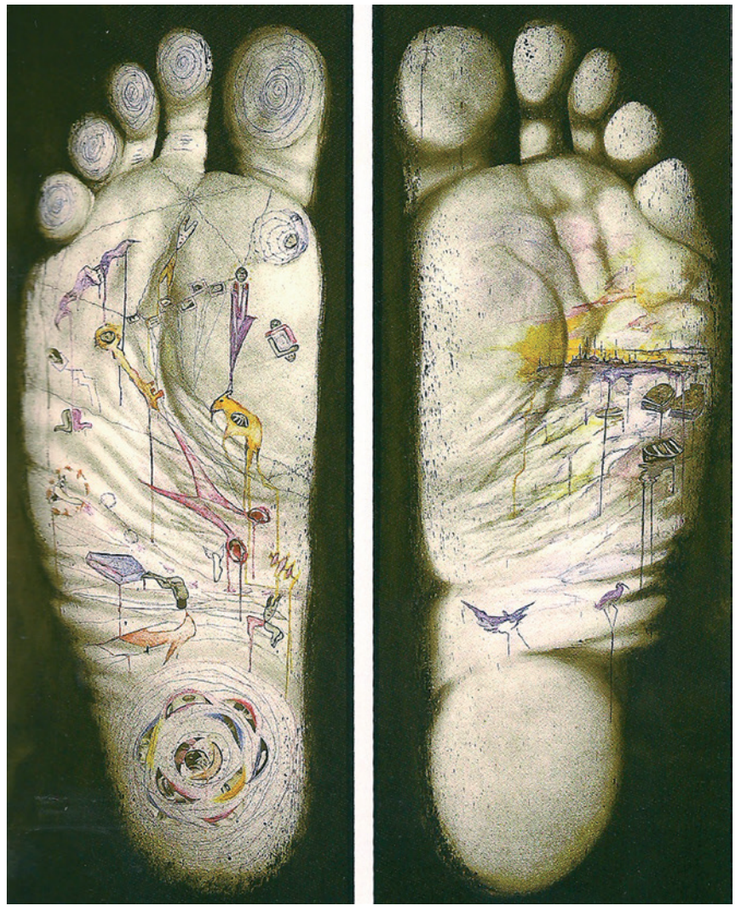
The philosopher John Dewey and his naturalist theory of knowledge are largely recognized today as precursory of situated cognition. *Dewey (1896) explicitly argued against the view,…, that perception, thinking and action are three separate faculties. Unlike "academic robots" which have to first see, then think, then act, he argued that* ***perception and action are mutually shaping****. Perception is altered by actively moving and manipulating things, just as action is controlled by properly coordinated perception.* ***Perception is part of an active sensori-motor "coordination" rather than a mirror of given objects.***[93] (Lave 2008:42, bold mine)

The situated perspective of embodied cognition help us argue that meaning arises not through the perception, however pre-reflective, automatic, instinctive or metaphorical it might be, of an exterior ¨other¨, that is atmosphere in this case, but on the contrary meaning is constructed through an interactive relationship with the environment. This process leads to, as Varela implies, an emerging of ***knowledge through the primary agent's bodily engagement with the environment, rather than being simply determined by and dependent upon either pre-existent situations or personal construals***. (Varela et al. 1991)

Indirectly, the ¨subjectiveness¨ of the phenomenon of atmosphere is thus relativized: meaning is constructed not based on any subjective pre-conceptions of the observer but it is contextualized through his bodily engagement with the environment.

On the other hand a clear connection between perception and action is proposed. Dewey (1896), Varela et al. (1991) **clarify the term action by affirming that sensory and motor processes, perception, and action are fundamentally inseparable in lived cognition. For biological organisms, action, and perception** "***are not merely contingently linked in individuals; they have also evolved together***" (Varela et al. 1991:173). This is a crucial aspect of the issue, underscored earlier by J.J Gibson (1986) whose pioneering efforts and his ecological perspective certainly represent a fundamental antecedent for the paradigm of embodied cognition.

Fig. 60:
Annette Messager, *Mes Tropheés*, 1987
S: Harmon Katharine, *You are here. Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 2004, p. 28



[94] *"The observer may or may not perceive or attend to the affordance, according to his needs, but the affordance, being invariant, is always there to be perceived"* (Gibson 1986: 139).

[95] *His research has helped to elucidate the neural basis for the emotions and has shown that emotions play a central role in social cognition and decision-making. His work has also had a major influence on current understanding of the neural systems, which underlie memory, language and consciousness.*http://www.usc.edu/programs/neuroscience/faculty/profile.php?fid=27

The central point of Gibson's theory was his explicit refusal of the dichotomy between action and perception and the underlying dualism between physical and mental capacities; "*so we must perceive in order to move, but we must also move in order to perceive*" (Gibson 1986: 223).

The key concept of the ecological perspective of Gibson, as proposed in The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception (1986), is the term of **affordance**. **The affordances refer to the offers, consistent in opportunities of interaction, that the objects in the environment possess in relation to the sensorimotor capacities of each animal species**: "*The affordances of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill*" (Gibson 1986: 127). Different objects in the world offer different affordances for manipulation or nutrition; other animals, in turn, offer complex affordances, like "*a rich and complex set of interactions, sexual, predatory, nurturing, fighting, plying, cooperating, and communicating*" (Gibson 1986: 128).

Gibson maintained that **affordances are intrinsically part of objects themselves and are not constructed from the observer's needs or intentions**. According to Gibson there are some basic characteristics that we share as human species that in a way structure the perception of the environment. We perceive the environment not as objective properties to be later interpreted according to our basic need or intentions: **the value and meanings of things in the environment are directly perceived**[94].

Atmosphere or at least its interpretation as a first impression is proposed to have a direct bearing on the meaning perceived in the affordances offered by space. What is more, following Gibson, the affordances are intrinsically part of the objects themselves and do not depend on the subjective interpretation of the observer: the affordances are objective: they are a property of the environment. As far as atmosphere is concerned, this implies that **atmosphere could be partially defined through the ¨affordances¨ that construe it**. What is more atmosphere would thus orient perception, as the direct perception of affordances orientates the preceding actions and behavior (Gibson 1986).

"*The observer who does not move, but only stands and looks is not behaving at the moment, it is true, but he cannot help seeing the affordances for behavior in whatever he looks at" (Gibson 1986: 223). Perception of an object's characteristics, its shape and its dimensions, or, as Gibson would say, its "surface's layout," becomes one with perception of the actions that could be executed with it. "The point to remember is that the visual control of the hands is inseparably connected with the visual perception of objects. The act of throwing complements the perception of throwable objects. The transporting of things is part and parcel of seeing them as portable or not*" (Gibson 1986: 235).

The direct perception of the affordances in terms of preceding actions, independently whether the actions are finally consummated illuminates two basic aspects, that might be involved in the perception of atmosphere: atmosphere, as first impression, orientates action. On the other hand, objects express meaning, a meaning filtered according and through our specific capacities of possibilities of interaction with the environment. Perception moves us to act in this or that manner thus according to the possibilities of actions we immediately detect in the environment. Nonetheless, action involves decision making. And, as Antonio Damasio[95] (Damasio 1994) proposes, any decision making involves emotions and feelings.

Fig. 61:
Christian Nold, *San Fransisco Emotion Map*, 2007
Available at: http://sf.biomapping.net/sanfran.pdf

Common everyday maps typically show static architecture and exclude the people who inhabit and create the place. The San Fransisco Emotion Map attempts to remedy this by mapping the space of human perception and experience. Christian Nord, 2007:37
(Nord C, 2007, Emotional Cartography: Technologies of the Self, Creative Commons)

[96] Antonio Damasio: "El origen de los sentimientos". Interview published in *Executive Excellence* nº85 oct11

[97] *So if someone tells us that emotions are somewhat vague and difficult to understand and feelings are something impossible to define, and impossible to put in mind, I would say that at the first place that the mind is something that is made by the brain and emotions are very real and noticeable changes in the nervous system, not something that floats in the ether. Feelings have a reality as real as my perception of the audience during a conference…*
Antonio Damasio: "El origen de los sentimientos". Interview published in *Executive Excellence* nº85 oct11

[98] Antonio Damasio: "El origen de los sentimientos". Interview published in *Executive Excellence* nº85 oct11

[99] Antonio Damasio: "El origen de los sentimientos". Interview published in *Executive Excellence* nº85 oct11

Damasio's findings not only fade the claims against the subjectivity of feelings, but also might sustain our emotional response to atmosphere. This emotional response is not matter of choice. As an essential part of cognition and decision making is inevitable that will and does happen. Nonetheless, atmosphere has been defined as a metaphorical exemplification of structures of feeling. In this point the distinction between feeling and emotion proposed by Antonio Damasio might help us: An emotion is always related to a sequence of actions and feelings refer to the results of this sequence of actions. *It is important that we realize that when facing a danger, what saves us - and makes us act- is a series of actions that are triggered, not the feeling of fear. However, if you are feeling or sensing fear, it is that feeling which will guide your future actions. Our nature provides us with both aspects: first with an action that allows us to effectively flee, without thought or reflection, from a place where there is a danger, and also provides us with that added benefit of keeping in our minds something that will always reminds us of that source of danger*[96]*…..**Therefore, a quick definition might be that while emotions are programs of action, feelings of these emotions are the composite perceptions that come from the bodily state during an emotion and it is this perception that provides us with a particular feeling*.

Feelings and emotions themselves seem to have an objective structure, much as other realms of thought and understanding. According Damasio[97], ***emotions are not born, but are part of an automated system that allows us to react to the world, in an immediate and without thinking manner***, *with which we are already gifted from birth. Emotions are part of the regulation of the body and come in different "shapes and flavors". There are primary and simple emotions such as fear, anger, happiness or misery … There are emotions which are more complex, such as compassion, contempt, admiration, pride …They are all part of the basic equipment with which we are born. This equipment, primary and original, it is learned as fact. What we learn to do throughout our life (starting at a very early stage) is to associate emotions-and-feelings with certain objects or events, we learn that a person, object or house, for example make us afraid. Then we learn the connection between the object and emotion, creating a specific feeling*[98].

Feelings are real, and are equally important for decision making as rationality is: (Damasio 1994:70): *There appears to be a collection of systems in the human brain consistently dedicated to the goal-oriented thinking process we call reasoning, and to the response selection we call decision making, with a special emphasis on the personal and the social domain. This same collection of systems is also involved in emotion and feeling, and is partly dedicated to processing body signals.* Damasio (1994:269) defines reason as the "*ability to think and make inferences in an orderly and logical manner*", and rationality as "*that quality of thought and behavior that comes from adapting reason to a personal and social context*". Reason and rationality are engaged primarily in the service of decision-making, and decisions that in any way imply personal and/or social consequences are necessarily informed by emotions and/or feelings. Emotions and feelings, thus, play a central role in any reasoning that is personally relevant, highlighting both dangerous and propitious potential courses of action, and biasing decision-making accordingly.

Thus, "mere" perception of the world necessarily implies evaluation of the world, and evaluation, in turn, necessarily elicits emotions and action tendencies—tendencies either to continue with what one is doing, or to withdraw.

The close relation between emotion and action is explained by Damasio as follows:

*We do not learn emotions because we are born with them; we learn to connect the emotions through the system of facts, with an emotion that is already there. Both go together. T**he emotions reach their goals by generating actions. It is these actions that end up generating what we call feelings.** This was something I never understood until recently. When an emotion does his job, creates an action. **This action is directed to the inner state of our body, in his conduct and in his mind***[99].

Fig. 62:
Karin Schaefer, *WTC Memorial Model*, 2003: front view
Paint marker on plexi glass, 12 x 12
Available at: http://karinschaefer.com/detail/322/

[100] *Habitat selection is a vital decision in the lives of all organisms. When selecting a habitat an organism responds as if it understood the significance of objects, sounds, and odors for its future survival and reproductive success. Initial responses typically are emotional feelings that lead to rejection, exploration, or a certain use of the environment. Because the strength of these responses is a key to immediate decisions about where to settle and what to do there, the emotional states habitats evoke should be positively correlated with the expected survival and reproductive success of an organism in them. That is, good habitats should evoke strong positive responses; poor habitats should evoke weak or even negative responses.* (Orians 1998:50)

[101] Appleton also relies on a biological basis for aesthetics, defending that man obtains aesthetic pleasure from satisfaction from basic drives shared with animals.
Appleton proposes: "*that aesthetic satisfaction, experienced in the contemplation of landscape, stems from the spontaneous perception of landscape features which, in their shapes, colours, spatial arrangements and other visual attributes, act as sign-stimuli indicative of environmental conditions favorable to survival, whether they really are favorable or not. This proposition we can call habitat theory.*" (Appleton 1975:69)

[102] *Affect is central to conscious experience and behavior in any environment, whether natural or built, crowded or unpopulated. Because virtually no meaningful thoughts, actions, or environmental encounters occur without affect (Ittelson, 1973, p. 16; Izard, 1977; Zajonc, 1980), an affective state is an important indicator of the nature and significance of a person's ongoing interaction with an environment (Lazarus, Kanner, & Folkman, 1980, p. 190). Research concerning affective and aesthetic response, therefore, may have a central role in advancing our understanding of human interactions with the natural environment and could prove pivotal in the development of comprehensive theories. Further, this area of research relates to important questions in environmental planning and design, including, for instance, visual landscape assessment, the provision of vegetation and parks in cities, and issues of wilderness management and recreation. Concerning the latter, it appears that aesthetic and emotional experiences are the most important benefits realized by many recreationists in the natural environment (Rossman & Ulehla, 1977; Shafer & Mietz, 1969).*
(Ulrich 1983: 85)

[103] Parsons and Daniel aim a defense of scenic environmental aesthetics: *The central role for emotion in cognition as proposed by Damasio clearly contradicts with ecological aestheticians' division of landscape aesthetics into superficial, affectively-oriented scenic aesthetics on one hand, and deep, cognitively-oriented ecological aesthetics on the other.* (Parsons, Daniel 2002:51)

[104] Preference studies seem to share the same awkward destiny as atmosphere does. As Kaplan (1979), who will guide our investigation on preference, explains: *There are many who feel that preference judgments are bound to be arbitrary, idiosyncratic at best, and perhaps even random. In part the distrust of preference judgments probably stems from the fear that aesthetics will be debased by stooping to a popular consensus. Hidden in this fear is a profound irony. It implies that there is no basic consistency, no underlying pattern characteristic of preference judgments….If aesthetics is not an expression of some basic and underlying aspect of the human mind, then it is hard to see why it is of more than passing significance.* (Kaplan 1979: 242)

Basic purposes

I dont' pretend to limit perception into terms of safeguard and survival and the aesthetic cannot surely be reduced to a biological response to the environment. A question might emerge at this stage: what is the connection between this biological basis and the aesthetic appreciation of atmosphere tinted by our emotional sensibility?

Studies of environmental aesthetics seem to provide a wide field of references where biological motivation is linked with the aesthetic experience through the world of feelings: As Parsons and Daniel (2002) propose:

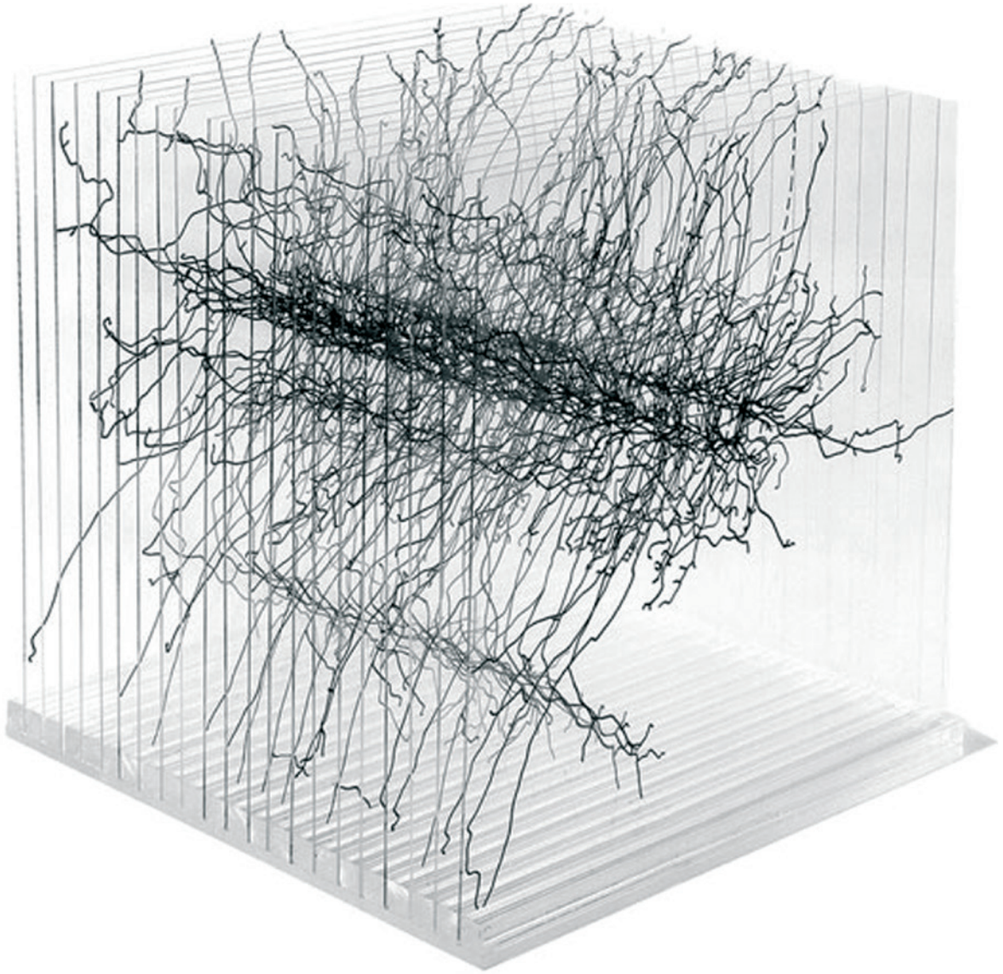
Whether it is through habitat selection (Orians and Heerwagen, 1992)[100], *prospect and refuge*[101] *(Appleton, 1975), knowledge acquisition (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989) or the emotional well-being elicited by secure, resource-rich environments*[102] *(Ulrich, 1983),each of these models seeks to explain landscape aesthetics in terms of the personal survival implications of environments. Thus, each of these models regard affective and cognitive processing as integrated, complementary aspects of the human–environment transactions that lead to aesthetic experiences of landscapes. Any perspective that sees one type of processing as shallow (e.g. affective) and the other as deep (e.g. cognitive), is seriously out of step with the neurobiological and cognitive science research of the past 15 years.*
(Parsons, Daniel 2002:51)

A quick review of the aforementioned theories by Parsons and Daniel justify the proposal that affective[103] processes are integrated with the cognitive processes that lead to aesthetic responses towards the environment but a thorough reconsideration of aesthetics or more specifically of beauty is proposed.

…beauty is not an intrinsic property of the objects that we call beautiful. Rather, it is the product of interactions between traits of objects and the human nervous system that evolved so that objects we consider beautiful have properties that result in improved performance in some aspect of living… (Orians 1998)

Evolutionary models and preference studies[104], on the other hand permit us ask these concrete questions that intrinsically carry the potentiality of informing this process of investigation: As Charlesworth (1976) has pointed out, *a species has not only to be able to recognize the sorts of environments it functions well in, it has to prefer them. Animals have to like the sort of settings in which they thrive. Ideally they would not have to learn such an inclination.*

Fig. 63: Making sense through layers
Karin Schaefer, *WTC Memorial Model*, 2003: left view
Paint marker on plexi glass, 12 x 12
Available at: http://karinschaefer.com/detail/322/



[105] *While our realization of the centrality of these two purposes arose in the context of research on preference, there are sound theoretical grounds for believing that they would be necessary to the survival of an information-based organism. If making sense and involvement are indeed pervasive purposes for humans, then environments that support these purposes should be preferred. "Support" here refers to whatever an environment might afford that makes that particular purpose more likely to be pursued to a successful conclusion. For making sense this refers to the perceived structure of the environment. It takes in anything that would make the environment easier to create a map of, easier to characterize, to summarize to oneself. It involves those affordances that increase one's sense of comprehension. For involvement, on the other hand, the supportive environment is one rich in possibility. In a sense, the affordances for involvement entail the raw materials for thinking about and coming to understand. The issue here is having what is required to be challenged, to have to call on one's capacities in order to process the information successfully. Thus a poem or a landscape that is "simple-minded" or "obvious" fails to offer affordance for involvement. (It should be noted that the "raw material" that challenges one's capacities need not actually be present; it constitutes an effective challenge even if it is only implied or suggested.)* (Kaplan 1979:243)

It could be costly for an animal to spend years barely subsisting in unsatisfactory environments in order to learn that such environments were in fact unsatisfactory. And to the extent that erroneously choosing certain environments could be a fatal error, such a bias would ideally be innate and immediate. Hence, one can view preference as an outcome of a complex process that includes perceiving things and spaces and reacting in terms of their potential usefulness and supportiveness. ***In this perspective aesthetics must, at least to some degree, reflect the functional appropriateness of spaces and things.*** (Charlesworth 1976 quoted in Kaplan 1979: 241)

The search for underlying patterns characteristics of human cognition that structure preference judgments presupposes that these structures are widely shared, although might be influenced by historical specificity and cultural context:

Although perceptions are not all the same, there are some remarkable communalities, perhaps in part because of our common evolutionary heritage. And while there are indeed certain cultural differences, these may involve differential emphasis on the components of preference discussed earlier... (Kaplan 1979:246)

My question to evolutionary models is very specific: which are these communalities that might help us in a functional manner when it comes to understanding how atmosphere is interpreted:

Kaplan (1979) seems to provide a quite concrete answer: *Recent work on perception views the perceptual process as inextricably connected with* ***human purposes****, and perhaps with human preferences as well. In fact our research …has over the years repeatedly pointed to two underlying purposes which people are concerned with throughout their waking hours. These two purposes probably had an important impact on the long-term survival potential of the individual. Their pervasive influence seems appropriate since they are necessarily vital to any specific purposes an individual may choose to pursue. We have come to call these persisting purposes "making sense" and "involvement"*[105]... (Kaplan 1979:242)

Making sense *refers to the concern to comprehend, to keep one's bearings, to understand what is going on in the immediate here and now, and often in some larger world as well...* (Kaplan 1979:242)

Involvement *refers to the concern to figure out, to learn, to be stimulated...* (Kaplan 1979:242)

At first glance these two purposes may seem to be contradictory, or at least at opposite ends of a continuum. But upon closer examination this turns out to be a misconception. Certainly there are environments that one can comprehend and at the same time be stimulated by. Likewise, there are environments that offer neither possibility. In fact, all, combinations are possible; knowing that an environment makes sense tells one nothing about whether it will be involving or not... (Kaplan 1979:242)

Kaplans' proposal is interesting for this investigation because he clarifies the significant patterns of information components of the "making sense" and "involvement", distinguishing firstly between two basic categories of reaction towards the environment:

Fig. 64: Seker Ahmet Pasa: *Woodcutter in the forest*

"If the beech tree between the edge of the forest and the far side of the clearing is nearer than anything else in the painting, then you are looking from its far edge, and from this point of view the woodcutter and its mule are the farthest away. Yet we also see him in the forest, dwarfed by the huge trees, about to cart across his load of wood. Why does much double vision have so precise an authority about it?

Its precision is existential. It accords with the experience of forest. The attraction and the terror of the forest is that you see yourself in it as Jonah was in the whale's belly. Although it has limits, it is closest around you. Now this experience, which is that of anybody familiar with forests, depends upon you seeing yourself in double vision. You make your way through the forest and, simultaneously, you see yourself, as if from the outside, swallowed by the forest."

John Berger, 1980, *About Looking*, New York: Vinage International, p.88

[106] *People can only hold a certain amount of information in what is called their "working memory" at one time. Research on this phenomenon suggests that this limit in capacity is best understood in terms of a certain number of major units of information or "chunks."* (Kaplan 1979:243)
Thus, rather than being able to remember a certain number of individual details or facts, people seem to be able to hold on to a few distinct larger groupings of information. The current evidence suggests that most people are able to hold approximately five such chunks or units in their working memory at once (Mandler 1967). It follows from this that anything in the scene which helps divide it into approximately five major units will aid the comprehension process. The various factors that contribute to coherence all tend to do this. The greater the complexity of a scene, the more structure is required to organize it in this way, or in other words, for it to be coherent as well. . (Kaplan 1979:243)

In reacting to the visual environment, people seem to relate to the information they pick up in two quite different ways. They react both to the visual array, the two-dimensional pattern, as if the environment in front of them were a flat picture, as well as to the three-dimensional pattern of space that unfolds before them... (Kaplan 1979:243)

As far as the making sense is concerned, then the key components are coherence (visual array) and legibility (three-dimensional pattern).

Coherence …*includes those factors which make the picture plane easier to organize, to comprehend to structure…. In other words, something that draws one's attention within the scene should turn out to be an important object or a boundary between regions or some other significant property. If what draws one's attention and what is worth looking at turn out to be different, then the scene lacks coherence*[106]. (Kaplan 1979:243)

On the other hand the **legibility** component has a parallel meaning to "refuge" component as defined by Appleton (1975):

The other aspect of landscape stressed by Appleton concerns safety in the context of space. While he terms this component "refuge," emphasizing being able to see without being seen, from an informational perspective safety encompasses considerably more than this. This broad conception of safety closely parallels the "making sense" side of our framework; we have chosen the term "legibility" to refer to the possibility of making sense within a three-dimensional space. Legibility entails a promise, a prediction, but in this case not of the opportunity to learn but to function. It is concerned with interpreting the space, with finding one's way, and not trivially, with finding one's way back. Hence it deals with the structuring of space, with its differentiation, with its readability. It is like coherence but instead of dealing with the organization of the "picture plane" it deals with the organization of the ground plane, of the space that extends out from the foreground to the horizon... (Kaplan 1979:244)

Atmosphere might thus entail the prediction of opportunities of functioning, not learning, in the ground plane. A clear parallelism can be drawn between Kaplan's' term of legibility and the theory of affordances of Gibson (Gibson 1986). The legibility component makes more clear that atmosphere is not depending on the perception of a vague, indecipherable and diffuse impression of the environment. Atmosphere functions at a level where the environment is judged according to its structuring, its differentiation, and its readability.

The component of involvement proposed by Kaplan is here proposed as significant for the analysis of atmosphere: its key components are complexity and mystery.

Complexity *is the "involvement" component at this surface level of analysis. Perhaps more appropriately referred to as "diversity" or "richness," this component was at one time thought to be the sole or at least the primary determinant of aesthetic reactions in general. Loosely speaking it reflects how much is "going on" in a particular scene, how much there is to look at. If there is very little going on -- as, for example, a scene consisting of an undifferentiated open field with horizon in the background -- then preference is likely to be low.* (Kaplan 1979:243)

Fig. 65: Mystery and activation of the imagination
Gregory Euclide, *I imagined soft decay hiding in the scenic turning*, 2011
Acrylic, balsa wood, euro cast, fern, found foam, geranium, lichen, moss, paper, pine cone, pine needle, plastic bag, sponge, sedum, waxed tape, winter wheat, wire

Available at: http://gregoryeuclide.com/gallery/

[107] *One of the most striking aspects of people's reaction to landscapes that suggests a three-dimensional interpretation is their preference for scenes where it appears as if one could see more if one were to "walk into" the scene a ways. Strong as this "involvement" component of the spatial interpretation has been, it has been frustratingly difficult to find a name for. We have decided on mystery, a term long ago used in the context of landscape architecture to refer to an essentially similar idea (Hubbard and Kimball 1917).* (Kaplan 1979:243)

The **mystery**[107] component has been far the most influential one in the preference theory field: *Mystery involves not the presence of new information, but its promise. …While the "promise of more information" captures the essential flavor of this concept, there is actually more to it than that. Scenes high in mystery are characterized by continuity; there is a connection between what is seen and what is anticipated. While there is indeed the suggestion of new information, the character of that new information is implied by the information that is available. Not only is the degree of novelty limited in this way; there is also a sense of control, a sense that the rate of exposure to novelty is at the discretion of the viewer. A scene high in mystery is one in which one could learn more if one were to proceed further into the scene.* (Kaplan 1979:244)

Another area of potential confusion should perhaps be mentioned. "Mystery" to some people connotes the ambiguous, even the incoherent of impossible to understand. While it is in some way true that anything that makes no sense is mysterious, the term is intended in a far more limited sense. Admittedly it implies uncertainty. But here the uncertainty is thoroughly constrained and bounded. It is of a limited degree and its rate of introduction is under control. It is by no means beyond comprehension; rather it is possible to anticipate to a reasonable degree. Mystery arouses curiosity. What it evokes is not a blank state of mind but a mind focused on a variety of possibilities, of hypotheses of what might be coming next. ***It may be the very opportunity to anticipate several possible alternatives that makes mystery so fascinating and mind filling.*** *The human capacity to respond to suggestion is profound.* (Kaplan 1979:244)

I detect a usefull distinction between the concept of legibility and that of mystery. Legibility has to do with functioning while mystery has to do with learning, with the promise of new information: This promise of new information though has to be characterized by specific characteristics in order to lead to a sense of involvement: although Kaplan named this component mystery some very non mysterious conditions have to be fulfilled:

- Continuity between what is seen and what is anticipated
- Insinuation: The character of the new information is implied by the information available
- Control and liberty: the rate of exposure to novelty must be at the discretion of the viewer

Although unavoidably mystery implies uncertainty it is by no means beyond comprehension. What is more interesting is what mystery evokes:

- Curiosity.
- Not a blank inactive state of mind but one focused, alerted, consciously awaken to detect and judge the spectrum of possible alternatives. As Kaplan describes: The human capacity to respond to suggestion is profound.

And in my opinion, this awaken and conscious state of mind, triggered by the environment, based to insinuation rather than definition, suggestion rather than affirmation is a central point for atmosphere.

Suggestion, arousal of curiosity, an under control uncertainty, a clear connection between what is seen and what is anticipated, a promise of new information, seem to be basic factors, along with the richness of the patterns of information. What results interesting for me is that Kaplan makes reference to patterns of information, not to the proper subject-matter of information. In other words, Kaplan's approach poses the emphasis on the qualitative properties of the perceived space in terms of the structuring relations that characterize the distributional pattern of the elements and not to the subsequent emotions-feelings felt at the presence of these specific patterns.

[108] *Character, finally is denoted by adjectives…A character is a complex totality, and a single adjective evidently cannot cover more than one aspect of this totality …In general a place is given as such a character or ¨atmosphere¨. A place is therefore a qualitative, ¨total¨ phenomenon which we cannot reduce to any of its properties, such as spatial relationships, without losing its concrete nature out of sight.* (Schulz 1980:p7)

[109] *…all language has a form which requires us to string out our ideas even though their objects rest one within the other. This property of verbal symbolism is known as discursiveness, by reason of it only thoughts which can be arranged in this peculiar order can be spoken at all, any idea which does not lend itself to this "projection" is ineffable, incommunicable by jeans of words. That is why the paws of reasoning, our clearest formulation of exact expression, are sometimes known as the 'laws of discursive thought'. There is an unexplored possibility of genuine semantic beyond the limits of discursive language. This logical "beyond", which Wittgenstein calls the "unspeakable", both Rusell and Carnal regard as the sphere of subjective experience, emotion, feeling, and wish, from which only symtoms come to us in the form of metaphysical and artistic fancies. The study of such products they relegate to psychology, not semantics. And here is the point of my radical divergent from them: so long as we admit only discursive symbolism as a bearer of ideas, "thought" in this restrictive sense must be regarded as our only intellectual activity. I believe that in this physical, space-time world our experience there are things which do not fit the grammatical schema of expression. But they are not necessarily blind, inconceivable, mystical affair, they are simple matters which require to be conceived through some symbolistic schema other than discursive language. Visual forms-lines, colors, proportions, etc-are just as capable of articulation, as words. But the laws that govern this sort of articulation are altogether different from the laws of syntax that govern language. The most radical difference is that visual forms are not discursive. They do not present their constituents successively, but simultaneously, so the relations determining a visual structure are grasped in one act of vision. The understanding of space which we owe to sight and touch could never be developed, in all its detail and definiteness by a discursive knowledge of geometry.…The meanings given through language are successively understood, and gathered into a whole by the process called discourse, the meanings of all other symbolic elements that compose a larger articulate symbol are understood only through the meaning of the whole, through their relation within the total structure. Their very functioning as symbols depends on the fact that they are envolved in a simultaneous, integral presentation. This kind of semantic may be called 'presentational symbolism'.* (Langer 1985:102).

[110] *¨... the symbolic function that is distinctive of pictures is denotation-hence pictures are labels and in that respect are analogous to linguistic predicates. The characteristics that distinguish pictorial systems from other denotational systems (e.g., from natural languages) make them the very opposite of a notation: pictorial systems are dense throughout and in that respect are similar to other analog systems, such as those of diagrams and maps.¨*(Goodman 1976).

"While we must use propositional language to describe these dimensions of experience and understanding, we must not mistake our mode of description for the things described". (Johnson 1987:4)

Although it is widely accepted that we automatically perceive atmosphere, it is also widely observed that it is almost impossible to describe through words this embodied experience or proceed to a clear justification of the elements that configure it without sacrificing through abstraction something of its particular essence (Schulz 1980)***108***.
I agree that in the passage from embodied experience to its ¨reproduction¨ through a different medium certain of its attributes fade and even vanish. Nonetheless, as I propose, this shouldn't function as a definite obstacle for a more substantial consideration of atmosphere as a tool for analysis. What results more relevant for me is to explore the potentialities revealed when the meaning of the ¨reproduction¨ of atmosphere is configured through a medium proper for spatial analysis and design. For this reason I permit me a certain distance from discursive meaning as the only possible vehicle for thought and draw upon approaches, such as this of Susanne Langer (1942), that define an alternative semantic to discursive meaning. Langer's proposes presentational symbolism***109*** as subject to laws distinct of those of discursive form but equally capable of articulating meaning, For the construction of meaning in presentational symbolism the succession of signs is essential, understood only though the relation of the parts within a total structure. Langer's proposal could be complemented by the reflection of Goodman (1976)***110*** on notation systems and his distinction between dense and disjunct systems.

Drawing on Goodman, the perception of atmosphere is more likely defined as dense throughout, subject of the laws of presentational meaning, based not on the perception of distinctive elements but on their relations in space: These relations form the basis of the configuration of atmosphere, subject to the laws drawn by what might be called as presentational symbolism, structurally differing from those of discursive meaning. And that might be exactly the reason why a translation of atmosphere into a propositional description seems unable of capturing its essence or why the classification and categorization of its constructive elements (and not of their relations) seems equally unable of capturing its essence, although this categorization might be intended through dense presentational or pictorial systems such as diagrams or maps. (Goodman 1976)

[111] *The best way to describe the figurative embodied character of image schemas and their metaphorical extension and projection into abstract meaning is to give an example. One deeply entrenched image schema is the IN-OUT schema. Our daily lives are rife with in-out orientations: we get in our cars and step out of them; we fall into a deep sleep and awake; we put food in our mouths and so on. By metaphorical extension, in-out orientations permeate our lives, whether we are aware of them or not, and this general recurring pattern forms an image schema. Moreover, the IN-OUT schema has several subvariations where different levels of abstraction manifest themselves depending on the type of action involved. For example, the metaphorical projection of the IN-OUT schema underlies the abstract conceptualization of a viewpoint. A viewpoint can be represented diagrammatically as a centered point and an encompassing circle, indicating a reference point directed towards a bounded horizon; the IN-OUT schema maps a person's perspective to the centered point (IN), and maps the view seen to the bounded horizon (OUT). The "assumption of a viewpoint is not typically a matter of entertaining certain concepts or propositions . . . rather, it is simply a point of view that we take up, because it is part of the structural relations of the relevant schema" . That is, we dwell in the point of view that we adopt, as it is a recurrent pattern we tacitly appropriate.* (Tataki 2010:28)

[112] *Although Lakoff (1987) and Johnson (1987) developed the basic idea here in different ways (see also Lakoff and Johnson 1999, Johnson 2007), the general flavor of the view they share can be conveyed by considering a well-known example they discuss: that of love as a kind of journey. For Lakoff and Johnson, this non-literal language is not merely peripheral expression useful for adding bells and whistles to the bustle of communication, but reflects something deep about how love is conceptualized. Importantly, the central organizing metaphor—love is a journey—involves a mapping from one domain (journeys) to another (love), where the source domain is informed by our bodily physicality and the embodied experience that we have as creatures that move through the world to achieve purposes and goals.* Wilson Robert A. and Foglia L., "Embodied Cognition", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2011 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/embodied-cognition/>.

The challenge is not to face the fragility of the description of atmosphere as a problem, but on the contrary as forming part of its intrinsic nature. And the approach (partial and selective) to its description beyond its effects requires an insight into the alternative order the underlines the perception of its apparent direct meaning towards two directions: Langer's and Goodman's definition of presentational symbolism and dense notational systems focus the attention to visual perception. Nevertheless, the meaning of atmosphere is essentially spatial, not visual; atmosphere is directly linked with embodied perception that integrates visual attention as an important but not unique agent. On the other hand, Kaplan's (1979) and Gibson's (1980) approach define meaning on a biological basis that limits the subsequent effects of atmosphere purely to basic purposes and feelings of well being and survival. Nonetheless, atmosphere, as it will be subsequently argued, also functions in the threshold towards abstract meaning.

My argument is sustained through a more intentional approach to the perception of spatial meaning: the recent findings in the field of embodied cognition provide us with suggestive perspectives not only for the description of the effects of atmosphere but essentially for the possible identification of its causes. I specifically refer to cognitive linguistics and the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1999) and more precisely to their recognition of the importance of metaphor in structuring and influencing many central cognitive processes through the metaphorical extension and projection of basic spatial patterns that emerge from our proper generic embodied experience. These embodied patterns, such as "front", "back", "up", ¨in and out¨ or ¨containment¨ named image schemas (Lakoff, Johnson, 1999) organize out mental representation and are not reducible to propositional forms. An image schema is "*a recurrent pattern, shape, and regularity in, or of, those ongoing ordering activities*" (Johnson 1987:29). It consists of a "*small number of parts and relations, by virtue of which it can structure indefinitely many perceptions, [concrete] images, and events*" (Johnson 1987:29). They have two important features: they are **non-propositional structures** and they have **a figurative embodied character**. These patterns are **embodied at a pre-conceptual level** and in turn provide **structure to many of our higher-order modes of knowing through their metaphorical extension and projection**[111] towards different levels of abstraction. Metaphorical extension refers to necessary for our survival patterns of interaction and understanding of the physical world surrounding us, while metaphorical projection refers to the equally necessary configuration of symbolic and abstract meaning.

The term ¨metaphorical¨ (extension or projection) refers to the understanding of metaphor as "***a matter of projections and mappings across different domains in the actual structuring of our experience (and not just in our reflection on already existing structures)***".[112] (Lakoff 2012:207). ***The essence of metaphor is understanding one kind of thing in terms of another***. (Lakoff, Johnson 1980:5).

Lakoff and Johnson use the term image schemas, although, in my opinion, their definition would be more precisely defined as embodied spatial schemas. Although lacking scientific testing, my proposal is that atmosphere arises through the perception of the affordances and the four criteria of visual information, but also from the manner that these last situate the body in space in terms of **schematic patterns of bodily interaction with space**, detected automatically now not in our minds but to the environment containing us. What is more, the embodied perception of these spatial patterns of containment might lead to the metaphorical extension and projection of their embodied experience into abstract meanings insinuating a consequent level in the perceptual structuring of atmosphere where environment works as a sequence of spatial metaphors leading our thought process towards the creation of new metaphors or towards to the detection of the correlation with conventional ones.

Fig. 66: Attachment and detachment
Gregory Euclide, ***And what we see now I built with my detachment***, 2014
Printed on archival 308 gsm Hahnemühle photo rag paper, 18x22

Available at: http://gregoryeuclide.com/gallery/

It is thereby assumed that atmosphere works not only at a level of pre-reflective consciousness, where the environment is perceived at the level of specific patterns of information (Kaplan 1979) that provide particular potentialities of action (Gibson 1980), but also at the **threshold** towards conceptualizations of abstract meaning, and possibly to the generation of new meaning through the metaphorical extension and projection of the bodily experience of spatial patterns and the specific manner that these contain and situate the body in space.

THE OBJECTIVE SUBJECTIVITY

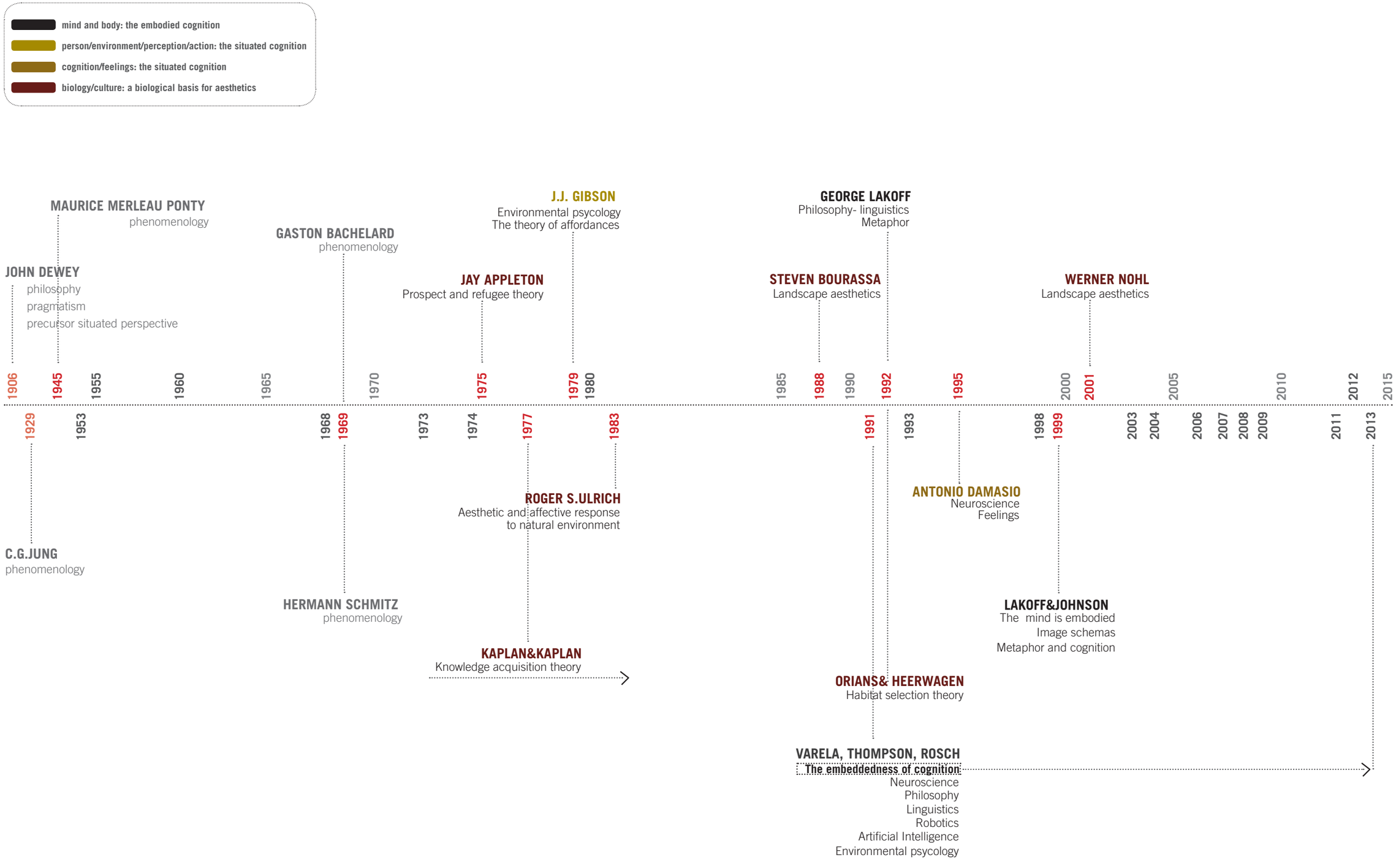


Fig. 67, 68: Textures of the second case study: the agricultural park of Baix Llobregat

2.3. From theory to the cartography of atmosphere

Some of the structural questions, crucial for the conceptualization of atmosphere as a spatially situated, are arising from the above review of the selected bibliographic references.

Among existing definitions, that of Susanne Langer, defining architecture as *an illusion, a visible expression of a feeling, sometimes called atmosphere* (Langer 1977) succeeds in bringing together some of the key aspects of atmosphere. Certainly the most influential contribution for us to expand Susanne's Langer definition of atmosphere as visible expression of a feeling is that of Nelson Goodman and his notion of expression as metaphorical exemplification (Goodman 1976).

The work of Susanne Langer and Nelson Goodman permit us thus **define atmosphere as the objective properties of environment that metaphorically exemplify structures of feeling through the creation of embodied experience.**

Thus defined, **atmosphere brings together different aspects of the intelligibility of environment**:

In a first level atmosphere emerges as a result of a pre-reflective, not yet articulated self-consciousness. At this most level, atmosphere bears on the orientation, the attribution of importance that underlies the embodied perception of the environment. At this level, atmosphere as first impression and prediction finds its resonance with the theory of affordances, as defined by J.J. Gibson and further explored by the situated perspective on cognition. **Affordances**, as defined by Gibson, refer to the offers, consistent in opportunities of interaction that the objects present in the environment in relation to the sensorimotor capacities of each species. The value and meanings of the affordances of the environment can be directly perceived; they **are intrinsically part of the objects themselves and are not constructed from the observer's needs or intentions**.

We link the theory of affordances we one of the possible "objective" hues that structure the sense arising from the conceptualization of atmosphere as first impression: atmosphere is perceived as meaningful, it is directly interpreted in terms of negative or positive affordances. What is more, affordances are essentially conceived as potentialities of action: we could thus suppose that one of the main effects of atmosphere is to orient actions.

Fig. 69: Textures of the second case study: the agricultural park of Baix Llobregat

In a parallel level, the work of Kaplan (1979) permits to look beyond the interpretation of the atmosphere based on an automatic interpretation of these affordances as potentialities of action towards the implication of **structural patterns of information**, such as **complexity, mystery, coherence and legibility**. These patterns, according to Kaplan, are linked to human basic purposes: these are: **"making sense" and "involvement"** (Kaplan 1979).*While making sense refers to the concern to comprehend,…involvement refers to the concern to figure out, to learn, to be stimulated.* ***Nonetheless, knowing that an environment makes sense tells one nothing about whether it will be involving or not.*** (Kaplan 1979:243).

Atmosphere thus not only orients the proceeding actions but also highly influences its interpretation: When people view a landscape they are making a judgment, however intuitive and unconscious this process may be. This judgment concerns the sorts of experiences they would have, the ease of locomoting, of moving, of exploring, in a word of functioning, in the environment they are viewing (Kaplan 1979). This process, according to embodied cognition findings, seems to be indeed automatic, unconscious and inter-personal. Thus, the perception of the environment implies its evaluation, and evaluation, in turn, elicits emotions and consequent tendencies of action, tendencies either to continue with what one is doing, or to withdraw, as the work of Antonio Damasio (1994) proposes.

Damasio (1994) points us towards a possible correlation of atmosphere with an emotional response to environment. Damasio's findings not only fade the claims against the subjectivity of feelings, but also sustain their fundamental role in cognition. Emotional responses are not matter of choice as neither is the search of significance an option. Feelings, as the perception of emotions activating and activated through a system of actions, underlie cognition, perception, reasoning and action.

Nonetheless the perceptual process is not bounded at this stage.

At another level, the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1999) and their definition of image schemas as non-propositional patterns embodied at a pre-conceptual level, clearly influence my proposal for the interpretation of atmosphere also in terms of **spatial patterns of containment** that metaphorically extend and project the embodied experience towards other orders of meaning. Such metaphorical extensions and projections of primary embodied experiences are widely shared, they function as fundamental metaphors we think with, rather than as metaphors we consciously construct, or think of.

What is more, the sense of metaphor defined by Lakoff and Johnson as *understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another* (Lakoff, Johnson 1980:5) becomes central for the construction of the argument, mainly for two reasons: at a first place sheds light to the definition of atmosphere as a metaphorical exemplification of a feeling. The term metaphorical, through the definition of Lakoff, acquires a more tangible meaning. On the other hand, image schemas as non figurative structures shed some light to the interpretation of the sense arising from atmosphere not in terms of discursive meaning but in a manner parallel to the specific kind of semantic that might be called '*presentational symbolism*', as initially defined by Susanne Langer (1985:102).

The subsequent argument will take 2 case studies as point of departure:

The abovementioned levels of intelligibility of the environment define atmosphere as the manner in which the body is positioned within a field of sense and experience prior to the retrieval of intellectually sustained descriptions.

The usefulness of distinguishing these aspects of intelligibility is this: insofar as the word "atmosphere" denotes an immediate and intuitive response to environment it is important to ask how far its cartographic "interpretations" can work not at a level of a reflexive understanding of the atmosphere in terms of this response, but essentially in terms of its causes and thus to an interpretation of the environment in terms of **basic affordances, fundamental spatial patterns of containment and the quality of the visual information**.

THREE LEVELS FOR ATMOSPHERE

FIRST IMPRESSION: pre-reflective, not yet articulated self-consciousness

METAPHORICAL projections and extensions OF THE EMBODIED EXPERIENCE

1906 1929 1934 1945 1953 1955 1960 1965 1968 1969 1970 1973 1974 1975 1977 1979 1980 1983 1985 1988 1990 1991 1992 1993 1995 1998 1999 2000 2001 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2015

J.J. GIBSON
Environmental psycology
The theory of affordances

The value and meanings *of the affordances of the environment can be directly perceived; they* ***are intrinsically part of the objects themselves*** *and are not constructed from an observer's needs or intentions.*

ANTONIO DAMASIO
Neuroscience

An emotion is always related to a sequence of actions and feelings refer to the results of this sequence of actions. *It is important that we realize that when facing a danger, what saves us - and makes us act- is a series of actions that are triggered, not the feeling of fear. However, if you are feeling or sensing fear, it is that feeling which will guide your future actions.*

KAPLAN&KAPLAN
make sense:
coherence/legibility
involvement:
complexity/mystery

To summarize the ground covered so far, recent work on perception views the perceptual process as inextricably connected with ***human purposes****, and perhaps with human preferences as well. Preference, in turn, is a far better-behaved measure than is often feared. The remainder of the paper is based on the premise that preference judgments are not antithetical to aesthetics. Rather, they are seen as providing a powerful tool for understanding the* ***patterns underlying what we consider aesthetic.*** *Such judgments may also point to the underlying significance of the aesthetic in the larger human scheme of things.*

Feelings

LAKOFF&JOHNSON
The mind is embodied
Image schemas
Metaphor and cognition

"But as soon as one gets away from concrete physical experience and starting talking about abstractions or emotions, metaphorical understanding is the norm".

"the essence of metaphor is ***understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another"***

"metaphor as a ***matter of projections and mappings across different domains*** *in the actual structuring of our experience (and not just in our reflection on already existing structures)"*