4-2011

Vernacular Grounds: A Process of Observation

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Vernacular Grounds: A Process of Observation

Abstract
This presentation will consider the role of observation in an interdisciplinary practice that seeks to comprehend the experiential nature of place and, thereby, unfold a more acute view of the world. My perspective is anthropological with specific interest in material culture, ritual and vernacular grounds. Like the anthropologist, the architect develops an understanding of the nature of lived space, not by imposing a theory, but by letting the revelation derive from the act of recording observations. An act to which I refer as staging; the assembly of a framework used in reconstructing the nature of place. This process of inquiry is informed by the production of writing, mapping, modeling and drawing culture in effort to define the criteria for making place based propositions. This methodology is the embodiment of an interdisciplinary agenda that has to do with authenticating the architectural essence of lived space and, thereby, produces a more sustainable basis for reconstructing our inherited landscape.

Disciplines
Architecture

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Conference Chairs:
Peter Hind
Lindsey Bahe
Brian Kelly

Keynote Speakers:
Allison Arief, Columnist
New York Times

Michael James, Chair
Dept. of Textiles, Clothing and Design
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Session Topic Chairs:
PROVEN THROUGH THE DECADES
Tim McGinty

INTEGRATING INTEGRATION
Matt Burgermaster
New Jersey Institute of Technology

DISCIPLINARY DIALOGUES
Ann Sobiech Munson and Vera Adams
Iowa State University

WRITING AS REPRESENTATION
Lindsey Bahe and Peter Hind
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

MEDIA/REPRESENTATION
Igor Siddiqui
University of Texas Austin

DISCOVERY AND THE EMERGENCE OF FORM
Zuzanna Karczewksa
Montana State University

THE SUSTAINABILITY OF HUMANITY MODERATOR
Alexis Gregory
Savannah College of Art and Design

ACQUISITION AND ELIMINATION
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SLOVENLY WILDERNESS
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MATERIAL AND NON MATERIAL
Shai Yeshayahu
Southern Illinois University

DESIGN DEMO CRAZY: CUSTOMIZATION
INDIVIDUALIZATION, AND DEMOCRATIZATION
Susanne Fraser & Sanjit Roy
Morgan State, University

GROUNDLESS
Greg Watson and Hans Herrmann
Mississippi State University

Paper Abstract Reviewers and additional Moderators:
Among many others we would like to thank the following: Chris Ford, Betsy Gabb, Steven Ginn, Tim Hemsath, Sarah Thomas,

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Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the University of Nebraska - Lincoln, College of Architecture administration for encouraging us to pursue this conference in order to both share our work and to ask the types of questions that needed to be asked at the beginning design level. The support from the administration has been endless.

Along with the administration we would also like to thank the faculty at the College of Architecture. Along with a busy semester, a large number of them found time to offer support and assistance with the conference. Special thanks to Chris Ford for his willingness to curate and manage the show of student work on display throughout the building. Additionally, without Tim Hemsath’s early involvement, the conference would have looked and felt much differently.

Our goal was to have non-architects as speakers and we were pleasantly surprised to get two of the best. We are immensely grateful for their participation and willingness to share observations and critique on beginning design. Thank you Allison Arieff and Michael James for joining our discussion and for being brave enough to enter a room filled with architectural educators.

The body of the conference was comprised of a diverse list of session topics, all of which were submitted as a response to the conference theme. The Topic Chairs then reviewed abstracts, papers, and spent time choreographing the actual conference sessions. These individuals have been crafting much of the important content for the conference. We thank all of them for their patience and for going well above the expected workload. They are all volunteers and they have done their work with grace and care, thank you!

To diversify the blind peer-review process further, we had a selection of peer reviewers who worked through the submitted abstracts. We are grateful for their commitment as well.

We would like to thank adjunct professor, Nick Rebeck for the design of the amazing billboard bags (and sewing help). Thanks also to the volunteer students who sewed diligently. Graduate students Abbie Reece, Brittany McClure and Maura Trumble must be mentioned by name for their hard work on the Proceedings, graphics, and general preparations for the conference.

A big thank you also goes to all of the paper and poster presenters whose work made the conference possible.

Finally, thank you to the past chairs of the NCBDS. We submitted a proposal to host the conference and you selected us – we hope we lived up to your expectations and we look forward to a continued relationship with this important group of educators. We wish Jodi LaCoe and her conference committee the best of luck for next year’s 2012 NCBDS conference to be held at Pennsylvania State University.

Peter Hind, Lindsey Bahe, and Brian Kelly
The Conference Theme:

Design schools have been dealing with issues of sustainability, design, and solutions to problems for a long time. It has been long known that meaningful design inherently calls for sustainable outcomes and leads to solutions in harmony with nature; not outside of it. While this may be true, the level of discourse about the impact our design can have in improving the climate, material reduction, energy reduction, and more, has increased to astonishing levels.

Almost ten years ago, William McDonough and Michael Braungart in Cradle to Cradle suggested a radical method of thinking and making (perhaps this is not actually radical, just counter to the entrenched methods of making in the developed world). This call for change has been with us for some time but is our teaching paving the way for their type of new thinking? Are we really capable of this level of change? Can we affect change in what we do? If sustainable design thinking is the solution to environmental issues, do our early design studios prepare the way for change?

The NCBDS 27 conference raised these and other questions about the shifts in practice and teaching. How are we responding or speculating about them? We created and encouraged participants in the conference to both answer and challenge our questions. Our goal was to create a stage where educators can claim what they are doing in foundation education is preparing students for the shifts and changes that have happened in the field of design. Conversely, discussions proposed an opposing viewpoint that suggests that we are not doing enough.

We never wanted to prescribe outcomes, but rather we wanted to provide a stage for open discourse and argument.
keynote bios:

**ALLISON ARIEFF**

Friday, April 1 - 4:45 pm
Mary Riempa Ross Media Arts Center

Allison Arieff is a columnist for the New York Times’ Opinionator column and is a contributing writer to GOOD. She also consults on media, design and sustainability, most recently for Urban Revision and IDEO. From 2002-2006, Arieff was Editor-in-Chief of Dwell, and was the magazine’s founding senior editor. Dwell won the National Magazine Award for General Excellence in 2005 under her tenure. In 2005, she developed the Dwell Homes program, as an extension of the 2003 Dwell Home Design Invitational in which architects were invited to design a modern, affordable prefab home. Arieff is an author of the books “Prefab” and “Trailer Travel: A Visual History of Mobile America.” She began her editorial career in book publishing with stints at Random House, Oxford University Press, and Chronicle Books, where she edited numerous titles on design and culture, including “Airstream: A History of the Land Yacht”, “Cheap Hotels”, and “Hatch Show Print: The History of a Great American Poster Shop”. She has been featured as an expert on sustainable design for two seasons of the Sundance Channel series “Big Ideas for a Small Planet”, as well as on CNN, NBC News, NPR, Marketplace, and KCRW’s Design+Architecture; she has lectured at the Architectural League of New York, the Commonwealth Club of California, UCLA, and the Hearst Lectures at Cal Poly, among others. She received her BA in History from UCLA, her MA in Art History from UC Davis, and completed her PhD coursework in American Studies at New York University. Arieff lives in San Francisco, where she has a 500-square foot urban farm in her backyard.

**MICHAEL JAMES**

Saturday, April 2 - 4:45 pm
Sheldon Museum of Art

Michael James serves as the department chair and Ardis James Professor in Textiles, Clothing, & Design in the College of Education and Human Sciences at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He works closely with the International Quilt Study Center & Museum, housed in his department. At UNL, Michael teaches in the areas of visual literacy, textile design, and quilt studies, and his own work in the medium of quilts has been recognized and exhibited internationally. It is included in the collections of the Museum of Arts & Design in New York City, the Racine Art Museum, the Newark Museum, the Mint Museum, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, and the Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art at the Smithsonian, among others. For his work in the area of non-traditional quilts, James was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree by his undergraduate alma-mater, the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, in 1992, was inducted into the Quilters Hall of Fame in 1993, became a Fellow of the American Craft Council in 2001, and in 2009 was honored with the University of Nebraska’s system-wide “Outstanding Research and Creativity Activity” Award, given for a sustained record of excellent accomplishment in research or creative activity. Since 2002, he has focused his creative efforts on digital textile printing and its interface with the quilt as mixed media platform. His work explores the liminal and fluid borderland between the physical and metaphysical worlds.
### SESSION PAPERS

**PROVEN THROUGH THE DECADES - Tim McGinty, Boulder, CO**

**LIQUID CONTAINERS**  
Leslie Johnson and Catherine Wetzel, Illinois Institute of Technology

**BOXING FORM: 12 YEARS OF PLAYING IN THE SAND**  
Brian T. Rex, South Dakota State University  
Martí Lea Gottsch, Rice University

**PERENNIAL QUESTIONS, PERSISTENT CUBES**  
Charles Graves, Jr., Kent State University  
Thomas Sofranko, Louisiana State University  
Alfred Willis, Hampton University

**MINING THE NC BDS ARCHIVE: STEPS TOWARDS DISCIPLINARITY**  
Jim Sullivan and Tom Sofranko, Louisiana State University

**POWER [TOOLS]: PARASITE’S PROGRESS**  
Brent Freeby/Michael Lucas/JoAnn Moore/Bryan Ridley/Keith Wiley, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo  
Brian Kelly, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

**BUILDING CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS: CUMULATIVE LEARNING IN THE ACT OF DESIGN**  
Richard Hoag, Kansas State University

**ABSTRACTING, MAKING, AND BEGINNING (TO DESIGN)**  
Steven Temple, University of Texas San Antonio

### INTEGRATING INTEGRATION - Mathew Burgemaster, New Jersey Institute of Technology

**SOCIAL PRACTICES**

**INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY: REFLECTIONS ON POLLAN’S A PLACE OF MY OWN:**  
The Architecture of Daydreams  
C. A. Debelius, Appalachian State University

**THE FORM OF CONTEXT**  
James Bassett, Virginia Tech
CHANGING CURRICULUM
Donna Kacmar, University of Houston

OR+AND
John Folan, Carnegie Mellon University

MATERIAL PRACTICES

WORKING WITH CONTRADICTION
Shannon Criss, University of Kansas

THE LIVING WALL: A PROJECT OF MANY
Christopher Romano, University of Buffalo/SUNY
Nick Bruscia, University of Buffalo/SUNY
Shadi Nazarian, University of Buffalo/SUNY

TECHNOLOGICAL PRACTICES

BUILDING ON MIES, INTEGRATION AT IIT
Catherine Wetzel, Illinois Institute of Technology

RE-TOOLING THE LOGIC OF DESIGN
Maria Vera, Southern Illinois University - Carbondale

BLURRING BOUNDARIES: INTEGRATED DESIGN, ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGY, AND THE BEGINNING DESIGN STUDENT
Michael McGlynn, Kansas State University

ECOLOGICAL PRACTICES

RECALIBRATED: APPROACHING INTEGRATED DESIGN VIA CURRICULAR SHIFTS
Christian Dagg, Justin Miller, Auburn University

BIOMIMCRY STUDIO: NATURE-INSPIRED SUSTAINABLE DESIGN THINKING APPROACH
Rima Ajlouni, Texas Tech University

STARTING WITH INTEGRATION, USING HYBRID TECHNIQUES FOR ZERO ENERGY DESIGN
Troy Peters, California Polytechnic State University

DISCIPLINARY DIALOGUES - Ann Sobiech Munson and Vera Adams, Iowa State University

BRIDGING DISCIPLINES AND CULTURES: FROM BEGINNING DESIGN IN THE UNITED STATES TO INTEGRATED HUMANITIES IN BANGLADESH
Katrina M. Lewis, Kansas State University

INTRODUCING MULTIDISCIPLINARY AND MULTI-SCALE THINKING INTO A BEGINNING DESIGN PROJECT
Lohren Ray Deeg ASAI, Ball State University
WRITING AS REPRESENTATION - Lindsey Bahe and Peter Hind, University of Nebraska - Lincoln

ONLINE / ON TARGET: REFLECTIVE PRACTICE THROUGH BLOGGING
Nancy Yen-wen Cheng & Claire Alyea, University of Oregon

PARALLEL LINES - THE MIRROR OF ARCHITECTURAL CREATION AND BELIEF IN TEXTUAL AND VISUAL REALMS
Raymond Quek, Nottingham Trent University, UK

RHYME BLUE
Samantha Krukowski, Iowa State University

WORD DESIGN
Daniel J. Butko, The University of Oklahoma

THE WRITE STUFF: STEALTH THEORY FOR BEGINNERS
Michael Lucas, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

SCRIPTORIUM [SPACE OF THE NIGHT SCRIBE]
Brian Ambroziak, University of Tennessee

MEDIA/REPRESENTATION: Moderator: Igor Siddiqui, University of Texas Austin

DIGITAL DESIGN COMMUNICATION
Susannah Dickinson, University of Arizona

FOLD IN ARCHITECTURE: A FORM-MAKING STRATEGY IN FOUNDATION STUDIOS
M. Saleh Uddin, PhD., Robert Tango, Arief Setiawan, Southern Polytechnic State University

FOUND OBJECT/MATERIAL IN THE DESIGN PROCESS: MORE THAN JUST VISUAL?
Brian M. Kelly, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

RE-ENVISIONING: ANALYSIS TOOLS IN BEGINNING DESIGN STUDIOS
Justin Miller, Auburn University

PRIMARY SOURCING: DEFINING A ROLE FOR PHYSICAL ARCHIVES IN TEACHING DIGITAL MEDIA
David Hill, North Carolina State University

DISCOVERY AND THE EMERGENCE OF FORM - Zuzanna Karczewska, Montana State University

THE DIAGRAM & BEGINNING DESIGN EDUCATION
Jeff Balmer, University of North Carolina, Charlotte

THE SYNTHETIC DIAGRAM AND THE CREATION OF FORM
Julia Granacher, Savannah College of Art and Design
PARAMETRIC THINKING [NOT MODELING] AS A GENERATOR
Jonathon R. Anderson, University of North Carolina Greensboro
Ming Tang, University of Cincinnati
Maria Vera, Southern Illinois University
Shai Yeshayahu, Southern Illinois University

DIGGING UP IDEAS: VISUALLY EXPOSING NEW DIRECTIONS
Jonathan Mills, Syracuse University

MAKING OF PLACE
Eric Oskey; Dennis Playdon, Temple University

[RE]CONSTRUCTING THE SUSTAINABLE IMAGINATION
Jodi La Coe, Pennsylvania State University

BEGINNING CONNECTIONS: MYTHOLOGY AND COLLAGE FOR BEGINNING ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN STUDENTS
Anthony Cricchio, University of Oklahoma

BODY AS SITE
Kristopher M. Palagi, University of Hawaii at Manoa

BEGINNING OF THE NEVER-ENDING: DESIGN INVESTIGATIONS
Glenn NP Nowak, University of Nevada Las Vegas

OUT OF THIN AIR
Bradley Walters, University of Florida

SUSTAINABILITY OF HUMANITY - Alexis Gregory, Savannah College of Art and Design

WHY WAIT? INTEGRATING SOCIAL PROBLEMS INTO THE BEGINNING DESIGN PROJECT
Maria V. Miller, Iowa State University 2008-10

SUSTAINING THROUGH DESIGN CURRICULUM
Kate O’Connor, Marywood University

ACQUISITION AND ELIMINATION - Raymond Quek, Victoria Farrow, Gavin Richards, Nottingham Trent University, UK

ETHICAL REHEARSAL: STORYTELLING AS DESIGN PRAXIS
Peter Olshavsky, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

WEAVING WALLS: AN ALTERNATE NARRATIVE OF THE ESSENCE OF ARCHITECTURE
Dariel Cobb; Theodore Sawruk, University of Hartford

UNLOCKING THE INTUITIVE: TOWARDS A CODIFIED GENERATIVE DESIGN APPROACH
Julia Granacher- Savannah College of Art and Design

DEMOCRATIC BY DESIGN: ARCHITECTURE TEACHER LEADERS BUILDING A LIBERAL ARTS FOUNDATION TO SUPPORT TRANSFORMATIVE CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP
Beth Bilek-Golias, Kent State University
A NEW BEGINNING DESIGN STUDENT: FROM THE END OF HIGH SCHOOL TOWARD THE END OF CAREERS
Glenn NP Nowak, University of Nevada - Las Vegas

DESIGN THINKING AND THE 3+ GRADUATE ARCHITECTURE STUDENT
Shonali Bose; Gregory Kessler, Washington State University

EMBEDDING SUSTAINABLE DESIGN THINKING INTO THE ARCHITECTURAL CURRICULUM
Shannon Criss, University of Kansas

POET/TECH - Ted Shelton, University of Tennessee

MATTER MATTERS
Leslie Johnson, Illinois Institute of Technology

CONCEPTUAL SYSTEMS: TECHNICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR BEGINNING DESIGN STUDENTS
Donna Kacmar, University of Houston

THE NECESSITY OF MANUAL COMPETENCY
Thomas Cline, University of Oklahoma

A TECHNOLOGY AGAINST ITSELF: POETIC ENGAGEMENT IN EARLY DESIGN EDUCATION
Peter Olshavsky, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

THE HAND AND THE VECTOR: GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION
William Batson; Arsenio Rodrigues, Prairie View A&M University

THINKING MANUALLY, WORKING DIGITALLY
James Eckler; Karl Wallick, Marywood University

TO SUSTAIN LEARNING: DEVELOPING SPATIAL AWARENESS IN FIRST-YEAR DESIGN STUDENTS
Jennifer Barker, University of Memphis

SLOVENLY WILDERNESS - C.A. (Chip) Debelius, Appalachian State University

RECONCILING THE POETIC AND THE PRESCRIPTIVE: NEGOTIATING ARCHITECTURAL FORM
Frank de Santis, Drexel University

WHERE ARE THE WILD THINGS? INTRODUCING ENVIRONMENTAL THEORY IN FIRST-YEAR DESIGN STUDIO
Kathryn L. Bedette, Southern Polytechnic State University

ECOLOGICAL MATERIAL PRACTICE AS FUNDAMENTAL HABIT (OR, DUMPSTER DIVING POETICS)
Ann Sobiech Munson, Iowa State University
MATERIAL AND NON MATERIAL - Shai Yeshayahu Southern Illinois University

DESIGN ECOLOGY: WASTE HAPPENS
William R. Taylor: Portland State University/The Art Institute of Portland
Jennifer Wall: University of Oregon/Oregon College of Art and Craft

MATERIALISMS AND EXCESS
Bradley Walters, University of Florida

REPRESENTATION AND REALIZING: A HYBRID PROCESS OF IMMATERIAL AND MATERIAL
Ming Tang, University of Cincinnati
Maria Vera, Southern Illinois University
Jonathon R. Anderson, University of North Carolina - Greensboro

DESIGN DEMO CRAZY; CUSTOMIZATION, INDIVIDUALIZATION, AND DEMOCRATIZATION
Susanne Frasier and Sanjit Roy, Morgan State, University

MATERIAL PERFORMANCE
Manole Razvan Voroneanu, Southern Polytechnic State University

SCENARIOS: PARTICIPATORY ENVIRONMENTS IN A PRE-ARCHITECTURE PROGRAM
Kevin H. Moore, Auburn University

STUDENTS INVESTIGATE DIGITAL FABRICATION AS MEANS FOR ELEVATING DESIGNER-CLIENT RELATIONS
Jennifer Hamilton, Syracuse University

GROUNDLESS - Greg Watson and Hans Hermann, Mississippi State University

GENERATIVE PROGRAM CREATES CONTEXT
Matthew Battin, Urban Density Lab

RATIONALIZATION AND RECONCILIATION
James Eckler, Marywood University; Karl Wallick, University of Cincinnati

TRIPLE GROUNDING
Jim Bagnall, Brent Freeby, Michael Lucas, JoAnn Moore, Byran Ridley, Keith Wiley. California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN BETWEEN BOUND AND UNBOUND CRITERIA
Henning Haupt, Florida Atlantic University

THE EARTHBOUND OBSERVATORY: GROUNDING BEGINNING DESIGN
Nora Wendl, Portland State University

SURROUNDED NOT GROUNDED
Jeffrey L. Day, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
FIELD-MAKING: WAYS TO RE-IMAGINE THE FIGURE-GROUND PROBLEM  
Sanda Iliescu, University of Virginia

VERNACULAR GROUNDS: A PROCESS OF OBSERVATION  
Peter P. Goché, Iowa State University

ENGAGING THE GROUND: A PROCESS, OR, THE SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF  
Charles MacBride, Iowa State University

OPEN SESSION - Lindsey Ellsworth Bahe, University of Nebraska - Lincoln

A THROW OF THE DICE: ALEATORY PROCEDURES AS DESIGN BEGINNINGS  
Steven K. Holmes, Lauren Mitchell, Clemson University

PARAMETRIC THINKING  
David Karle; Brian M. Kelly, University of Nebraska - Lincoln

INTEGRATING STRUCTURES  
Bruce Wrightsman, Montana State University

INTERROGATING PERSPECTIVE  
James Spiller, Iowa State University

POSTER SESSION

MIND MAPPING SUSTAINABILITY  
Jennifer Barker & Jennifer Thompson, University of Memphis

HOLISM  
L. Abigail Buchanan & Jonathon R. Anderson, University of North Carolina-Greensboro

SHAPING LIGHT  
Nancy Yen-wen Cheng, University of Oregon

SPOILED  
Hans C. Hermann

SMALL & NOBLE  
Hans C. Hermann & Cory Gallo

DISCOVERING FORM THROUGH PROCESS  
Jenny Kivett, Mississippi State University

PERFORMATIVE-INFORMATIVE  
Shadi Nazarian, State University of New York at Buffalo

INTERLOCK BLOCK  
Weston Willard & Jonathon R. Anderson, University of North Carolina-Greensboro

FIGURE/GROUND AND STORM WATER  
Mo Zell
Vernacular Grounds: A Process of Observation

Peter P. Goché, Iowa State University

This presentation will consider the role of observation in an interdisciplinary practice that seeks to comprehend the experiential nature of place and, thereby, unfold a more acute view of the world. My perspective is anthropological with specific interest in material culture, ritual and vernacular grounds. Like the anthropologist, the architect develops an understanding of the nature of lived space, not by imposing a theory, but by letting the revelation derive from the act of recording observations. An act to which I refer as staging; the assembly of a framework used in reconstructing the nature of place. This process of inquiry is informed by the production of writing, mapping, modeling and drawing culture in effort to define the criteria for making place based propositions. This methodology is the embodiment of an interdisciplinary agenda that has to do with authenticating the architectural essence of lived space and, thereby, produces a more sustainable basis for reconstructing our inherited landscape.

This paper will consider two case studies using cartography, art, landscape architecture, and architecture as lenses for exploration. It will reflect on how students see and express their own interpretations of site, landscape and cultural inscriptions. Using processes of observation, students were asked to collaborate in the development of an iterative method to elicit new interpretations of a dormant flood plain and limestone bluff along the Missouri River at the foot of Kansas City’s historic River Market area.

To generate awareness of how visual thinking evolves, students were encouraged to use multiple forms of media as tools for visual expression. By employing various exploratory techniques, a conceptual generator based on each student’s experiential comprehension of the landscape and corresponding spatial configurations was developed and informed the trajectory of each effort. The culminating staging resulted in a body of work that expresses the meaning of place and the relationship between the River Market neighborhood and the topographic and phenomenological nature of the latent site. Our coursework sought to establish individual methodologies for synthesizing the criterion with which to reconstruct a landscape and architecture that deepens the relationship between a people and its local ecology. In so doing, each student came to recognize an existing socio-geographic configuration that is host to a sensation of something vast and deep and boundless – a condition that is present in the unconscious but not consciously expressed.