

# Theory Place – An Image

This is about design theory today modeled as an emergent image coming into focus.

When asked if he had discovered gold in the new world, the great Spanish explorer, Coronado, supposedly replied,

“Although we did not find the gold for which we sought, we found a wonderful place to look for it.”

Such I believe is also the case for late modern design theory. I believe that we have found an especially promising place to look for it. There are, richly and increasingly, a number of useful maps and guides for how to get there, but I think they are all pointing - at least roughly - to the same conceptual region. Here then is my personal set of GPS directions to this theory place:

If you take the ontological road of axiology that I call valuing and meaning to where it intersects with the ontological road of epistemology, or more objective ways of knowing, you will have reached this late modern theory place. I call it late modern because it acknowledges both the possibility and the necessity of complementary ontological points of view. Without the former, one wouldn't know what was desired or why something needed to be done. Without the latter, one wouldn't know how or be able to do it.

The image of a crossing or intersection conceptually portrays a region that becomes whole through the combination and interaction of multiple ontological perspectives, where each reacts to and integrates the significant formative influences of the other.

Beyond the incidence of ontological intersection, the geography of this theory place captures the spatial consequence of that meeting, which is the creation of a dynamic poetic region, a culturally situated and conditioned field where people and their agents are immersed and engaged in desired situational transformations, and where all manner of meaningful artifacts become forged and expressively brought into being by and for their owners.

Photographically,

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